

AQUINAS Church of England Education Trust

"Life - Transforming - Learning"

Policy Title: Teaching Learning and Assessment Policy
Responsibility: Trust Education Director
Review Body: Education Scrutiny Committee
Date: November 2019
Review: November 2020

CONTEXT

We are ambitious for our pupils, whatever their background or circumstances. Pupils learn and thrive when they are healthy, safe and engaged. Our overarching aim is that pupils enjoy their time with us and leave as well-rounded individuals equipped with skills for a fruitful life. We believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the idea that both adults and pupils learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone. Through our teaching we equip pupils with a depth of knowledge, skills and understanding; a love of and desire for further learning and the ability to benefit society through their positive contribution.

Assessment is integral to both teaching and learning. It is a continuous process which allows pupils to achieve their full potential. We believe that appropriate teaching, learning and assessment will help pupils to lead happy and fulfilling lives. The Trust strives for excellence within teaching and learning, supported by assessment processes, to enhance pupils' life chances. Each academy will provide a high quality learning environment which stimulates pupils' interests. Teaching and learning will be suitably challenging and varied, incorporating the breadth, depth and pace required to promote excellent learning and achievement.

POLICIES RELATING TO TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

This policy should be read in conjunction with central trust policies

- Curriculum Policy;
- Early Years Policy;
- English/Literacy Policy;
- Forest School Policy;
- Inclusion Policy;
- Mathematics/Numeracy Policy;
- More Able and Talented Policy;
- PE and Sports Policy;
- Pupil Premium Policy;
- Religious Education Policy;
- Science Policy;
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.

and individual academy policies:

Additional Guidance Document 1. Planning For High Quality Teaching, Learning And Assessment

- Behaviour Management Policy;
- Educational Visits Policy;
- English as an Additional Language Policy;
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy.

PRINCIPLES

All our pupils have special skills, abilities and aptitudes and are entitled to access a broad, challenging and appropriate curriculum. All pupils are entitled to experience a variety of learning and teaching styles which enables them to achieve their full potential. Our aim is to help pupils to become creative thinkers who are not afraid to take risks and see mistakes as opportunities for learning. All staff have a responsibility, collectively and individually, to contribute to the delivery of the curriculum. We recognise that continued professional support, coaching, mentorship and feedback at all levels are essential to empower staff to deliver effective learning experiences.

High quality teaching fosters high quality learning. It stems from effective lesson design whatever the age of the pupils, their level of ability, or the subject or skill learnt.

Assessment is designed to support achievement and as such assessment systems must inform teaching and learning to drive progress, be accurate and build confidence in learning. Assessment must be integral to planning so that core concepts and skills are taught deeply and thoroughly so that they are truly embedded for pupils. Assessment must carefully track progress against standards and provide closely linked intervention which can be monitored. It must provide clarity for all with the expectation that each child will end the academic year having achieved or exceeded an expected standard and made expected or rapid progress. Academies will work towards a shared understanding of these measures. Through effective use of assessment academies will act flexibly to overcome any possible barriers to learning and drive our belief that all pupils must achieve to the best of their cognitive potential.

Teaching:

- Is improved by informed collaborative planning and evaluation;
- utilises highly focused lesson design with clear objectives
- Is enhanced by strong subject and pedagogical knowledge, an excellent understanding of progression within their subject, and the relationship between areas of the curriculum;
- Must be based on high expectations of what each pupil can achieve, including a clear focus on higher order thinking and extension of subject vocabulary;
- Develops a deep body of knowledge which contributes to overall personal development;
- Must inspire, motivate and challenge by responding to the strengths and needs of all pupils and include opportunities for creativity;
- Makes effective use of questioning, modelling and explaining;

Additional Guidance Document 1. Planning For High Quality Teaching, Learning And Assessment

- Requires the establishment of an orderly and stimulating classroom environment;
- Is enhanced by professional development focused on improving progress and outcomes for pupils;
- will foster independence with opportunities for pupils to develop questioning skills and curiosity, to lead and to make choices.

Learning:

- Involves the systematic development of knowledge, with opportunities to experience broad and deep learning experiences, being able to access this equally regardless of personal needs or barriers to learning;
- Requires pupils to think hard about what they are learning and respond with perseverance to feedback;
- Requires pupils to take risks, to explore, to discuss, to reflect on ideas and make useful mistakes;
- Is effective when pupils are motivated, resilient, freethinking and enquiring learners with positive attitudes;
- Requires pupils to take responsibility for becoming increasingly independent and interdependent, developing collaborative working skills with adults and peers that can be transferred back into the classroom;
- Builds on high self-esteem, a positive self-image and sense of identity and is enhanced through enriching relationships.

Assessment:

- Supports planning and teaching to promote learning;
- Reflects an accurate understanding of each pupil's ability, including the degree of security in key concepts, knowledge and skills.
- Helps to close the learning gap between current and expected learning;
- Must be precise, meaningful and manageable;
- Must involve timely and effective feedback to support pupil progress.
- Must raise aspiration and encourage pupils to work hard so that they all make at least good progress;
- Must help pupils to understand their success in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding and know what they need to do next in order to improve;
- Provides appropriate information to parents in an effective and timely manner, seeking their support as partners in their children's learning;
- Provides information for target setting for individuals, groups and cohorts;
- Ensures continuity when the learner changes class, year group or school;
- Supports critical self-evaluation and improvements to teaching and learning;
- Allows the Trust Board to track the progress of individuals and groups to raise standards and complies with statutory requirements.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Trust Board and Academies Core Education Team

Additional Guidance Document 1. Planning For High Quality Teaching, Learning And Assessment

The Trust Board works through the academies Core Education Team, Secondary Strategy Team and Education Scrutiny Committee to provide a strategic direction and to make sure the policy is implemented effectively in all academies. The progress of pupils is analysed on a regular basis and schools receive monitoring visits. Where schools have an executive head, the executive head will hold the overall responsibility and accountability for the quality of teaching and learning supported by effective assessment and reporting.

The Trust Board set floor standards for performance within academies and additional targets for pupils' progress.

Senior Leaders

The headteacher/head of school is accountable for the performance and training of staff, the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils. The leadership team provides appropriate support, training and resources for teams and individuals in line with their portfolio of responsibility. They make sure that classroom practitioners, pupils and parents understand the expectations for good teaching and learning. They oversee processes for reporting to parents and to the Trust Board. The leadership team will establish a programme for quality assurance including: reviews of planning; visits to lessons; scrutiny of written work; analysis of data; pupil progress meetings; discussions with pupils and feedback from parents.

Middle Leaders

Middle leaders with subject responsibilities make sure that all planning is in place and they are accountable for its quality. They monitor and evaluate consistent delivery of the policy at team level, and provide appropriate support to team members through training and coaching. Where subject networks exist they collaborate with leaders in other academies to develop good practice, including moderation and assessment standards. They are responsible for the development of subject knowledge for those they lead.

All middle leaders are accountable for the quality of the learning environment, the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils in their area of responsibility. They are expected to undertake regular quality assurance and monitoring activities and take effective action where improvements are needed. They check the regularity of assessment and the quality of assessment information and challenge teachers when pupils do not make enough progress.

Teachers

Teachers contribute to planning, using the agreed plans to structure and sequence the teaching programme. They must continue to develop their subject knowledge and pedagogical skills. They provide a well organised and stimulating environment which has a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning. They set high expectations for attitudes to work and behaviour for learning. They are responsible for the accurate assessment of pupils they teach and all their practice is in line with the policy so that all pupils make good or better progress.

Other Classroom Practitioners

All other classroom practitioners are responsible for promoting and maintaining good progress for all pupils in their care. They are expected to work directly with the classroom teacher to maintain a high quality learning environment. They work in partnership with the teacher and make use of the teaching programme to provide support or extend learning with individuals or focus groups.

REVIEW AND REPORTING

In recognition of the Trust Board's responsibility:

- Half termly data reports will be reviewed detailing the attainment and progress of pupils in each year group detailing:
 - Pupils who are looked after (CLA);
 - Pupils recognised as disadvantaged;
 - Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities;
 - Pupils performance based on prior attainment ability bands.
- Termly monitoring visits will take place for all academies.
- The quality of teaching learning and assessment will be reviewed at all Education Scrutiny Committee meetings.
- The Trust Board will receive reports on the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils.
- The policy and procedures will be reviewed annually.

MONITORING

The Trust Board through the Education Scrutiny Committee will as a part of its internal monitoring processes, audit each academy in order to ensure that the academy has complied with the requirements of this policy and the responsibilities delegated to it.

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