



Barthol Chapel School Continuous Improvement Policy

Introduction

Barthol Chapel School is committed to implementing effective processes of continuous improvement in order to promote a culture of self-evaluation for self-improvement for all learners, staff and parents. Our processes take full account of national & local priorities and advice. Barthol Chapel School's Vision, Values & Aims are clear, in line with a Curriculum for Excellence and embody the views of pupils, staff and parents. They provide the basis for developing policies and guidelines and the foundation for self-evaluation. The school is developing a range of processes for self-evaluation, which measure attainment and achievements and allow pupils, staff and parents to identify the strengths and development needs of the school. They also establish our improvement planning priorities.

By implementing effective continuous improvement procedures, we aim to raise standards of attainment and achievement, thereby enabling all our learners to reach their full potential. To this end, a cycle of activities is carried out throughout the school year (See Barthol Chapel Continuous Improvement Calendar, Appendix 1), which enables all stakeholders to translate our policy statement into practice. These activities are linked directly to "How Good is our School? (4th edition)" which is a toolkit use at Barthol Chapel School to engage in evidence-based analysis of what is working well and what needs to improve to have greater positive impact on learners. Barthol Chapel School aims to have robust internal approaches to self-evaluation and to value the objectivity which external partners can bring. We understand that self-evaluation for self-improvement is an ongoing process and we continually reflect and evaluate our work and use the evidence from these activities to plan our future improvement priorities.

Effective self-evaluation for self-improvement at Barthol Chapel School is seen as an "inwards, outwards, forwards" approach which answer the questions:

- **How are we doing?**
- **How do we know?**
- **What are we going to do now?**



Through this approach, we look inwards to analyse our work, look outwards to find out more about what is working well for others locally and nationally and look forwards to gauge what continuous improvement will look like in the longer term.

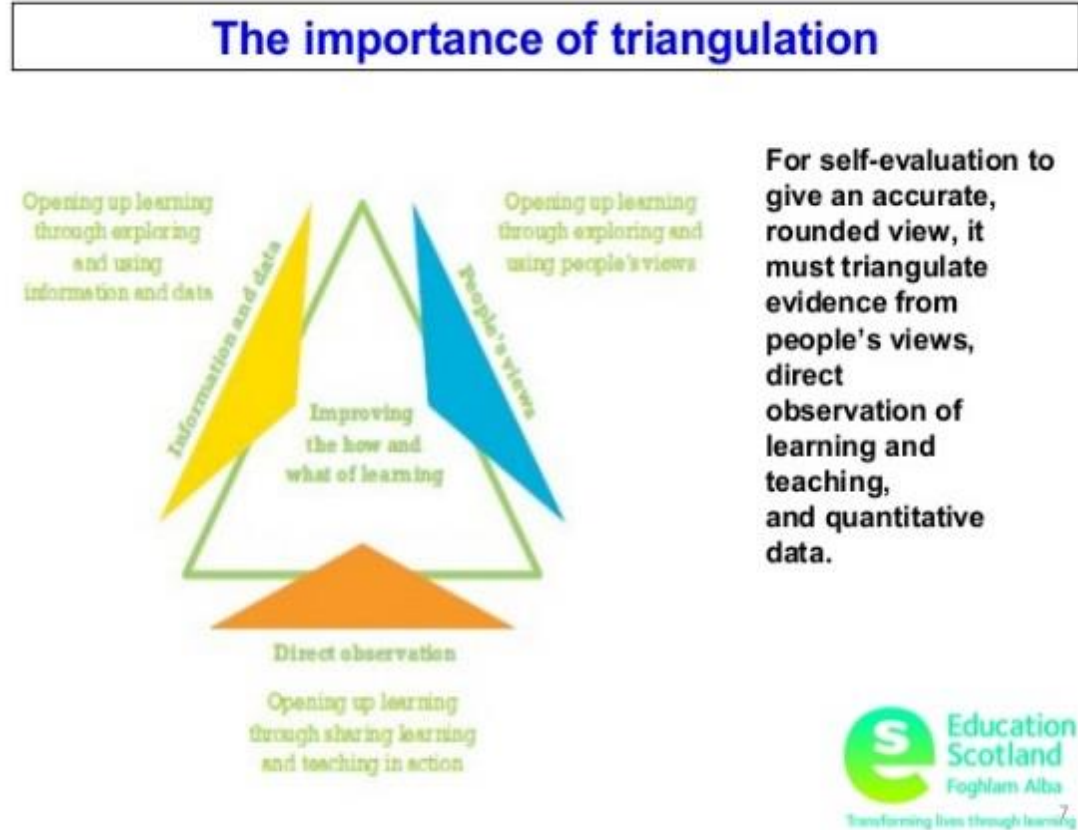
Self-Evaluation Evidence Gathering

Triangulation is the process used at Barthol Chapel School to ensure evaluative statements about strengths and aspects for development are grounded in a robust evidence base. The triangulation of evidence-based information and data, people's views and direct observation of practice involve all school staff, learners, partners and other stakeholders.

We collect a wide range of Quantitative Data, for example, about attainment, attendance etc. Effective self-evaluation involves rigorous interrogation of this data by staff who use this data to recognise emerging issues and when specific interventions are necessary.

Staff, pupils, parents/carers, partners and other stakeholders such as the local authority have regular opportunities to share their views about the school. At Barthol Chapel School, People's Views are gathered through surveys, focus groups, ongoing professional dialogue, learning visits and minutes of collegiate meetings.

Direct Observations of practice takes place during a range of learning contexts. Observations are always linked to agreed criteria and a shared understanding of their purpose with feedback used to support self-evaluation and improvement.



The Quality Indicator Framework

The quality indicator framework is used by all school staff at Barthol Chapel School. Other stakeholders also see quality indicators and themes which relate to their role in the school and can use the framework to support evaluations of their work. The framework emphasises and supports collaborative self-evaluation within Barthol Chapel School, between schools and with the wider range of stakeholders who contribute to children and young people's learning and development. Children and young people's active participation in self-evaluation is an important factor at Barthol Chapel School.

It is not always necessary to use a complete quality indicator or the entire framework for effective self-evaluation. At Barthol Chapel School a three year cycle is in place (See 3 Year Self-Evaluation for Self-Improvement Cycle, Appendix 2). This enables us to build a complete picture of our work and capacity for improvement over time and ensure no important aspects are overlooked. Quality indicators or themes from different quality indicators may be bundled together to enable a focus on a particular area of work of the school such as family learning. There will be times when more specific self-evaluation questions can create a focused context for self-evaluation.

At Barthol Chapel School, the Head Teacher has overall responsibility for ensuring the school has a clearly communicated vision and priorities for improvement. All staff are responsible for ensuring active self-evaluation in partnership with all stakeholders is at the heart of school improvement. At Barthol Chapel School, self-evaluation is not seen as an "add-on" or involve lots of additional time and bureaucracy. It focuses on the key work of our school – learning and teaching. The evidence we gather arises from ongoing work where we demonstrate impact in relation to improved outcomes for our learners. We continuously track and monitor learners' successes and achievements and use our self-evaluation to identify where the school is performing well and where it could do better.

The framework consists of a set of 15 Quality Indicators (QIs) which enables us to answer three questions linked to important aspects of the work and life of Barthol Chapel School. The quality indicators are divided into three categories:

- **Leadership and Management:** How good is our leadership and approach to improvement?
- **Learning Provision:** How good is the quality of care and education we offer?
- **Successes and Achievements:** How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our learners?

Putting Policy into Practice at Barthol Chapel School

Barthol Chapel School Continuous Improvement Calendar (Appendix 1) provides a comprehensive calendar of continuous improvement activities at Barthol Chapel School. It also outlines the responsibility and role of staff in this important process.

How do we Gather People's Views?

The morale of staff, pupils and families and their levels of commitment should be high and are sustained through a sense of ownership and active experience of personal responsibility. All members of staff at Barthol Chapel School have a responsibility to work towards this ideal. Joint (collegial) working is a distinctive feature of school improvement at Barthol Chapel School and is the responsibility of **all**. Staff, learners and adults, parents, education authority personnel, and colleagues in partner agencies all have important perspectives on learning. Individually, each perspective is valuable and can contribute to successful change. Taken together, people's views can be a major force for innovation and improvement.



What are the views of our learners?

Our children, young people and adults have daily, first-hand experience of learning and teaching at Barthol Chapel School and can be responsive and perceptive when encouraged to express their views. The best contributions emerge when everyone feels confident that their views are valued. They have a distinct view of how their teacher and school is helping and challenging them to learn, and a clear view about how learning and teaching builds their confidence and skills.

At Barthol Chapel School, we use both informal and formal ways to elicit and share learners' views: informally staff work with individuals in lessons or in learning experiences out with the classroom; or by gathering views more formally through daily, weekly, monthly or longer-term arrangements. Staff should elicit views in the best means to suit the needs of their class.

Encouraging learners to discuss their views about learning with each other and with their teachers, including their successes and disappointments, can provide powerful evidence for self-evaluation of learning in the classroom and of our success as a school and this should be undertaken routinely within the classroom.

The findings of such conversations will be shared to help to improve learning and teaching. The process helps learners to reflect on their own skills for learning, work and life as well as their communication skills and confidence. The Head Teacher regularly meets with the Pupil Voice Group to discuss all aspects of school improvement and will give pupils a voice in the strategic direction of learning in the school. Once a year a more formal questionnaire is issued to canvas all pupils to help guide the learning. Questionnaires/interviews will be a routine part of school life and linked to aspects of the School Improvement Plan. Blending of learners' individual and collective views with other information can help to ensure high quality and improving experiences for them.

What are the views of parents/carers at Barthol Chapel School?

Gathering parents' views on their children's learning at Barthol Chapel School helps to strengthen the partnership between school and home and reinforces the key role which parents have in their children's learning. Not all parents/carers are confident about being involved, but by involving parents in all aspects of their children's learning, seeking out their views and aspirations, and enlisting their help, advice and support, the likelihood of successful outcomes for their children is increased.

Parents provide a distinct perspective on learning and teaching which can help staff to improve learning for young people and also, in some cases, for the parents themselves. Some parents will have regular involvement in encouraging, supporting or sharing their children's learning, at home or in the community. Some will have an astute understanding of their children's progress. They will know exactly what they want for their children and what their children expect and will have a keen interest in homework, assessments and all other indications of progress. Other parents' perspectives may rely on varying degrees of informal feedback from their children following a day at school, or from formal reports from teachers. It is important for teachers to engage with parents/carers to discover and share their views to help the parents to support their children's learning and foster success.

The Head Teacher will regularly meet with the Parent Council and they will be asked to help shape the strategic direction of the school as well as inviting parents and carers to help shape development work in school in a variety of ways, for example their involvement in producing the Standards & Quality Report and consultation in drawing up the School Improvement Plan. Plentiful opportunities will be afforded to parents at Barthol Chapel to work in partnership with staff to develop school policies and hear about curricular developments through a range of curricular evenings and open afternoons and through the Parent Focus Group. Opinion will be sought on these occasions so that the format and effectiveness of them can be gauged. Once a year the Head Teacher will issue a formal questionnaire to ascertain opinion on the life of the school. The results of these questionnaires will be used to inform school improvement. Parents Interviews will be used to canvas opinion on a range of initiatives with parents asked to evaluate our effectiveness in key areas.

What are the views of our staff and other professionals?

The Getting it Right for Every Child approach places increased emphasis on child-centered partnerships and collaborations. The curriculum and support for some children may involve contributions from a wide range of staff. It is important that all contributors to a learner's education are fully involved in self-evaluation and improvement. This will include staff from other agencies, colleagues and other educational establishments.

Teachers have a detailed knowledge about the quality of learning and teaching based on their professional expertise and day-to-day experiences. Other colleagues may be responsible for improving specific aspects or for an individual learner's progress. At all levels, teachers have a key responsibility for evaluating the impact of learning and teaching and applying their findings as they develop their practice further to meet the expectations of Curriculum for Excellence. A culture of collegiate improvement will be fostered at Barthol Chapel School, where all staff are encouraged to engage in dialogue about the best approaches to school improvement. Staff will be routinely audited when new initiatives are being developed and should be honest in their feedback.

As detailed in the Continuous Improvement Calendar, all staff are involved in evaluating and improving the life of the school making use of HGIOS4. This detailed evaluation for improvement will then help to inform school improvement priorities. The school vision, values and aims will be routinely reviewed so that we can measure our progress towards the aspirational vision and aims and so that we continue to strive for excellence.

What are the views of the wider Barthol Chapel Community?

Members of the community can be both learners themselves and supporters of learning. A community's approach to learning can have a direct effect on the attitude, commitment and ultimately success of learners. It is important to capture and combine all of these perspectives and use them to inform development. We plan to use a combination of questionnaires, meetings, workshops and working groups to:

- **explore strengths in learning and teaching approaches and the ways particular learners and groups of learners respond to different approaches;**
- **plan changes to learning and teaching required to promote the higher order learning skills embedded in the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes and, for example, in planning to develop literacy and numeracy across learning;**
- **gather detailed evidence from staff to help evaluate establishment-wide approaches to improve learning and teaching, such as analysing data about learners' progress;**
- **establish and collate staff views on aspects of the life of the school such as ways of promoting health and wellbeing;**
- **explore the impact of different kinds of support, including aspects of pupil support or other resources deployed to help meet learning needs; and**
- **identify examples of effective practice for sharing more widely.**

Drawing the strands together – Identifying Priorities

Contributions to decisions about priorities are an important part of professional practice for all staff. The process of establishing priorities for development is more effective when it is based on a clear picture of current practice, drawn from a range of sources of evidence. It also requires a shared understanding of the purpose and expectations of learning and the curriculum. It should always have a focus on the impact of decisions on learners' progress and achievement.

Information & Data Analysis

At Barthol Chapel School we recognise the value of using a wide range of data in analysing the impact of the school's vision for learning. We use the results of this analysis to focus on improvement activities on action which will have significant impact on pupils' learning experiences.

Staff seek and use data and information from a wide range of sources, including from stakeholders and other sources which the school itself has identified as useful to help identify and tackle improvement challenges.

Staff use comparative data judiciously to reflect on, and take action to improve the learning of all pupils.

Across all areas of the curriculum, teachers will gather evidence of progress as part of learner's day-to-day learning. Evidence can be drawn, for example, from discussions with learners, and observations of their skills in communicating in different ways and settings, solving problems creatively, and justifying their opinions of their own and others' work. Learners can demonstrate their progress in skills, knowledge and understanding as, for example, they develop their practical skills, express increasingly complex concepts and ideas, apply their creative skills to produce more complex pieces of work and demonstrate increasing skills and confidence in presentations. Termly Quality Assurance of Planning for Learning is carried out at Barthol Chapel School, (Appendix 3).

Assessment should also apply to learning outside the classroom. Schools have information about success in an increasingly wide range of achievements. Monitoring such a wide range of achievements is not without challenges. However, information about engagement in activities beyond the classroom can help to support discussions with individuals their learning and development across the attributes and capabilities of Curriculum for Excellence. All of this in turn can lead to greater success.



Data and information on progress and achievements at points of transition such as transfer from class to class, stage to stage, or school to school are particularly important. Through being rich in information and data about learners' progress at these times, and basing judgements on knowledge of individuals, teachers can ensure that learning takes full account of prior achievements and of individual needs. Improvements in progression across transitions bring about real and lasting improvements to learning.

Comparative information can be particularly helpful for teachers. It can help them to 'benchmark' aspects of the school's achievements. Benchmarking involves learning from others. It helps to identify strengths and aspects where levels of success might be improved. Often, such comparisons are made using data about learners' success shared across schools, perhaps schools with learners of similar needs and backgrounds and sometimes using national data. Using information in these ways helps teachers to learn from others who may be facing similar challenges in meeting learning needs, and allows them to learn from a range of different solutions and approaches. At Barthol Chapel School we will seek access to comparator schools to allow such comparisons to take place.

The Head Teacher will work with staff to ensure all staff understand how to interpret assessment information and data, particularly standardised assessment results. All staff at Barthol Chapel School will engage in a "*Targeting Success Meeting*" (Appendix 4) to target set/track progress three times across a session (November, February & June). The Additional Support for Learning Teacher will discuss and refine Individual Education Plans (IEPs) with members of staff. The approach to tracking and target setting will depend upon the needs of the pupils.

Tracking/target setting focuses on improving the outcomes of learning and teaching. Evaluation of learners' coursework can help to:

- **show the rate of learners' progress over a given period of time;**
- **indicate how successful the learning experiences have been in achieving the intended outcomes, and at what pace;**
- **show the degree to which learning and teaching innovations and policies are being implemented and how they may be impacting on learning; and indicate the level of personalisation that needs to be planned for learners.**
- **use formative, baseline or standardised assessments to identify learners' strengths and needs and identify the next steps towards realistic but challenging outcomes, and to ensure continuity of learning across key transition points particularly in literacy and numeracy;**
- **discussions about learners' progress with colleagues and with learners themselves;**
- **progress in learning and the full range of their achievements, across all aspects of the curriculum;**
- **comparative assessment information from internal or external assessments or other sources;**

Individual pupils may be tracked over the course of a term to measure the impact of targets that have been set. Approaches to this will be agreed with the class teacher. Sampling of groups prior or after tracking will be an important part of our approach to moderating the standards within CFE.

Improving the How & What of Learning

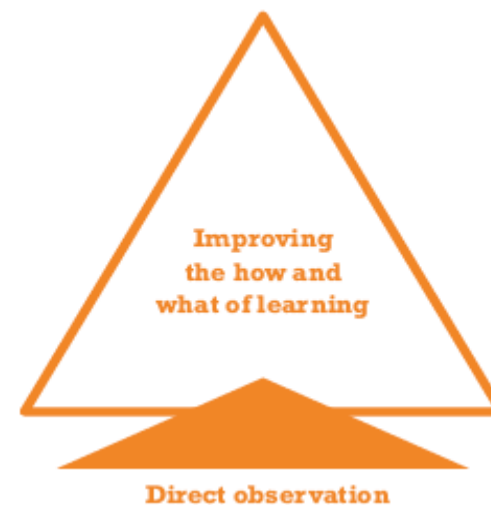
Staff discuss their practice, share knowledge of their craft and observe and help one another. Feedback and self-evaluation for self-improvement should be embedded into classroom routines so that there is a focus on continuously improving learning and teaching. Staff are committed to identifying areas for improvement. Learning permeates priorities in all improvement plans at Barthol Chapel School.

Direct Observation

Increasingly within Curriculum for Excellence it is essential for teachers to understand how their work relates to the whole curriculum experienced by each learner and how the learning and teaching approaches which a learner experiences fit together. For example, the extent to which the expectations and best features of children's learning experiences are maintained and built upon as they progress into the next stage of their learning. Working with colleagues enables teachers to share and reflect on these aspects, consolidate innovations and sustain improvement.

At Barthol Chapel School, as well as planned visits from the Head Teacher, teachers can increase the depth of their understanding of what makes for successful teaching and its impact on learning through evaluating the quality of learning directly in each other's lessons and learning activities. (Appendix 5). They can develop shared expectations, increase their own expertise in the art and craft of teaching, gain a deeper understanding of how people learn and contribute to a collegiate purpose by reflecting with each other on what they learn from seeing. Staff are encouraged to visit their colleagues in class in order to widen their experiences of approaches to learning.

Much of the information and data that schools have will come from assessment practice. Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching and flows from the planned curriculum. It provides an emerging picture of learners' achievements and can be a motivation to do better and progress further in learning.



Direct Observation & Subsequent Reflection & Dialogue

Visits to lessons should be part of a formative approach to improvement in learning and teaching and for evaluating the impact of changes in practice. Successful approaches to direct observation of learning depend upon careful preparation and discussion about sensitivities or potential misunderstandings. It is important that learning visits are constructive and have a positive impact. Professional dialogue is essential in all cases and it needs to be both exploratory and formative. It is important to focus a learning visit clearly on outcomes for learners and to avoid becoming overly engaged by processes.

Before a learning visit, teachers will find it beneficial to have discussed the purpose and intended outcomes of the visit, and may have explored how the visit will be carried out, for example:

- how they will manage the visit and engage in constructive professional dialogue that leads to improvement;
- how the visit might be complemented by future learning visits, perhaps with visits to and from the teachers involved to other classes, whether the nature of the lesson will enable the visitor to work alongside a colleague, for example in a cooperative teaching approach.

Starting a learning visit to class: 'What is it like to be a learner in this lesson?'

Initially, staff visiting lessons may find it helpful to identify and consider the likely impact of important contextual features which can influence the quality of learners' experiences; features such as the environment for learning, or ethos. Then, by moving quickly to focus directly on learners themselves, they can recognise the extent to which each is engaged in learning, perhaps autonomous in learning or, on the other hand, when they might have withdrawn from learning.

As an example of the kind of things staff may want to consider in an initial lesson visit, here are a few prompts that might be used in a visit to a lesson in mathematics. Not all of these features are straightforward, and staff would want to ensure they focused directly on the impact on learners of each of these aspects.

- **The classroom is well managed, with resources that are readily available, well organised and appropriate to the activities being carried out.**
- **The lesson has a clear learning intention. It is well structured with an introduction to share the objective with learners, and explain the main points clearly, and an ending to review the key ideas.**
- **The pace of work is brisk. Young people's interest and attention is sustained through interactive teaching and group and individual work.**
- **Learners are well motivated and work conscientiously.**

- Teachers use questioning effectively to: involve as many learners as possible; give learners time to think before providing an answer; seek extended explanations rather than one-word responses;
- Teachers allow time to explore reasons for wrong answers; and take account of prior learning when questioning individual learning when questioning individuals.
- Teachers set high standards for learners work.
- Where appropriate, teachers take opportunities to ensure that learners develop skills in mental calculation and in solving problems, practise and apply mathematical skills in real life contexts and situations across the curriculum, and use ICT effectively.
- Teachers listen carefully to learners answers to questions and modify their teaching accordingly. They give constructive feedback on oral and written work.
- Learners are supported according to their needs, groupings are appropriate, the work is sufficiently challenging for all young people and they are helped when they experience difficulties.

As staff visit each other's classes, they will be analysing how well learning and teaching is leading to the development of the skills, attributes and capabilities embedded within the experiences and outcomes. They will want to consider, for example, how the learning activities are addressing the development of: skills in literacy and numeracy; being creative; learning independently and in groups; evaluating; reasoning; self-awareness; assessing risk; critical thinking; developing informed, ethical views; applying learning in new situations; problem solving; using technology; taking the initiative and leading; and understanding their own and others' cultures are supported to take on leadership roles of working in pairs and teams.

Sometimes staff may identify the need to look at the impact of learning on longer-term outcomes, perhaps related to the school improvement plan. In that case, they may focus a learning visit and related discussions with learners on areas such as:

- how literacy and numeracy are being developed, extended and reinforced across all learning;
- how learning activities promote the aspects of health and wellbeing which are the responsibility of all staff;
- the extent to which learning currently addresses a broad or narrow range of outcomes and how to extend this to cover the broader range of outcomes intended within Curriculum for Excellence; and
- whether learning is sufficiently active, practical and applied.

The areas being explored should be shared and discussed in a climate of trust and professional partnership. It is important for teachers to both undertake learning visits to others' classes and to have others visit their class. By doing both they learn from and with those around them. All involved need to know the intentions of the lesson or learning activity to be observed, to enable them to discuss the extent to which the experiences led to the intended outcomes for learners, best practice, and shared this practice widely. Most teachers also reflected frequently on their own practice.

Sharing Learning & Teaching

Many teachers find it helpful to assess jointly or compare their marking and feedback approaches with colleagues (moderation). Such approaches help them to agree and confirm standards and to clarify expectations and take steps to promote improvement. They can also use external assessments to reflect on their establishment's internal assessments of the levels achieved by learners. Overall these approaches help to share and set standards across the profession. Regular monitoring and sampling of learners classwork is carried out by the Head Teacher. (Appendix 6)

External Evaluations of Quality at Barthol Chapel School

Quality Improvement visits by a Quality Improvement Officer are a means of monitoring and validating the progress made by the school against the Quality Indicators from HGIOS. Prior to the visit an agenda is distributed and any relevant evidence is collated for the Quality Improvement Officer to scrutinise.

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools carry out full inspections of schools. Reports of these inspections are published on Education Scotland Website. Barthol Chapel School was last inspected March 2006.

Professional Review & Development

Teachers are responsible for their own professional development. It is their responsibility to consider their own professional needs and can expect a system of supportive professional review and development (PRD). This is to assist teaching staff to identify constructive ways to engage in self-evaluation and professional learning in order to maintain and enhance their own professional knowledge, skills and practice. At Barthol Chapel School, teaching staff will be invited to attend an annual Professional Review and Development meeting with the Head Teacher or appropriate line manager.

Employee Annual Review

At Barthol Chapel School, support staff will be invited to attend The Employee Annual Review (EAR). It is intended to be a meaningful job focused conversation between an employee and their manager or supervisor to, review work performance over the last year, recognise and celebrate achievements, agree the work priorities for the coming year and plan how to achieve these and identify the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to do the job effectively.