

Main Pay Scale (MPS) vs Upper Pay Scale (UPS): Key Differences

Mainscale (MPS)

- Designed for classroom teachers developing their practice. Expected to meet Teachers Standards as part of normal practice.
- Primarily focused on their own classroom and professional development.
- Runs from M1 to M6, with annual progression expected unless under a capability process.

Upper Pay Scale (UPS / UPR)

- Intended for experienced, highly competent teachers who make a substantial and sustained contribution beyond their own classroom. Must demonstrate broadened impact.
- Runs from UPS1 to UPS3, progression was historically every 2 years. With effect from September 2026 and in line with recommendations from the trade unions, the Trust will implement annual progression expected unless under a capability process. **Important:** UPS is **not** payment for additional responsibilities, e.g. taking whole school responsibility for subject areas - that is what **TLRs** are for.

What Makes a Contribution “Substantial”?

The contribution should:

- Influence others, not just own classroom.
- Improve outcomes, systems, or staff skill levels.
- Be above what is expected of MPS teachers.
- Be sustained over a reasonable period, not a one-term initiative.

This typically means the teacher is driving improvement, not just participating in it.

Examples of Substantial Contributions

1. Mentoring and Developing Other Staff

- Acting as a mentor for trainees or Early Career Teachers, providing ongoing, high-quality support and helping them improve their practice.
- Coaching colleagues in specific areas such as behaviour management or teaching strategies.

Target Example:

Mentor ECTs or trainees over the academic year, supporting their professional development and guiding them to meet Teacher Standards successfully.

Why it fits UPS:

UPS criteria highlight effective contributions to the wider team and supporting colleagues as a sign of substantial, sustained impact.

2. Leading School-Wide Improvement Initiatives

- Leading a project that improves outcomes across year groups or subjects—for example, improving writing moderation, developing assessment approaches, or implementing new curriculum resources.
- Introducing a new process or system that enhances teaching consistency, SEND provision, or pastoral care.

Target Example:

Lead a whole-school initiative to improve a specific area of teaching (e.g., feedback quality, reading comprehension, or assessment consistency), ensuring measurable improvement across multiple classes or key stages.

Why it fits UPS:

UPS teachers are expected to act as role models, lead developments, and make distinctive contributions to raising pupil standards.

3. Influencing Practice Beyond Own Classroom

- Providing specialist advice to teachers and support staff (e.g., SEND strategies, safeguarding practice), resulting in measurable improvements across teams.
- Supporting teachers in behaviour strategies, lesson planning, or subject content.

Target Example:

Lead an intervention project or cross-class initiative that closes gaps in attainment or enhances progress for a targeted group of pupils (e.g., disadvantaged, SEND, EAL), and measure its whole-school effect.

Why it fits UPS:

UPS teachers must show distinctive contributions to raising pupil standards.

4. Delivering Whole-School or Cross-Phase Training

- Designing and delivering internal CPD workshops that other staff apply successfully.
- Running staff meetings or training sessions that change or improve practice across the school.

Target Example:

Deliver at least two staff training sessions on an area of expertise (e.g., phonics, adaptive teaching, subject knowledge), followed by support to ensure implementation across the school.

Why it fits UPS:

Teachers on the Upper Pay Range should demonstrate wider school impact and growing expertise used to enhance others' practice.

5. Improving Systems or Processes

- Streamlining marking/feedback policies, assessment tracking systems, or SEND processes that benefit multiple classes or the whole school.

Target Example:

Design or streamline a school process (e.g., SEND provision tracking, moderation procedures, or behaviour systems), demonstrating measurable positive impact across the school.

Why it fits UPS:

UPS progression requires evidence of “substantial and sustained” contribution, often through improving systems that support colleagues and pupils.

6. Providing Expertise Without a TLR

- Acting informally as a “go-to” person for an area of strength (e.g., phonics, maths, behaviour) even if not paid via a TLR.
- Providing input in some areas by virtue of experience, even when it isn’t an official responsibility.

Target Example:

Review, update, or redesign curriculum units in a subject area, ensuring improvements in sequencing, assessment, or pupil outcomes, and then share best practice with the wider staff team.

Why it fits UPS:

Curriculum leadership reflects “extensive knowledge” and advanced practice expected of post-threshold teachers.

7. Supporting School Culture and Ethos

- Contributing to initiatives that improve the wider school environment such as wellbeing, inclusion, safeguarding culture, parental engagement, or extracurricular enrichment.

Target Example:

Lead a whole-school initiative to strengthen the school’s culture of inclusion and positive behaviour by developing and promoting shared expectations, modelling exemplary practice, and supporting colleagues in embedding consistent routines across all year groups

Why it fits UPS:

This target requires the teacher to demonstrate a substantial and sustained contribution to the wider school environment beyond their own classroom and role model behaviour and teaching expertise. It also impacts on colleagues and school culture, aligning with UPS expectations for whole school influence.

8. Demonstrating Impact Over Time

- Showing that your contribution has been ongoing, not one-off—reflecting the requirement for work that is “substantial and sustained.”