

Rewarding Teachers and Raising Standards – Implementing the National Agreement on Rewards and Incentives

LIGHT-TOUCH VALIDATION OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Last October the Rewards and Incentives Group (RIG)¹ issued the first in a series of RIG Notes on key issues relating to pay and performance management. The first note provided information about the RIG and the Agreement on Rewards and Incentives for Post-Threshold Teachers and Members of the Leadership Group that was signed on 9 January 2004 (the January Agreement). RIG Note 1 was published on TeacherNet (see www.teachernet.gov.uk for copies) and distributed by partner organisations.

As part of the January Agreement, a system of light-touch validation of schools' performance management systems was proposed to take effect from September 2005 to provide a light-touch assurance that schools' performance management systems were based on current regulations and applied consistently across all schools. RIG Note 1 set out the principles on which light-touch validation will be based. It also provided a performance management checklist as a tool to help schools and governors to evaluate their performance management systems in advance of light-touch validation. This note provides schools and LEAs with information about how light-touch validation will be implemented in schools from September 2005.

How light-touch validation will work in 2005/06

In 2005/06, in the vast majority of schools, the light-touch validation of schools' performance management systems will be conducted by the External Advisers selected by governing bodies to provide advice on headteacher appraisal.

Correspondence from CEA to governing bodies and headteachers about the arrangements for the next round of headteacher appraisal (Round 6) gave schools notice of this and drew their attention to RIG Note 1 and the performance management checklist. Schools are being invited to provide their External Adviser with a copy of their completed checklist in advance of the Adviser visit.

During the course of the visit, External Advisers will ask headteachers and governors questions about their schools' performance management systems, focusing on some of the areas covered by the performance management checklist. To inform the discussion and as evidence of a school's practice, the External Adviser may ask to see key documents, such as the school's pay policy or the headteacher's report to the governing body on performance management, or they may ask to see a few anonymised examples of teachers' performance management objectives or teachers' annual pay statements.

¹ Members of RIG are ATL, DfES, NASUWT, NEOST, PAT and SHA

No new documentation should be generated for this process. The only documentation that External Advisers will ask for is material that schools should already have in place.

The nature of the discussion should be exploratory and supportive. It should give the school an opportunity to describe the systems in place and to reflect on their effectiveness. Where the discussion identifies areas for development, External Advisers will suggest sources of further information and pointers for how schools could start to address them.

The only exception to these arrangements applies to schools in the New Relationship with Schools pilot who have been allocated a School Improvement Partner (SIP). In these schools light-touch validation will be carried out by the SIP who will also be providing advice to the governing body on headteacher appraisal. The SIP will follow the same process as the External Adviser for reviewing the effectiveness of the school's performance management systems by exploring some areas in discussion and seeking evidence of how they are working in practice.

Light-touch validation is a separate process from the advice given to governing bodies about headteacher appraisal but there may be instances when an area for development identified in the context of the light-touch validation process is relevant to the coverage of the headteacher's objectives for the coming year. This should be reflected in the advice provided to governing bodies by either the External Adviser or the SIP where it is appropriate to do so.

Arrangements from 2006/07

As announced at the launch of the New Relationship with Schools in March this year, SIPs will be taking on the performance management functions currently provided by External Advisers in all schools. Having light-touch validation and headteacher appraisal undertaken by one person reduces the number of partners working with schools, and should reduce the associated bureaucracy. It should also help to ensure that performance management and school improvement reinforce each other. These arrangements will be phased in as SIPs are allocated to schools by local authorities.

For further information about the role of SIPs and the New Relationship with Schools see www.teachernet.gov.uk/newrelationship.