



Wigston Academies Trust

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

VOLUNTARY

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APPROVED BY:	Executive Headteacher
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Signed by Executive Headteacher:

Date:

1st November 2024

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1. Purpose

The purpose of the Learning and Teaching Policy is an attempt to promote consistent practice, and work towards outstanding teaching across the Trust and provide students with opportunities to make sense of the information they receive and develop their own understanding.

2. Aims:

- Every student has the right to high quality teaching
- To maximise the learning potential of every student through high quality teaching
- Opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD) for staff to continue to develop teaching and learning
- Collaboration of staff across the Trust and curriculum, facilitating the sharing of good practice in teaching and learning sessions

At Wigston Academies Trust, our vision is for all of our students, regardless of background and circumstances to make good progress and achieve grades that will allow them to follow their chosen path in the future. We want our students to be curious inquisitive and develop a thirst for knowledge; resilience and to value effort. Students need to understand that sometimes making an error or failing at a task is an essential part of learning and recognise that developing a positive ‘can do’ attitude will help them to achieve.

3. To achieve the vision, teachers are expected to:

- Have high expectations for all including; behaviour for learning, participation, engagement, presentation of work and outcomes
- Show outstanding knowledge and passion for their subject area
- Know their impact – be reflective, evaluate the effect they are having on their students learning and adjust teaching accordingly
- Be skilled in formative assessment practices, assessing students’ progress throughout the lesson and being flexible to student needs during a lesson
- Know the key knowledge, concepts and schemes students need to know and what they need to improve in the different elements of a subject
- Use assessment data to plan lessons which take into account prior attainment and specific learning needs
- Differentiate / Scaffold work appropriately to challenge **all** learners
- Challenge students, expect the most out of them, enabling them to deepen their knowledge and understanding
- Use time, support staff, technology and other resources effectively (Appendix 4)
- Take responsibility for their own professional development; be committed to learning themselves as reflective practitioners who strive to keep up to date with knowledge and pedagogy
- National College membership facilitates individualised CPD
- Maintain class files (Appendix 1)

‘Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better’ Dylan William

4. There is not a recipe for the perfect teacher; the following information is guidance for staff to work within and beyond:

Knowing our students:

- Enables teachers to assess their needs effectively and raise their expectations – when is their engagement drifting? Why is it happening? Do they need help or time to work it out for themselves? These questions can only be answered if we know our students.
- Students need a fair, trusting safe environment that acknowledge they may not know and may make errors and develop the positive of being able to do it without mistakes. The teacher's role is to maximise the efficiency of the time available, provide many learning opportunities to learn, ensuring time is spent learning and not just doing.

High levels of challenge:

‘A successful teacher establishes a student's expectations of their abilities but then dispels those expectations by telling them they can do better. Professor J. Hattie

- Appropriate challenge ensures students have high expectations of what they can do

Engagement:

- Students need to engage in what is happening within the classroom, this means that they will be thinking about what we want them to think about and as a result learning is more likely to take place
- Lessons need to get off to a positive start, use a ‘do now’ task to hook their attention from the offset, making effective use of retrieval activities to develop recall skills and development of long-term memory ‘sticky knowledge’

Explanation and modelling:

- New key components are explained effectively to enable students to be able to move on to other composites of the learning process.
- Once key knowledge has been explained, students need to be able to know how to apply it – one of the most recognised methodologies is for an expert to model the process

Opportunities for independence:

‘Don't practice until you get it right, practice until you don't get it wrong’ Unknown

- Students having opportunities to work independently – completing activities that are designed to allow application and practice of key knowledge.
- Carefully planned tasks will also allow intelligent practice which develops the thinking process rather than repeated mechanical activities.

Effective Questioning: (Appendix 2)

- Questioning is a key part of what takes place in a classroom and effective questioning can spark discussion, assess current performance and provide deeper levels of challenge

- Expert questioning can force our students to think, a key part of the learning process as we are more likely to lock information away in our long-term memory if we think about it
- Effective questioning also enables students to be able to use subject specific language within their responses
- Questioning can also be used to assess current performance allowing teachers to recognise if students are ready to move on to the next stage of a topic as well as diagnosing potential misunderstandings

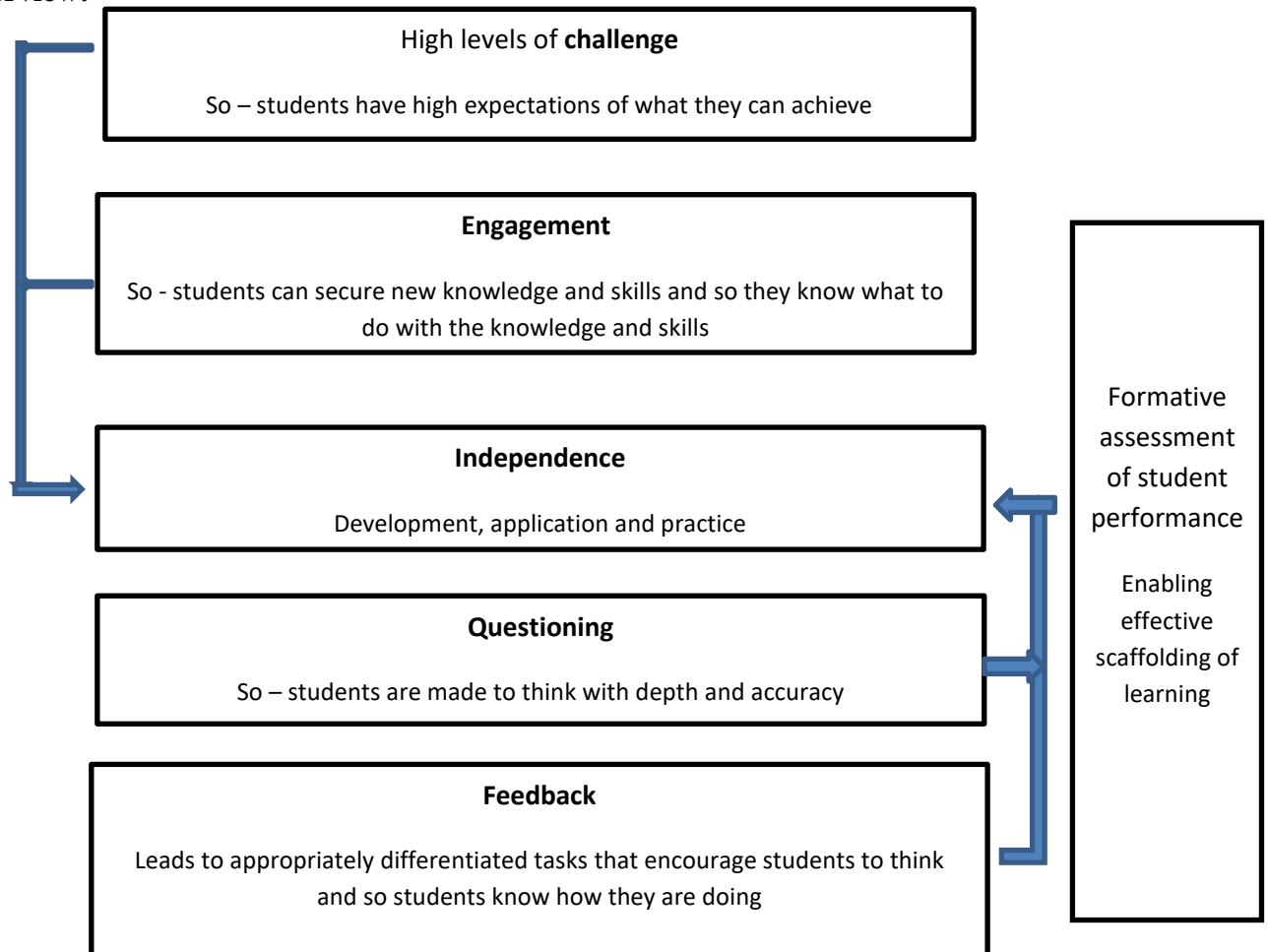
Feedback:

- Effective feedback is a crucial tool in order to determine the next steps a student needs to take to continue to make progress
- Good feedback practices can result in high levels of differentiation as students work on the particular element of their personal feedback to allow them to move on
- Use the Trusts feedback policy consistently – FAR – Feedback, Action and Response (student), ensure students have time to reflect and respond to the feedback you have given whether in class or as a homework
- Feedback will support those underachieving and opportunities provided to stretch the most able.
- Feedback must be focussed on improving the progress of learners.

Formative assessment of student performance (Appendix 3)

- Skilful formative assessment supports effective scaffolding of next steps within a lesson and beyond. It enables us to consider the improvement in performance that a student is making. This also enables us to consider the direction of the next lesson
- It is important to acknowledge that learning takes place over time and as teachers we must reflect on this carefully and consider how we will change the improved performance into learning
- Teachers must be aware of the needs of specific groups such as SEND, More Able, EAL (English as an additional language), Pupil Premium, Looked After Children, BME (Black and Minority Ethnic Groups), Armed Forces and Travellers and will provide the appropriate support. Class files highlight these students in individual classes

Overview:



5. Management of Learning and Teaching:

It is important that learning and teaching is monitored in order to ensure that all students receive the best possible learning experience.

Effective practice is shared in a number of ways which includes:

- Good/outstanding practice observed in observations and or learning walks – asked to lead a teaching and learning session to share good practice and/or invited to mentor other staff
- CPD – use of National College in-house sessions
- Action Research / triad groups
- Drive Team – evidence based research informing Teaching and Learning practice and to support colleagues
- Observations – formal and informal
- Learning Walks
- Drop-ins

- Work sampling
- Focussed teaching and learning department meetings
- Teaching and Learning conversations
- Half termly Teaching and Learning bulletin
- Regular recommended reads for learning and teaching (L&T), including L&T library in the staffroom
- Directory of Good Practice to identify 'Best Practice' to arrange a drop-in or Teaching and Learning conversation with identified colleagues

6. Monitoring:

Wigston Academies Trust is committed to ensuring that learning and teaching is rigorously evaluated and monitored to ensure it is of the highest quality. This process is tailored individually to teachers' career stage and/or teaching expertise and experience.

The following methods are used regularly to monitor teaching and learning:

- Formal lesson observations with feedback / dialogue within 2 teaching days
- Performance Management, self-review process for all teachers linked to teachers' standards
- Drop-ins and Learning Walks completed by the Leadership Team and Heads of Department
- Tracking and monitoring of formal observations by the Leadership Team
- Peer observation
- Student Voice
- Reporting to Governors
- Work Scrutiny
- Teaching and Learning conversations

7. Formal Observations:

Formal lesson observations will take place as part of the performance management and feedback will be a more supportive coaching model on areas of strength or development.

Informal:

Other observations may take place during the year, these may be more informal observations, peer observation to aid professional development, or subject leaders monitoring the quality of education in their department.

Department Review:

Staff may be observed to gain a clear picture of the quality of education and teaching and learning standards across a whole department. Feedback will be received for all observations.

Learning Walk / Drop-ins:

This is a means for the Leadership Team and others with delegated responsibility for teaching and learning, to assess the standard of learning that is taking place in the Trust. These visits are drop-ins to inform monitoring of the quality of learning and engagement. They are not an observation of teaching and focus on students learning.

Timeline:

Below is timeline for lesson observations and or drop-ins. If a member of staff does not teach a particular Key Stage, then a different year group will be observed. See QA calendar for Wigston Academy/Wigston College for an overview.

Additional observations may take place to provide support for new staff and those requiring support. Each member of staff will be observed / have a drop-in across at least two Key Stages during the academic year.

Observation Outcomes:

If an observation (formal or informal) demonstrates ‘expert’ practice, this colleague should be encouraged to participate in one or more of the following:

- Lead a workshop – department or whole school
- Conduct a peer observation; be encouraged to buddy up with a colleague
- Participate or Lead in mentoring/coaching
- Summarise a book or piece of research pertinent to the subject to share good practice
- Undertake Action research and feedback to staff at a teaching and learning session
- Apply to become a member of the Drive Team

Concern:

If an observed lesson is a cause for concern, the member of staff **must** be made aware. This applies to all forms of lesson observation both formal and informal.

The observer will meet the teacher to:

- Give clear feedback about the nature / seriousness of the concern
- Give the teacher the opportunity to discuss the concerns
- Discuss any support that may be required

The observer must meet with the teaching and learning lead to inform them of the concerns that have been raised. Through discussion with the teaching and learning lead:

- Appropriate support to address the specific concerns will be agreed
- It will be made clear how, and by when the progress will be reviewed. This will include further observations.

A repeat formal observation should take place within two weeks to gather further evidence and inform any support that may follow.

If any lesson observed that raises ‘serious concerns about the progress / safety of students’ a support programme **must** be put in place.

The support package may include:

- Head of Department involvement and support triggered at departmental level
- The teacher being able to undertake peer observations; pairing with a member of the Drive Team or consistently good practitioner
- Team teaching
- Teacher being assigned a peer mentor
- Lesson by lesson scrutiny of lesson plans by HoD and/or a senior leader
- Time limited period of informed support after which further actions may be required such as a period of formal support
- Further professional learning opportunities
- For an NQT any support package will usually be provided by their subject mentor

Appendices

Appendix 1: Class Files

Subject staff will maintain their class files; these will be accessible to Heads of department, Leadership Team and other QA visitors. They will be marked as confidential and kept securely as they contain sensitive information on students.

Expected Content:

Learning context

Lesson planning examples

Class/group lists

Annotated class photos i.e. PP/SEND, etc

Seating plans

Individual pupil information including pupil profiles if SEND – could include examples of feedback

Subject overview

Performance information – up to date data tracking

Appendix 2: Questioning

Questioning - Developing students' capacity for thinking and independent learning can be promoted through asking more open ended questions. Wait time has to be increased to allow students to think about the question and make a considered response.

- Don't be afraid to give students thinking time
- Schemes of Learning could be question led and include key questions which capture students' imagination
- Involve students at the start of the lesson through open and closed question starters
- Use different types of questioning i.e. open, closed, higher order, Blooms taxonomy
- Use a range of means to encourage everyone to engage with the question; use of retrieval strategies or questioning techniques, e.g. Pose, Pause, Bounce
- Give students short discussion time in pairs/groups before discussing as a whole class
Time this to ensure pace
- Create a community of enquiry by asking questions about new material at the beginning of a course/lesson
- Use hot seat questioning
- Try a traffic light system
- Give students an answer; they think what the question was
- Use questions on post-it notes
- Students ask questions about each other's work
- Do a mini quiz/questioning games
- Prepare a question chain so each student answers a question until the chain breaks
- Involve students in peer and self-assessment
- Explain a piece of work, students then respond with examples of what they have done
- Students use mark schemes to mark/level/grade other students' work
- Students use exemplars from previous years to mark/grade each other's work
- Peer proof reading of drafts in light of assessment criteria

- Students could identify 2 or 3 positive areas about another person's work and one target to work on
- Elect a peer observer to assess and provide constructive feedback to group work
- Develop self-assessment checklists or a proforma with a scale, to illustrate how far student has met learning objectives or increased confidence levels

Appendix 3: Assessment

Assessment for learning is not the same as assessment of learning. Assessment for learning is formative and takes place all the time in the classroom.

AfL gets straight to the heart of good teaching by:

- helping teachers help students to take the next steps in their learning
- helping students to help each other to take the next steps in their learning
- helping students themselves to take the next steps in their learning

Assessment for Learning Strategies in Lessons

The AfL opportunities that should be planned into every lesson have the potential to ensure that students are equipped to achieve their very best. Students can be empowered to take control of their own learning and work in partnership with others and the teacher to ensure that the needs of all are met.

In addition to the Trust Feedback Policy using FAR, some strategies that can be used and provide a clear distinction between assessment of and assessment for learning can be seen in the selection below:

Key characteristics of AfL

Sharing learning objectives – all students need to understand what they are being asked to learn and why so that they are able to make connections

- Regular retrieval practice using a variety of strategies
- Provide a lesson title in the form of a question
- Make links to prior and future learning
- Key knowledge linked to end of the unit/progress tests
- Students guess and rate their confidence on key knowledge to promote ownership of objectives
- Use past work to demonstrate to students the standard of work expected through effective questioning
- Modelling (visually or through ICT) to demonstrate
- Students identify key words in the key knowledge. Teacher to support students in understanding of key words using glossaries, washing lines or key words on walls, key term quizzes, etc
- Encourage students to use the key terminology in their work
- Use symbols ☺☹☹, traffic lights, etc, to show how far the objective has been met

Appendix 4: Effective use of Support Staff

Teaching Assistants/Learning Support Assistants are most effectively deployed in the classroom when they are informed of, and involved in, the learning:

- Teachers should give LSAs the scheme of work/lesson plans in advance
- Regular discussion of student progress and wellbeing should take place
- Teachers should give LSAs appropriate guidance on their role within the lesson or sequence of lessons
- LSAs should share their in-depth knowledge of the student being supported, particularly if progress differs significantly in other lessons