Teaching and Learning Policy

Lead Governor: Teaching and Learning Governor

Senior Leadership Team Link: Mrs Conley-Harper, Assistant Headteacher

Previous Review: September 2018   *Next Review Due: September 2023*

Ratified by Governors: September 2021

Introduction

At Oakmoor School teaching and learning is our core purpose. We have a responsibility to ensure that lessons are planned and delivered to the highest standard and we must challenge and support our students to learn. Our students are encouraged to achieve their potential through a culture of high expectations for everyone. We encourage a commitment to learning that is not based solely on the acquisition of knowledge but on the development of the skills, attributes and values needed to encourage life-long learning. Thorough and precise lesson planning alongside regular assessment and effective feedback enables our students to achieve their potential and secure successful outcomes.

As teachers we have the opportunity to model ourselves as lead learners and experts in our subject areas. We have a professional responsibility to remain up to date with current thinking and research in relation to best practice in teaching and learning and should be prepared to respond to ideas and try new approaches.

Several policies already exist which support and enhance teaching and learning at the school. These policies should be read alongside this document and will provide more specific detail and guidance in these areas:

- Assessment, Recording and Reporting
- Special Educational Needs/SEND
- Homework
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Behaviour and Pupil Discipline

Aim

The aim of this document is to present a clear set of principles and high expectations to develop a common approach to teaching and learning at Oakmoor School so that teachers, parents/carers and students are all aware and can work towards the highest possible standards of education. In addition, teaching staff are encouraged to develop their own style of teaching, to be innovative and to collaborate and share their own effective practice with colleagues at Oakmoor School and beyond.

Regular monitoring of teaching and learning takes place at Oakmoor School through the Self Improving School Cycle (Appendix 1) to ensure that high standards are always met and therefore, the best outcomes are achieved for the students.

Planning

It is encouraged for teachers at Oakmoor School to use a variety of methods to plan their teaching on a day-to-day basis. These methods could include use of presentations, use of a generic teacher planner or another structured plan of their choice.

Students must be able to move forward and make progress in their learning every lesson relative to their starting points. The learning objectives and intended outcomes must be clearly identified and the lesson understood in terms of its context within a scheme of work.

Teachers will identify barriers to learning (such as low levels of literacy) and implement strategies to overcome these. Activities are designed which support progress towards and achievement of the learning outcomes. These learning tasks are planned with regard to the need for variety and for their appropriateness to meet the needs of all students, including high, middle and lower prior attainers. 'One size does not fit all', and teachers should differentiate accordingly. Resources must be identified and made available for the lesson in an organised way which supports an orderly classroom.

Teachers know their students and particular groups of students well and routinely use assessment data including prior attainment, current attainment, students' target grades, KS2 scores for English and mathematics, reading and spelling ages and Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT) data to plan high quality lessons to meet the needs of all. Each teacher has an evidence file which includes this information alongside seating plans and assessment and feedback documents.

Feedback and Assessment

We continually, systematically and accurately assess to provide evidence of student progress and as a diagnostic tool to identify gaps in understanding. We use this knowledge to inform future planning in order to consolidate learning and close the gaps. Frequent and detailed formative assessment coupled with summative assessment enables teachers and students to understand how to improve and make progress.

To achieve this we:

- share learning objectives with students to plan and review progress
- involve students in the assessment process so that they have ownership of their learning
- engage students in reflecting on their learning by using whole class, peer, group and self-assessment strategies
- motivate students with feedback
- provide opportunities and specific time for students to act on feedback through read and response time (R & R – green pen)

- check that students understand the purpose and outcomes of their learning and systematically and effectively check understanding and progress throughout the lesson, anticipating where intervention is needed for most impact
- intervene early with students not making expected progress
- challenge underachievement or poor quality work (intervention strategies include: speaking to the student, setting individual targets for improvement, asking students to repeat a piece of work, providing exemplars/models of good practice, communication with parents, mentors, academic and pastoral leaders and subject leader, intervention sessions)

Teaching Repertoire

Questioning

Teachers will employ a variety of questions from simple closed questions to more complex higher order open questioning to extend, clarify, confirm, consolidate, challenge and enable deep thinking and problem solving.

In addition, teachers should be able to judge when it is appropriate to use different kinds of questions. Teachers will use questions as a means of stimulating thinking in students, challenging their conceptions and checking knowledge and retention.

Teachers should also be aware of different techniques for gathering responses from students. In particular teachers should not rely on a standard 'hands-up' routine for taking answers. It is expected that teachers will make use of a range of strategies to actively engage all students in question and answer sessions. Examples include the simple no hands up routine, giving the question in advance, planned and prepared questions from the teacher, allowing thinking and collaborative discussion time before answering, making use of small whiteboards, giving students time to plan and prepare questions they wish to ask, using probes and prompts, revisiting a question with a student after whole class discussion for clarification, 'bouncing' a question around the class for students to offer their views.

Explaining

Teachers will be able to develop a logical and coherent explanation of a complex idea or procedure. Teachers will be able to draw upon a variety of examples, anecdotes and analogies to illustrate the points they are seeking to make. Teachers will also demonstrate the ability to use a variety of visual, auditory or tactile aids as appropriate to gain and maintain the interest and attention of students. During an explanation, teachers will also use questions or other techniques to monitor the understanding and engagement of students and be able to respond quickly to this feedback.

Modelling

Modelling is defined as the process by which a teacher demonstrates how to carry out a task or procedure. Modelling is most effective and helpful for students when the teacher makes clear the thought process behind what they are doing (literally 'thinking aloud') and clearly breaks the process down into a series of steps which the students can watch and then go on to reproduce and understand how to apply this to their own learning.

Challenge and High Expectations

As professionals with expert subject knowledge, we set and maintain consistently high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge students of all abilities and groups (e.g. PP, FSM, most able and talented, EAL, SEND etc).

To achieve this teaching staff will plan challenging and purposeful learning activities in class and in home learning. In addition, they will actively promote a growth mind set and "can –do" culture to foster an environment where students are confident to take risks, make mistakes and become resilient learners.

Teaching staff will contribute to and regularly review schemes of work so that they are sufficiently challenging for the needs of all learners and in addition use assessment/skills criteria to clearly indicate expectations and the level of challenge.

Teachers will encourage and model talking and writing like an expert – insisting on the correct use of standard English, subject specific, technical and target language during learning and correct when it is mis-used.

Relationships - Positive Behaviour Management and Classroom Leadership

Taking the time to build positive, professional working relationships is the key to successful teaching and learning. Teachers should be positive and welcoming and model the behaviour that they wish to receive back from the students. Every lesson begins outside the room before the students enter. The teacher is best positioned if they stand at the door and greet the students positively on entry.

Ensuring positive behaviour from students starts at the planning stage of a lesson. Good behaviour will occur in good, well conceived, lessons.

Planning for good behaviour includes ensuring the classroom is clearly a place of learning. Tidy classrooms with good displays help to convey this message.

It is also vital that the teacher considers the seating of the students. Designing a seating plan is perhaps the most powerful way a teacher has of indicating that the classroom is theirs and they control what takes place within it.

Teachers will also consider the behaviour which should accompany the learning activities during the lesson. When explaining a task to a class, the teachers will also clearly describe the behaviour expected from students during the tasks. E.g. if paired work is required the teacher must clearly state that students should only be talking to their partner. If a task is to be completed by students working independently, then it may be appropriate to ask for silence at this time and the students should clearly understand this.

It is expected that the behaviour of students in lessons will in no way impinge negatively upon the process of learning and the progress being made. It is the responsibility of the teacher to create and maintain a positive classroom environment. The teacher is expected to achieve this by the enforcement of high expectations, consistency and routines in the classroom and the fostering of positive relationships between the teacher and the students and between the students themselves. The teacher should draw upon the school behaviour management policy to support their efforts in maintaining the required classroom environment.

From the outset, teachers should establish the expectations and routines for their classroom. This need not be done in a draconian or overbearing manner and is probably most effective when the need for high expectations and routines is explained in terms of how they are in the best interests of all. The teacher should include within the expectation and routines for their room, the '3 Golden Rules' which underpin the whole school behaviour expectations.

When it comes to promoting good behaviour, the school's reward system should be fully utilised. Ultimately, good behaviour occurs as a result of good relationships. Students do not generally

behave well, and more significantly learn well, in a high stress classroom where control is lacking or happens as a result of power built on fear. The teacher is the classroom leader. Their behaviour should model the qualities of respect and recognition to nurture ambition, courage and excellence - the values and ethos of the school.

The Engagement for Learning Checklist (Appendix 2) is a useful document to accompany this section of the policy.

Engagement

To ensure that students are intrinsically motivated and enthused, lessons must be relevant, enjoyable and meaningful and focus on opportunities for students to actively participate in and contribute to their learning. Teachers, Teaching Assistants (TAs), HLTAs (Higher Level Teaching Assistants and adults other than teachers (AOTs) use their expertise and subject knowledge effectively to develop students' independence, knowledge, skills and understanding.

To achieve this we:

- model our passion, love of learning and enthusiasm for our subjects
- employ a wide range of well-judged, imaginative and effective activities to engage students in their learning when planning lessons
- share best practice with other colleagues through our collaborative meeting cycle, staff meetings, inset days and Twilight CPD sessions to enrich teaching repertoire
- provide students with the opportunities to learn in a variety of ways with a range of resources, including new technologies
- promote and refer to Attitude to Learning grades for class and home learning as part of classroom discourse with individual students and use them accurately when assessing and recording at each data capture
- provide an environment where risk-taking is encouraged and reinforced
- praise and reward students for positive learning behaviours and outcomes

The Learning Environment

Each classroom and the areas surrounding a classroom such as entrance halls and corridors should be inviting, stimulating, attractive, clean, tidy and include displays and resources that enhance and support learning. Displays must be presentable and monitored during the school year to ensure that they always remain in an acceptable state. Student work should be displayed to assist with current schemes of work, to praise and reward and to model excellence.

Students will make a judgement on the presentation of a classroom, it is therefore crucial that the environment is acceptable for every lesson.

The learning environment should be organised to ensure that students have the opportunity to:
- Work in a safe, calm and secure environment
- Work in a purposeful and positive climate
- Work individually, in groups and as a class
- Work co-operatively
- Make decisions, solve problems, be creative
- Discuss and extend their ideas
- Develop and extend social skills
- Develop and extend independence of learning
- Use initiative and take on responsibility
- Receive support
- Achieve academically

Collaborative working, reflection, sharing and professional development

The principle which underpins professional practice in teaching at Oakmoor School is the belief that all teachers, from the NQT to the most experienced, can improve their practice. Indeed, it is our professional responsibility to always strive to do so. At Oakmoor School it is expected that teachers will reflect on their practice, discuss and share issues with colleagues and be prepared to try new ideas. Such an environment is demanding but is one which offers high professional rewards for teachers and ensures the best outcomes for our students.

Teachers can plan and engage in such activities through our collaborative meetings cycle where departments work together to share good practice, plan together and observe each other. Staff meetings and inset days grant further opportunity for this and the Twilight CPD sessions offer the opportunity for staff to engage in personal research in a specific area of their practice that they wish to improve and enhance. Our Professional Learning and Development as part of the self-improving school is attached as Appendix 2.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy will be monitored and evaluated through the Self-Improving School Schedule (Appendix 1), including:

- Student outcomes - achievement: attainment and progress
- Lesson observations & Learning walks
- Work Scrutiny
- Student voice/surveys/questionnaires
- Class data reviews, intervention and impact
- HOD department monitoring and line management.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors
- to ensure the effective and rigorous implementation and monitoring of the policy

SLT
- to monitor, evaluate and support the delivery and impact of the policy through regular line management meetings, department reviews, analysis of data, learning walks, work scrutiny and student interviews
- to provide appropriate support to colleagues whose practice is not consistently good or better

Subject leaders
- to be responsible for leading the planning of quality schemes of work and assessment outcomes, and encouraging collaboration within subject teams
- to monitor and evaluate the consistent delivery of the policy at department level
- to provide appropriate support to individual members of the team through Performance Management, mentoring, coaching or training

Class teachers
- to implement consistently this policy by planning and providing high quality learning experiences which engage and challenge all students
- to use assessment of students' work diagnostically to inform planning and provide feedback (in line with the assessment policy)

- to create a safe and stimulating working environment where students are confident to take risks
- to promote the importance of literacy across the curriculum through reading, writing and communication and in addition and where appropriate promote mathematics. These skills should be embedded well, equipping all pupils with the skills to make progress
- use resources, including modern technologies, effectively and innovatively to enable students to access information to support their learning (this includes the use of ICT to support students with SEND as part of normal practice in the classroom)
- deploy TAs, HLTAs and AOTs and work in partnership effectively so the learning and progress of individual students who have SEND is supported
- meet and agree the role of the TA/HLTA/AOT at the start of the year/support. Introduce the TA/HLTA/AOT to the class and demonstrate the partnership in students' engagement for learning and academic progress
- provide appropriate guidance to the TA/HLTA/AOT prior to the lesson, at the very start or as part of ongoing lesson dialogue

Teaching Assistants/HLTAs/AOTs

To meet our aim of delivering excellent lessons, the role of the TA /HLTA/AOT is vital as they contribute to students making excellent progress. We expect teachers and TAs/HLTAs/AOTs to work together in meeting the needs of our students. TAs/HLTAs/AOTs are expected:

- to be aware of the key principles and high expectations of teaching and learning at Oakmoor School and how they can work with class teachers and students to support learning and progress
- to regularly communicate with the teacher about how teaching can be structured to support students successfully
- to assist the class teacher in providing high quality intervention and support for individual students or small groups
- to inform the class teacher of the impact of their intervention/support in order for next steps to be planned and assessment for learning to take place

RATIFICATION DATE AND CHAIR'S SIGNATURE

Chair's Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____