SAFE START SCHOOL

WILLPOWER-INITIATIVE-SUCCESS-EMPATHY

QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

Date: March 2026

Written by: Grace Speakman

Date of next review: March 2027

Ratified by: Rachel Pilling

Introduction

This Quality Assurance (QA) Policy outlines the principles and processes used to ensure continuous improvement in teaching, learning, and overall provision for students at Safe Start School, an independent SEN secondary school in the UK.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure high-quality education and care for all students with Special Educational Needs (SEN).
- Monitor and enhance teaching and learning practices.
- Maintain compliance with relevant legal and statutory requirements.
- Foster a culture of continuous improvement through self-evaluation and feedback.

Key Principles

- Student-centred approach focusing on individual needs.
- Commitment to high standards and continuous improvement.
- Transparent, evidence-based decision-making.
- Collaborative approach involving staff, students, parents/carers and external stakeholders.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

- Hold the school to account for both its statutory and non-statutory obligations.
- Participate fully in the strategic thinking and planning of the school.
- The Chair of Governors challenges directors to ensure full oversight.

Proprietors

- Ensuring the school has robust policies and procedures in place, including safeguarding, curriculum, and assessment, and by demonstrating accountability to stakeholders
- Ensuring the school has comprehensive child protection policies and procedures.
- Regularly evaluate the school's performance and identify areas for improvement.
- Implementing targeted interventions based on self-evaluation and feedback.
- Ensuring the school meets the statutory Independent School Standards.
- Constantly driving forward improvements for our students to achieve the best outcomes.

Head Teacher

- Accountable to the proprietors for ensuring that all areas of the school are engaged in systematic and rigorous quality assurance and self-evaluation.
- Use the outcomes of school and team self-evaluation together with external (i.e. QIP, OFSTED) evaluations to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement and plan for future school improvement.
- With support from Proprietors and the Chair of Governing Body, constantly driving forward improvements for our students to achieve the best outcomes.
- Create a culture of nurture for all students at the school.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- Oversee implementation and compliance with the QA policy.
- Conduct regular quality reviews and assessments.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate training and support.
- Accountable in the areas for which they have strategic responsibility.
- The role includes reviewing progress on improvement plans, evaluating and analysing the standards reached and setting targets for future improvement.
- Accountable to their line manager for monitoring the work of their area/s of responsibility and providing objective evidence for quality assurance purposes.
- Collectively embed trauma-informed setting supported by trauma-responsive delivery.
- Lead on a neurodivergent friendly environment.
- Support parents/carers through the Thrive approach.

Teaching and Support Staff

- Implement best practices in SEN teaching and learning and added value.
- Engage in continuous professional development (CPD).
- Participate in quality assurance processes and self-evaluation.
- Lead on developing learners' citizenship, values to support all students in preparing them with life skills.
- To support equality and diversity in all aspects of the school community.

Students and Parents/Carers

- Provide feedback through surveys and consultations.
- Actively engage in the learning and development process.
- Parents/carers engage and support their child's learning.

External Agencies and Inspectors

- Provide independent evaluations and recommendations.
- Support compliance with regulatory standards.

Quality Assurance Processes

Lesson Observations and Learning Walks

- Conducted fortnightly to monitor teaching effectiveness and student engagement.

Student Progress Tracking

- Regular assessment of student attainment and progress against individual targets.
- Use of EHCP outcomes, baseline assessments, and personalised learning plans.
- Follow the plan-do-review approach to student learning, support and outcomes.
- Full oversight of each student and their support needs, through weekly Safeguarding and Student Support meetings.

Staff Appraisal and CPD

- Annual performance reviews and mid-year check-ins.
- Staff training aligned with school improvement priorities and SEN best practices.

Parent/Carer and Student Feedback

- Termly surveys and focus groups to assess satisfaction and gather insights.
- Annual parental consultation meetings to discuss student progress and provision.

Internal and External Audits

- Regular self-evaluation through the School Evaluation Framework (SEF).
- External moderation of assessments and compliance reviews with SEN regulations.

<u>Procedures</u>

The **Proprietor** will regularly review and evaluate Safe Start School School's practice through:

- Annual feedback from the school's Q.I.P or external advisor(s).

- Termly Full Governor meetings.
- Regular liaison with the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team.
- Weekly SLT meetings
- Half Termly Audit Reviews
- Staff appraisals and supervisions
- Create and implement Quality Assurance Calendar
- Create and review Job Plans for SLT
- Regularly review the staff structure

The Headteacher will regularly review and evaluate Safe Start School's practice through:

- A programme of support provided by the Q.I.P. or equivalent external advisor(s).
- The evaluation of relevant data at key points in the year.
- Regular strategy meetings with the Senior Leadership Team and Proprietors.
- A regular programme of line management meetings with members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Appraisal/Performance Management Meetings with members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Implementation of the Whole School Quality Improvement Plan.
- Review PCR meeting notes
- Attendance Data analysis
- Reviewing Safeguarding and Student Support minutes
- Review Assessment Data
- Review Pupil Progress Documents
- Review IEPs and Pupil Profiles

The Senior Leadership Team will regularly review and evaluate Safe Start School's practice through:

- Undertaking Curriculum Team reviews following the publication of external results.
- Undertaking Half Termly Audits including reviews of students' work and teachers' assessments.
- Regular line management meetings with SLT and joint lesson observations.
- Evaluation of relevant data including key points.
- Leading Examination Review meetings.
- Half Termly Audits – including Learning walks to all learning teams during each term. Each member of staff will receive a learning walk at least once per half-term. An email or verbal feedback may be given as a courtesy to the member of staff visited.
- Appraisal/Performance Management Meetings with Team Leaders – including lesson observations.
- Implementation of relevant areas of the Whole School Development Plan.

Review and Evaluation at Curriculum level (Teaching & Learning)

Curriculum Lead will regularly review and evaluate their team's/subject's practices through:

- Undertaking reviews of students' work and teachers' assessment by sampling sets of books from each member of their team as required by the QA calendar.
- Evidence from this monitoring should be available to support both subject and school self review and evaluation.
- Observing each member of the team teach on at least one occasion annually, while also carrying out Learning Walks at least once per half-term. An email or verbal feedback may be given as a courtesy to the member of staff visited.
- Ensuring that quality support is provided to any member of staff who is a cause of concern in lesson observations or consistently in Learning Walks.

- Undertaking a review of teachers' planning and record keeping by reviewing the lesson plans and mark books/teacher records of each member of their team at least once a term.
- Undertaking a review of the outcomes of progress monitoring for each year group (once a term). This review should be used to plan and implement interventions with teachers and/or students.
- Identifying inconsistencies in practice between different groups of students within their subjects.
- Evaluation of relevant data including key points.
- Feeding back in Examination Review meetings with SLT.
- Appraisal meetings with relevant team members – including possible lesson observations.
- Regular line management meetings with Subject Leaders & team members

Review and Evaluation at Behaviour Lead level (Pastoral)

The Behaviour Lead will;

- keep records of their monitoring and make these records available to SLT as required.
- observe each teaching assistant working with their group at least once each term.
- undertake a review of the outcomes of progress monitoring for each student communicating with parents and students, implementing intervention protocols.
- will monitor the attendance of students in their year by ensuring that the correct procedures are being followed by all pupils and staff members.
- undertake a survey of pupils' views of the school on an annual basis. The outcomes will be shared with the SLT and Governors to inform school self evaluation and review.

Review and Evaluation at Individual level (Teaching and Learning)

All classroom staff will regularly review and evaluate their practice through:

- Continual day to day reflection on the effectiveness of their practice.
- Evaluation of relevant data including census points.
- Line management meetings with their Subject Leader.
- Appraisal meetings with a more senior member of staff.

Additional Quality Assurance procedures

Additional specific procedures that are part of the above generic list **might** include:

- Additional observations of colleagues at work.
- The sampling of students' work.
- Reviews of teams or individuals by external consultants/professionals.
- Subject, thematic or Whole School Inspections carried out by OFSTED or HMI.
- Student Voice.
- Parental Questionnaires.
- Community Liaison.

Regular statutory Quality Assurance procedures

Additional statutory annual procedures are followed to ensure we meet agreed national standards in:

• Health and Safety (Including fire safety).
• Safeguarding Children.

As a school we need to ensure that we have outstanding practices, resources and evidence in the following areas:

• Quality of Teaching through Learning walks/Appreciative Enquiry (See Appendix 3) • Quality of Feedback.
• Quality of Schemes of Work.
• Assessment Focus.
• Work Scrutiny.
• Learning Environment Quality.
•Student perception.

Compliance and Review

- This policy is reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team.
- Updates reflect changes in legislation, inspection feedback, and school priorities.
- Any significant amendments are communicated to all stakeholders.

Conclusion

By implementing this Quality Assurance Policy, Safe Start School ensures that students receive the highest quality education, tailored to their needs, while maintaining a structured and continuously improving learning environment.

Middle Leaders How To: Book Scrutiny

In your middle leadership role, you may be asked to oversee or take part in a book scrutiny for your subject area. This could be for moderation within your own school; it could also be for a cluster of schools, as part of a learning collaborative or multi-academy trust.

Overview

Book scrutiny is a form of school self-evaluation and often forms part of an inspection. Regular book scrutinies help middle and senior leaders to establish the rate of pupil progress and monitor quality of teaching and learning across the school. Scrutinies can even help build evidence towards your School Improvement Plan (SIP). Book scrutinies can also help you, as a middle leader, to begin a conversation with ECTs, colleagues, departments or the whole school.

The Ofsted 'Quality of Education' focus means that knowing what is inside students' books has never been more important for middle leaders, as the focus has moved away from unnecessary internal assessments. Inspectors will be looking for evidence within children's workbooks of a well-implemented and practiced curriculum that is broad, deep and progressive.

What is a book scrutiny?

A book scrutiny should be a manageable sample of a range of classes and abilities, depending on the focus of the book scrutiny. To make sure that it is a productive use of your time, best practice suggests that the scrutiny should be time-limited and that teachers should be fed back to as quickly as possible afterwards.

Generally, a book scrutiny should have a specific focus to ensure the check can be thorough and productive.

What to check?

When looking through pupils' books, it is important to look at:

1 The Content

- Is the curriculum being covered in depth and breadth?
- Are children building on prior learning?
- Is there evidence of cross-curricular links?
- Where applicable, is there evidence of pupils applying literacy and numeracy skills that are comparable to the quality of their work in English and maths lessons?

2 Pupil Progress

- Are pupils on track to meet the expected standard or achieve greater depth by the end of the year? If not, is there evidence that pupils are being supported to make rapid progress?
- Is feedback/marking helping pupils to make progress?
- Does feedback/marking follow the school policy?
- Are barriers to learning being identified?
- Are misunderstandings and misconceptions addressed in a timely manner?

3 Quality of Learning

- Is the quality of pupils' work consistently high?
- Are pupils being challenged?
- Are pupils practising what they have learnt to deepen and solidify their learning?
- Does pupils' work show the knowledge and skills needed to meet the lesson objective or learning aim?

Class: **Class teacher:**	**Date of book scrutiny:** **Name of staff member conducting scrutiny:** **Focus of book scrutiny:**

Content	Pupil Progress	Quality of Learning	Points of Best Practice	General Feedback/ Comments

Middle Leaders: Learning Walks

What Is a Learning Walk?

As a middle or senior leader in school, a learning walk can be an effective way of seeing a snapshot of what's going on across the school. A learning walk is a visit to classrooms and learning areas across the school to provide a cross-sectional view of learning. A learning walk is not a lesson observation; it does not have a one-teacher focus but a whole-school angle. Often, evidence from a learning walk is used in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Each walk should focus on just one aspect of provision within the school, for example 'use of technology in classrooms'. The walk is intended to be non-threatening, constructive and a developmental tool for the whole school.

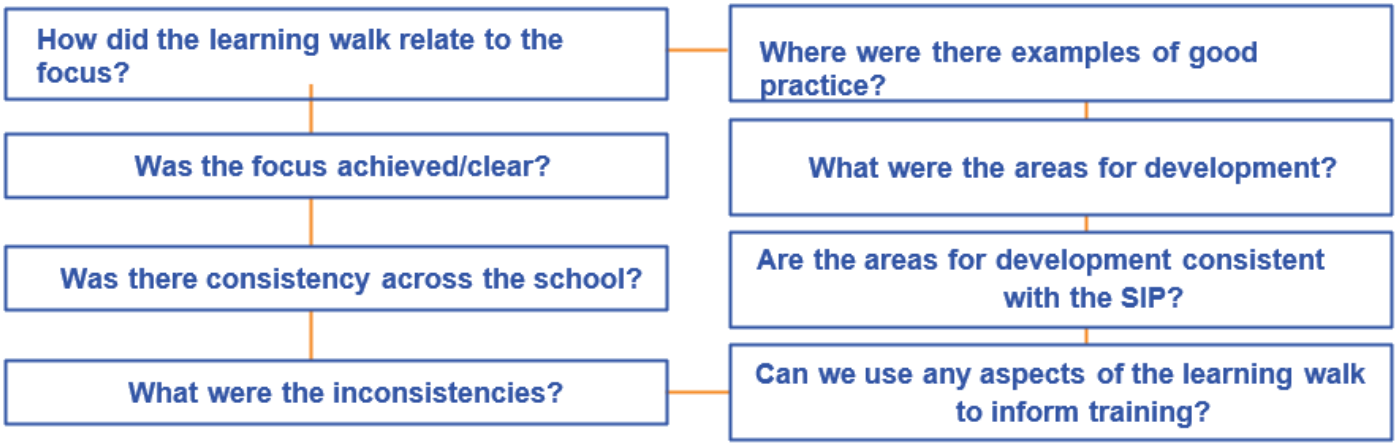
How Do I Plan a Learning Walk?

Be prepared: a learning walk should cause minimum disruption to teaching and learning. It is good practice to agree a time and date with class teachers and share with them the focus of the walk.The number of people and duration of visit to each area of the school should cause minimum disruption.

During the walk, visitors may want to discuss the learning taking place in a way that doesn't disrupt either children or adults within the class.

After the walk, it is good practice for the 'walkers' to analyse their evidence and then share it with teachers of classrooms that were visited. Some schools include learning walks as part of their observation schedule.

Questions to Ask after a Learning Walk



Learning Walk Planning Sheet Template

Learning Walk Planning Sheet	
Date:	
Walkers:	
Focus of Learning Walk:	

Classrooms to Visit:	
1.	3.
2.	4.

Questions to Ask Pupils:
1.
2.
3.
4.

Notes

Classroom 1	Classroom 2
Classroom 3	**Classroom 4**