



Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy

Date First Published	January 2023
Version	1
Last approved	January 2023
Review Cycle	Annual
Review Date	January 2024

“Learning together, to be the best we can be”

1. Context

1.1. Quality assurance within Nexus Multi Academy Trust involves the systematic review of practice, programmes, systems and processes in order to maintain and improve the quality of education in all our settings, leading to improved outcomes and life chances for all our learners framed around the “Big 3” improvement priorities of our Collaborative School Improvement Framework (CSIF):

- All our children and young people enjoy their learning and make at least good progress.
- All our children are responsible citizens who make an active contribution to society.
- All our Academies are continually improving our quality of provision.

1.2. The Trust seeks to work in a manner underpinned by appreciative inquiry, in a strengths based way so that we perpetuate a learning culture across our schools. We believe children need a safe space to learn from mistakes, and we apply this same philosophical approach to the management of our schools. In this regard, our quality assurance systems has a clear focus on support and challenge.

1.3. In order to offer support and challenge to our academies in an impactful and purposeful way, it is important that Trust officers understand the priorities within each of the academies and collectively across the Trust. This collation of priorities ensures that Trust-wide improvement work enables the principles of collective efficacy and collaboration.

1.4. Collated priorities are identified within the CSIF delivery plan. This outlines what we will achieve, how we will do it and why it is important.

1.5. Fundamentally, this model is in place to ensure that all Nexus MAT academies are working together to improve outcomes for children. Central to the model is ensuring appropriate levels of:

- Monitoring and challenge;
- Support and system leadership;
- Intervention (where needed).

1.6. Quality assurance is essential for accountability, as well as to support the ongoing improvement of schools, supporting and challenging school leaders to adapt to the changing needs of pupils and improve the quality of education for all learners.

1.7. In addition to priorities collated from all schools, the Trust also takes account of local and national priorities when planning quality assurance and

improvement activity, including drawing on emergent research and best practice.

2. Purpose and scope

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that a fair, robust and consistent process is applied to all academies, always having regard for supporting their development within the context of the Trust's strategic plan for improving educational provision and performance.
- 2.2. This will ensure that there is a systematic, transparent and auditable process in place for the review of school self-evaluation and improvement planning, with judgements made being rooted in evidence.
- 2.3. Ultimately this will enable executive leaders and governors to "stress test" the robustness of self-evaluation and improvement planning of Nexus MAT schools, and furthermore, triangulate and validate the judgements of Headteachers.
- 2.4. For the purposes of this policy, "Quality Assurance" is defined the process for evaluating the quality of education through a variety of school level and Trust level activity.
- 2.5. Quality assurance is intended be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all academies have the support they require in order to carry out their core business effectively.
- 2.6. Quality Assurance allows the Trust to celebrate success and share best practice.
- 2.7. The Trust does also commissions, or is subject to, other quality assurance activities which focuses on business management services which indirectly impact on the quality of education in our schools. These include, but aren't limited to:
 - 2.7.1. Internal and external audit of the Trust's governance and financial management;
 - 2.7.2. Health & Safety audits from the Trust's appointed competent person;
 - 2.7.3. External reviews of ICT and information governance;
 - 2.7.4. Reviews commissioned by the Department for Education and/or the Education & Skills Funding Agency for specific needs (e.g. buildings survey).

2.8. Whilst these areas of quality assurance provide an essential means of testing the Trust's compliance with statutory and best practice requirements, they are also connected to other core policies or legal documents, and therefore fall out of the remit of this policy. However, it is important that their existence is acknowledged and recorded as part of the e holistic system of quality assurance that the Trust operates within.

3. Quality Assurance Systems and Processes

- 3.1. The Trust recognises that the core business of schools is to offer a high quality of education to the community it serves. As such, our process places this at the centre of all activity.
- 3.2. An annual Quality Assurance calendar is developed considering workload and shared with Executive leaders and Headteachers in order to ensure that Headteachers know when activity is scheduled.
- 3.3. It is essential that an objective and robust view is formed for how well our academies are performing and to have a mechanism to ascertain our collective strengths, areas for improvement and to connect schools together within the Trust and beyond. The Trust now has a number of systems and processes in place to offer more robust quality assurance of school self-evaluation, summarised in Figure 1.

3.4. Figure 1 – Map of quality assurance sources



3.5. Dashboard

3.6. The Trust Board of Directors has defined a suite of key performance indicators (KPIs) which align to the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework but go beyond it, to reflect the wide legal and statutory duties of Directors.

3.7. Headteachers are required to self-assess the strength of practice in school for each indicator, using the defined rating system, on a termly basis. These self-evaluated ratings are then moderated by the Trust executive at the Schools' Performance Scrutiny Board, before they are submitted to Directors for their review.

3.8. Data Submissions

3.8.1. A range of data is collated centrally and used to form questions for further enquiry. The data collated includes:

- Tracking data and outcomes data in, at least, reading, writing, math's or - where these subjects are not taught explicitly - communication and cognition;
- Attendance;
- Behaviour, including categories of child on child abuse;
- Safeguarding.

3.9. Annual Support and Challenge Board

3.9.1. At the start of each academic year, Headteachers present the school Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) and new School Improvement Plan (SIP) to the Annual Support and Challenge Board. This provides an opportunity to co-construct a programme of work for the school and their assigned quality assurance and improvement officer.

3.9.2. The Board features in the Trust Scheme of Delegation as a formal subcommittee of the Trust’s Standards Committee.

3.9.3. Intended outcomes from this Board are that it will:

- Inform the priorities for any bespoke work commissioned by the Trust through the academic year;
- Inform the qualitative focus of the Trust’s governance cycle; and
- Identify best practice, innovations and shared areas for improvement across the Trust.

3.10. Internal Quality Assurance & Improvement visits to schools

3.10.1. The Trust internal Quality Assurance & Improvement system is designed to ensure that there is a systematic and auditable process in place for the review of school self-evaluation and improvement plans each term and for the scrutiny of key areas of school performance.

3.10.2. Each school will be allocated a Quality Assurance & Improvement partner who will endeavor to work in a strengths-based way with support and challenge rooted in evidence.

3.10.3. The focus of these visits will include working with schools to deliver the actions identified in the CSIF Delivery Plan, Deep Dive area of the School Self-Evaluation Dashboard. These actions link directly to the Education Inspection Framework (EIF). The Quality Assurance & Improvement partner can offer/commission bespoke support to address matters arising from school visits or the Schools Performance and Scrutiny Board.

3.10.4. Figure 2 – Flow of QA activity



- 3.10.5. At the start of each academic year, following the Annual Support and Challenge Board, each school will receive a planning visit to establish the Quality Assurance & Improvement work programme for the year.
- 3.10.6. Each School will receive a core offer of one half day visit each term. The approach will be a collaborative enquiry into one of the four areas of the Dashboard/EIF.
- 3.10.7. The team undertaking the Collaborative Enquiry will include the assigned Quality Assurance & Improvement Partner, Headteacher and, wherever possible, a Peer Headteacher.
- 3.10.8. The implementation of a formal quality assurance model – which includes peer review and research - enables school leaders to identify their own development needs from their improvement plans and self-evaluations.
- 3.10.9. For schools who are within the OFSTED window, this will also include an external professional.
- 3.10.10. The Collaborative Enquiry will follow the format of a Deep Dive and identify areas of strength and areas for further consideration by the school. It will also provide evidence for the schools self-evaluation against the dashboard judgements.
- 3.10.11. Feedback and evidence collated from collaborative enquiry work will be shared via the QA Intelligence Sharing Forum in preparation for the Schools' Performance and Scrutiny Board and Standards Committee.

3.11. Schools Performance and Scrutiny Board

- 3.11.1. All evidence collated from Quality Assurance activity will be presented and triangulated at the Schools Performance and Scrutiny Board (SPSB) which takes place each term.
- 3.11.2. This Board:
- Scrutinises data held by the Trust for each school alongside evidence collated through line management and support and challenge.
 - Stress tests the robustness of Self-Evaluations and Improvement Plans of Nexus schools, and validate Dashboard judgements from evidence;
 - Identifies the priorities for the Support & Challenge Partner bespoke work;
 - Informs the qualitative focus of the Trust local governance cycle;
 - Identifies best practice, innovations and shared areas for improvement across the Trust.
 - Moderates the school's self-assessment in the Dashboard before the executive reports to Directors.

3.11.3. The Board features in the Trust Scheme of Delegation as a formal subcommittee of the Trust Board.

4. Quality Assurance into Improvement

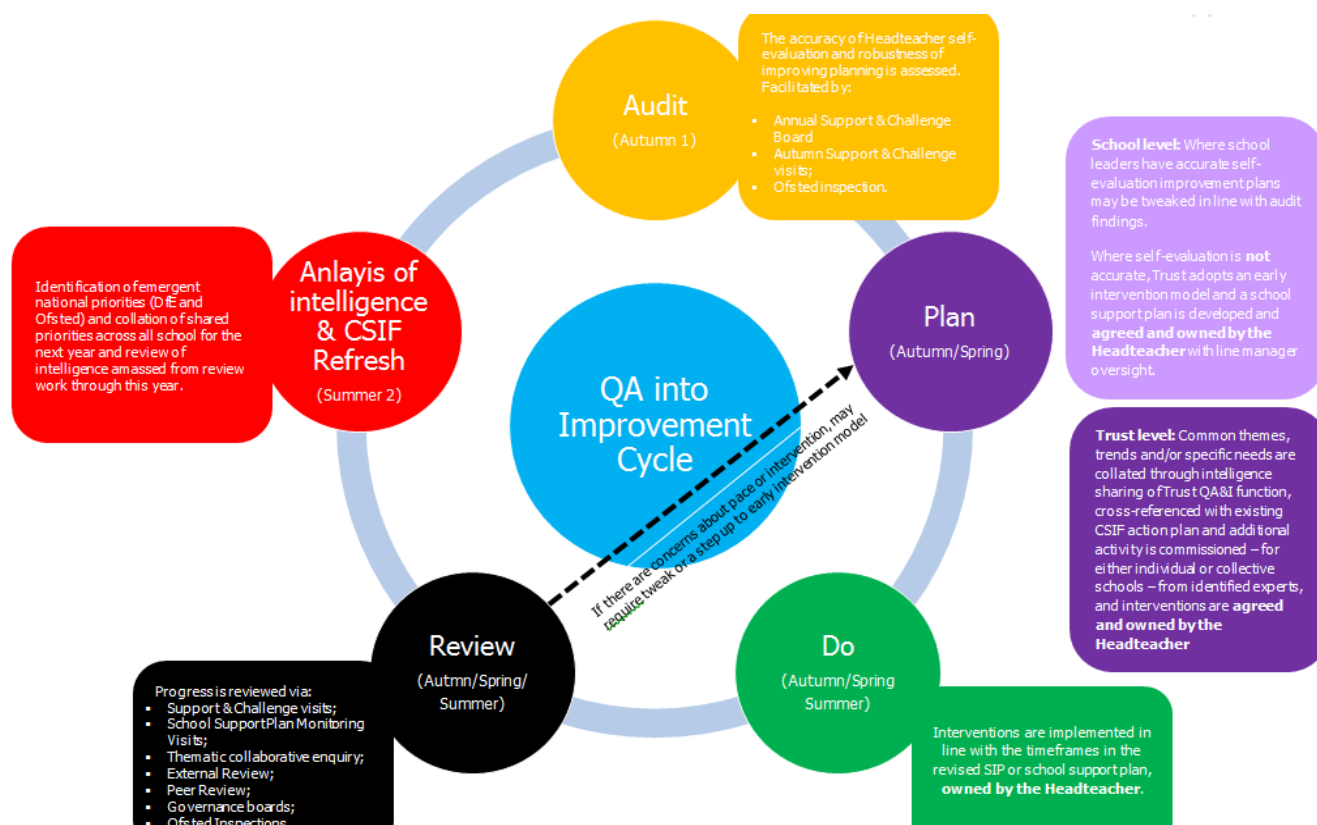
4.1. There is a clear cycle of 'audit, plan, do, review' in place at school and Trust level. (See Figure 3).

4.2. The Trust uses all quality assurance activity to support schools to audit current systems and processes, plan for the implementation of new activity or intervention, support training and development and support monitoring and evaluation.

4.3. The Trust facilitates school leaders to meet regularly to discuss and systematically cover different aspects of school performance and improvement. There is a clear agenda so that all attendees are prepared for a focused conversation that helps drive improvement for all.

4.4. The Trust regularly evolves its infrastructure and networks to support shared professional learning. There is a strong culture of subject networks, peer-to-peer coaching and reflective practice, linked to improvement priorities.

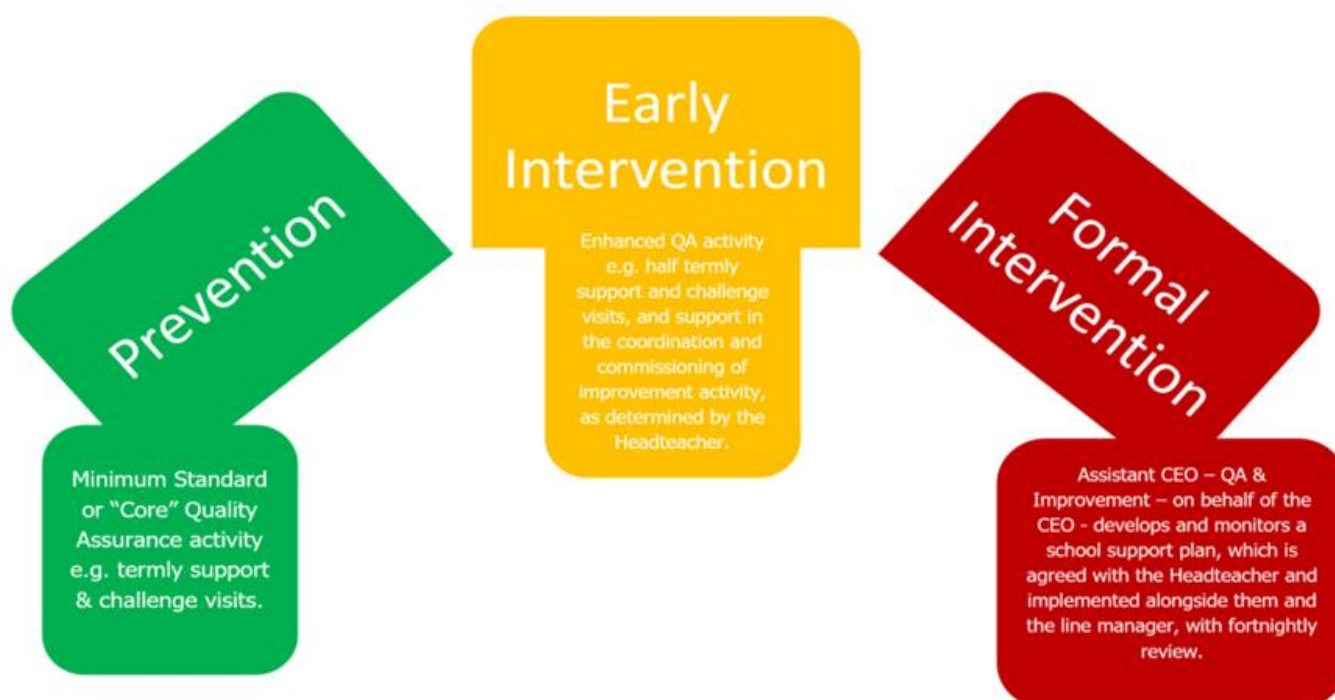
4.5. Figure 3 – The QA & Improvement Commissioning Cycle



5. Intervention Model

- 5.1. From the work of the internal Quality Assurance & Improvement audits and the Schools' Performance Scrutiny Board, the Trust formulates an evidence informed view of the support required by schools to consolidate their practice or where they need additional input.
- 5.2. The aggregated judgements from the schools' dashboard will indicate whether a school falls within 3 defined categories (figure 4); Prevention (from decline), Early Intervention or Formal Intervention. More detail about this is included in the Academies of Concern and Sponsored Academy Policy, which guides the bespoke activity offered to each school.

5.3. Figure 4 – Tiers of intervention and classification of schools



6. Governance

- 6.1. Outcomes from the Schools' Performance Scrutiny Board is reported directly to the Trust Standards Committee at least every term, which in turn reports to the Trust Board of Directors.