



Teaching and Learning Policy

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Date	October 2021
Version	5
Approved Date	October 2021
Review Date	October 2023

Teaching and Learning Policy

- 1 The aims of this document are to set out a clear set of high expectations and a common approach to teaching and learning at Alderbrook School so that teachers, parents/carers and students are all aware of and can work towards the highest possible standards of education. It is designed in such a way that teaching staff are encouraged to identify the best teaching approaches for their subject content but are not required to teach in any specific way. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning takes place to ensure that high standards are met and to support the best outcomes for students. We aim to create enthusiastic, flexible, creative, resilient, resourceful, independent, lifelong learners.
- 2 We believe that all learners can make progress and that academic skills can be developed. Learning is an active process of constructing knowledge and developing meaning. The best learning occurs when students have the opportunity to make sense of new content, practise skills and embed information, fixing new knowledge and skills into their long term memory.
- 3 We work in a culture that celebrates effort and the learning journey, where 'making mistakes', and 'being confused' are important parts of learning. We are aware that all students have different needs and we endeavour to cater for and support the progress of each one as a unique individual.

To achieve this we shall offer a curriculum that:

- Is inclusive
 - Is designed to develop both knowledge and understanding, and to review this to embed learning
 - Is coherent, relevant and life enhancing and aims to give individuals a positive attitude to life and the valuable part he or she might play in it
 - Is appropriately challenging for different groups of learners according to learning need
 - Is organised in such a way that each learning experience is stimulating and worthwhile in itself and part of a systematically planned programme of work
 - Is broad and balanced at Key Stage 3
 - Is increasingly specialised at Key Stage 4, whilst still offering a very wide range of courses
 - Provides a wide choice of A level subjects for further academic study post 16
 - Recognises, respects and celebrates diversity in all its forms
 - Offers learners the opportunity and encouragement to attain the standards of which they are capable
 - Offers appropriate support for those students with specific learning difficulties, so that they can access subject content.
- 4 Underpinning this curriculum are values intended to develop learners' relationships with each other as well as with adults, the community and the wider environment. In particular, the school values the whole individual, paying attention to moral, social, emotional, spiritual, cultural and physical development. The qualities of ambition, bravery and kindness are prized and reflected in our everyday interactions but are also a core part of learning.

The teacher as learner:

- 5 Effective teachers will search out new ideas and approaches in order to provide students with the very best learning opportunities. They are advanced learners themselves and keen to develop new skills and insights. They recognise that their personal and professional growth will have a profound impact on student development. They have the highest expectations of themselves and the students in their care. The Lesson Studies Programme (CPD) underpins this philosophy as staff spend time evaluating their practice, exploring strategies and measuring their impact. Staff are given opportunities to attend courses for their personal professional development particularly where this aligns with the development of the new curriculum and their own appraisal objectives. The appraisal process sits at the heart of the CPD programme, as staff identify aspects of teaching they want to develop and improve. The school makes provision for staff training through a further programme of voluntary internal training opportunities that allows staff to share their expertise and move forward together.
- 6 Through the evaluation of strategies to 'diminish differences' for specific groups of students, seven areas of teaching have been identified as having the 'highest impact' on progress:
 - Developing positive relationships
 - Using contextual data to inform planning.
 - Feedback
 - Independent learning
 - Embedding learning
 - Questioning and 'assessment for learning'
 - Engagement
 - Challenge and differentiation
- 7 These eight areas form the framework for lesson observations at Alderbrook and are supported by a 'Teaching and Learning Handbook' (Appendix 1) and lesson observation template (Appendix 2) to encourage consistency, high expectations and share best practice.

The conditions and climate for learning

- 8 We aim to provide a climate in which pupils are willing and able to learn. In particular, we aim to support students' self-esteem, as this is central to a student's ability to develop. The learning climate should be purposeful and orderly with a useful working environment including the display of whole school 'posters' to promote consistency, presentation of work, effort and behaviour grades, behaviour steps and marking codes.. Expectations should be high and learning objectives communicated clearly. Discipline should be firm and support the right of individuals to work without distraction or interference.
- 9 To achieve this, the individual teacher will endeavour to:
 - Uphold and encourage qualities of ambition, bravery and kindness..
 - Offer students a variety of engaging learning opportunities
 - Only use age-appropriate digital media in their teaching practice.
 - Adhere to lesson timings, welcoming students and dismissing them calmly and promptly, encouraging movement in between lessons to be brisk.
 - Take advantage, where appropriate, of learning that can be enhanced by community and local opportunities including employer led learning.

- Celebrate achievement in all its forms, making a particular effort to encourage a 'growth mind-set' in our students.
- Recognise the importance of the working environment and make challenging and interactive use of the available display space, including the promotion of literacy through key vocabulary displays.
- Apply the behaviour policy to ensure that behaviour standards are maintained

Planning for Progress:

- 10 It is important that teachers plan schemes of work and deliver lessons that enable students to work towards the learning objectives and make progress towards the success criteria. It is acknowledged that different teachers have their own preferred styles of teaching but it is imperative that the agreed criteria are followed to ensure the best outcomes for all students in all lessons. The ultimate aim is to ensure that thorough planning and focussed lesson implementation aids students to make progress over time.

Schemes of Work

- 11 Medium and long term planning for each subject area is in place, and all teachers of a particular subject follow these plans to ensure students have equal access to high quality plans and resources. It is expected that schemes of work will:
 - Clarify objectives and outcomes (including success criteria) for progress over time.
 - Identify clearly the subject knowledge and skills to be taught.
 - Include references to differentiated work to ensure all students are challenged in line with their ability.
 - Detail literacy and numeracy opportunities and how they will be taught.
 - Acknowledge the context of the lesson in terms of social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and aspects of the Personal and Social Education programme as appropriate.
 - Make reference to 'skills for success' and habits that can be developed during a particular project.
 - Reference specific health and safety aspects as needed.

Skills for Success:

- 12 We uphold the core principle that we are preparing young people for life and as such, we value and promote those skills that will allow young people to be the creative, flexible, resilient young people they will need to become.
- 13 More recently, we have worked on aligning the language of Guy Claxton's 'Building Learning Power' with the CBI's employability skills, which has provided the school with a contextualised understanding of learning skills and habits that young people need to develop that transfers across all learning. Teachers have mapped key skills across the range of subjects and are encouraged to pronounce these in their teaching. (Appendix 3)

Independent Learning

- 14 Homework is regarded as an important opportunity to develop independence and is therefore referred to as 'Independent Learning'. It will often be separate from class work and will take advantage of conditions beyond the classroom for research, investigations, collecting

materials and independent reading and writing. Teachers set Independent Learning tasks on an electronic tool: Class charts, so that students and parents receive the information directly.

- 15 To support consistency the following principles are encouraged in all classrooms:
 - Teachers should use contextual information (e.g. disadvantaged, LAC, more/most able, EAL, SEN) to support planning and teaching.
 - Teachers should ensure learning objectives and tasks are shared clearly with students and pitched at an appropriate level to provide enough challenge.
 - Teachers should make sure that all learners can access the tasks and differentiate as appropriate ensuring there is high level of challenge. Some differentiation however can only be applied effectively following 'assessment for learning' (AFL) activities.
 - AFL must accompany a design to shape the next stages of learning. This reshaping may require students to be working on different tasks, using different resources and organised into appropriate groups. Some tasks may be of different duration and require varying levels of support.
- 16 Teachers should make use of a range of AFL approaches so they are constantly checking the understanding and confidence of all their students. Questioning should be used to deepen understanding, engage all students, and check understanding across the class. 'No hands up' is encouraged for engagement and in order to quickly identify misconceptions.
- 17 Teachers must provide feedback in a timely and supportive manner and empower students to reflect on their misconceptions or difficulties. Marking is vital to inform the next steps in learning. Teachers use purple pens, with students self-assessing, peer marking or correcting work in green so that progress is clearly visible to other teachers, students and parents/carers.
- 18 Teachers should provide opportunities for students to review lesson content both within a lesson and across a scheme of work so that students have the opportunity to embed their learning over time.
- 19 Teachers should set Independent Learning tasks in line with school policy. This should be appropriately challenging, providing meaningful opportunities. Independent Learning is set for students using Class Charts, a homework application so that students and parents can easily access work set and resources to support learning.
- 20 Teachers have mapped their curriculum to the National Curriculum and examination specifications as appropriate for courses.