

Title	Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Policy
Cross References	External: • DFE Alternative Provision Statutory Guidance • DFE Non-school Alternative Provision Voluntary • National Standards • Ofsted Education Inspection Framework and relevant inspection toolkits • Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 Internal: • Safer Recruitment Policy • Self-Evaluation Framework • Online Lesson Observation Criteria • Performance Management Policy • Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy • Complaints Policy
Date	October 2026

1. Introduction

Apricot Online Ltd is committed to providing safe, high-quality and responsive alternative education. Quality assurance and continuous improvement are embedded within our operational and academic practice so that we can evaluate the impact of our provision, identify strengths and areas for development, and demonstrate accountability to students, parents/carers, commissioners and partner agencies.

As an online alternative provision provider, Apricot Online is not inspected in the same way as a maintained school or academy. However, many of our commissioning schools and local authorities are subject to statutory duties, oversight and inspection. Our quality assurance arrangements are therefore designed to provide commissioners with clear evidence that placements are safe, appropriate, purposeful and regularly reviewed.

Our approach also takes account of relevant Department for Education guidance and standards for alternative provision and of the expectations placed on commissioners when assuring themselves about the quality and suitability of external provision.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out Apricot Online's framework for:

- maintaining and improving the quality of teaching and learning;
- monitoring student engagement, progress and outcomes;
- ensuring provision remains appropriate to individual needs and agreed placement objectives;
- maintaining effective safeguarding and professional standards;
- reviewing curriculum, schemes of work and assessment practice;
- using feedback, complaints, concerns and stakeholder voice to improve services;
- supporting staff development through observation, feedback and CPD;
- monitoring the quality, reliability and accessibility of our online systems and service delivery;
- providing commissioners with meaningful quality information; and
- ensuring that actions identified through quality assurance are followed through and evaluated.

3. Quality Assurance Principles

Apricot Online's quality assurance framework is based on the following principles:

- Student-centred – quality is judged by the safety, experience, engagement, progress and outcomes of the young people we support.
- Evidence-informed – decisions are based on a balanced range of qualitative and quantitative evidence rather than a single measure.
- Reflective – staff and leaders are encouraged to evaluate practice honestly and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Proportionate – monitoring is purposeful and appropriate to the nature and scale of our online provision.
- Collaborative – students, parents/carers, staff, commissioners and partner agencies contribute to our understanding of quality.
- Responsive – concerns, emerging themes and changes in student need lead to timely action.
- Accountable – improvement actions have clear ownership, timescales and follow-up.

4. Areas of Quality Assurance

4.1 Teaching and Learning

The quality of teaching is monitored through a combination of lesson observation, review of recorded lessons where routinely and lawfully available, professional discussion, student work, assessment information and other relevant evidence.

- Quality assurance will consider, as appropriate:
- planning and sequencing of learning;
- subject knowledge and curriculum accuracy;
- adaptive teaching and responsiveness to SEND, anxiety, EBSA and other barriers to engagement;
- clarity of explanations, questioning and assessment;
- student engagement and participation;
- appropriate challenge and progress from individual starting points;
- feedback and next steps;
- professional relationships, safeguarding and boundaries; and
- effective and appropriate use of the online learning environment.

Observation and review should identify strengths as well as development needs. Feedback will inform coaching, CPD, performance management and wider organisational learning.

4.2 Curriculum and Schemes of Work

Department Heads will review schemes of work and curriculum materials at least annually and when significant curriculum, qualification or specification changes occur.

Reviews will consider whether programmes are coherent, appropriately sequenced, relevant to the students being supported and aligned with applicable curriculum or qualification requirements. Where students are working towards external qualifications, relevant awarding-body requirements will also be considered.

4.3 Student Progress, Engagement and Placement Objectives

Quality assurance will consider student progress in the context of individual starting points, attendance, engagement, SEND, health, emotional wellbeing, prior educational experience and the objectives agreed with the commissioner.

Weekly and half-termly reporting will be sampled to support consistency, accuracy and usefulness. Where appropriate, monitoring will include attendance, engagement, academic progress, agreed outcomes and any emerging barriers to learning.

Where a placement is not achieving its intended purpose, Apricot Online will work with the commissioner and relevant parties to review the programme, support or objectives.

4.4 Safeguarding

Safeguarding is integral to quality assurance and is not treated as a separate administrative exercise. Safeguarding procedures, reporting practice, staff training and online working arrangements will be reviewed regularly.

Themes arising from safeguarding concerns, low-level concerns, incidents or practice reviews will be considered for wider learning while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.

4.5 Student, Parent/Carer and Commissioner Voice

Apricot Online will seek feedback from students, parents/carers and commissioners to understand their experience of the provision and identify opportunities for improvement.

Feedback may be gathered through questionnaires, telephone or online contact, review meetings, end-of-placement feedback and routine communication.

Feedback will be considered alongside other evidence. Individual comments will not be treated as definitive evidence of quality in isolation, but recurring themes will be reviewed and acted upon where appropriate.

4.6 Complaints, Concerns and Incidents

Complaints, concerns and incidents are important sources of quality information. Apricot Online will review relevant themes and outcomes to identify whether changes are required to policy, practice, training, communication, systems or service delivery.

Learning from complaints or incidents will be shared appropriately with relevant staff while protecting confidentiality.

4.7 Staff Development and CPD

Quality assurance findings will inform staff training and continuing professional development. Department Heads and senior leaders will consider whether individual or recurring themes indicate a need for coaching, guidance, resource development or organisation-wide CPD.

Effective practice identified through QA may be shared across departments to support consistency and professional learning.

4.8 Platform and Service Quality

Apricot Online will monitor the reliability, accessibility and effectiveness of the technology used to deliver and support its services. Feedback from staff, students and commissioners, together with operational issues and technical incidents, will inform ongoing platform development.

Significant technical problems that affect access to education, safeguarding or service delivery will be reviewed to identify corrective and preventative action.

5. Self-Evaluation and Improvement Planning

Apricot Online will maintain a process of self-evaluation that draws together evidence from teaching quality, student outcomes and engagement, safeguarding, stakeholder feedback, curriculum review, complaints, staff development and operational performance.

The Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF) will be reviewed at least annually and may be updated during the year where significant evidence or developments arise.

Areas identified for improvement will be translated into clear actions. Improvement planning should identify:

- the issue or development priority;
- the action required;
- the person responsible;
- the intended timescale;
- the evidence that will demonstrate improvement; and
- the date or mechanism for review.

Senior leaders will monitor progress against improvement actions so that quality assurance results in demonstrable change rather than simply generating records.

Quality Assurance Calendar

The following calendar provides the core quality-assurance cycle. Additional scrutiny may be undertaken at any time where concerns, changes or emerging evidence indicate that this is necessary

Area of scrutiny	Method	Responsibility	Frequency
Client / Commissioner Relationships	Review Meeting, feedback and placement review	Operations Director (OD) / relevant senior staff	Termly and as required
Teaching Quality	Lesson observations / recorded lesson review, feedback and CPD	Department Heads (DHs) and Managing Director (MD)	Termly Cycle
Curriculum / Schemes of Work	Review and Update against curriculum, qualification and student needs	DH's	At Least Annually
Student Progress and Engagement	Review of attendance, engagement, progress and agreed placement objectives	DH's / relevant operational staff	Ongoing, formal review at reporting points
Weekly Reports	Quality and consistency Spot Checks	DHs	Weekly
Half-Term reports	Quality accuracy and consistency sampling	DH's and MD	Half-Termly
Overall Effectiveness	SEF review and improvement planning	OD, MD, DH's	At least Annually
Safeguarding	Review of Procedures, themes, training and practice	DSL/Safeguarding Team	Ongoing with Formal annual review
Policies	Planned review and update	Operations Director (OD)	Annually
Complaints / Concerns / Incidents	Theme and learning review	Relevant senior lead	Ongoing
Platform / Service Improvement	B2B Conferencing with Engineers	MD	Ongoing
Parent – Carer Satisfaction	Questionnaire and/or direct	OD and Office Admin (OA)	During and/or end of placement
Student Voice	Questionnaire, telephone/online feedback and review discussion	OD and Office Admin (OA)	Ongoing and/or end of placement
Staff Development	CPD needs analysis informed by QA findings	DH's	Ongoing, reviewed at least termly
Improvement Actions	Action log / improvement plan follow-up	Named action / owner. Senior Leadership	According to agreed timescales

7. Responsibilities

Managing Director and Senior Leadership

- provide strategic oversight of quality and continuous improvement;
- review overall effectiveness and organisational priorities;
- ensure significant quality concerns are addressed; and
- ensure improvement actions are appropriately resourced and monitored.

Operations Director

- coordinate policy review and relevant operational QA processes;
- support commissioner, parent/carers and student feedback arrangements;
- identify operational themes and improvement opportunities; and
- support evidence gathering and follow-up across the organisation.

Department Heads

- monitor teaching quality and provide constructive feedback;
- review curriculum and schemes of work;
- sample reporting and monitor academic quality;
- identify and support staff development needs; and
- escalate significant or recurring quality concerns.

DSL and Safeguarding Team

- monitor safeguarding practice and emerging themes;
- ensure learning from safeguarding activity informs improvement where appropriate; and
- support the review of safeguarding procedures and training.

All Staff

- engage constructively with quality-assurance activity;
- reflect on feedback and implement agreed actions;
- raise concerns about quality, safeguarding or service delivery promptly;
- contribute to continuous improvement; and
- maintain accurate and timely records relevant to their role.

8. Recording, Reporting and Confidentiality

Quality-assurance records will be proportionate to the activity undertaken and stored securely. Personal information will be handled in accordance with Apricot Online's data-protection requirements.

Information shared with commissioners will be relevant, accurate and appropriate to the placement or service being reviewed. Internal QA information relating to individual employees will be handled confidentially and in accordance with relevant employment and performance-management procedures.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where changes to statutory guidance, commissioning expectations, organisational practice, inspection arrangements or identified quality risks make this necessary

Authorised by: Jodie Phillips, Operations Director

Date: October 2026

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