Dixons City Academy

Policy Documentation

Policy: Teaching and Learning

**Responsibility for Review: Assistant Principal –
Literacy and Learning**

Date of Last Review: August 2017

Teaching and Learning Policy

Statement of Policy:
At Dixons City Academy, we have a relentless focus on learning and our concept of great learning has been developed with our staff to benefit our students. All staff are committed to ensuring our students have a great learning experience and work hard to meet their individual needs. Our high quality learning experiences arise from excellent partnerships between teachers, parents and students. Dixons prides itself on its cultural, social and academic diversity and our school is proof that diversity and achievement are entirely compatible. We balance clear expectations of 'non-negotiable' routines with teacher autonomy to teach in the way that best leads to great learning.   In CPD, we focus on student learning measured by quantitative data and removing barriers, rather than prescribed teacher methodology. Learning is constantly scrutinised by senior and middle leaders by daily 'walk- throughs' (philosophy of every lesson every day), unannounced learning walks and learning evaluations (not observations and no quantitative judgement of single lessons) and student voice. High behavioural expectations, our PRIDE values and data driven planning enable students to enjoy a wide variety of learning opportunities. Our teachers work hard to understand the individual learning needs of each student through daily data driven planning so we are able to effectively close the gap. Regular, detailed and specific feedback allows our students to share ownership of their learning and progress. Our technology-rich environment, excellent resources and extended day support high quality teaching and foster independent learning. Frequent educational visits and links with the local community and employers are used to provide a context for learning and to enable students to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to the outside world.

We communicate openly and work closely with parents to keep them informed and enable them to support students' learning in an effective three-way partnership based on mutual respect for all.   We are committed to making information as accessible as possible for parents, and providing an honest yet supportive dialogue. Additionally, formal and informal avenues for staff and student voice ensure that quality assurance and staff and student well-being is the responsibility of all.

Aims
- To develop a strong culture of learning through non-negotiable routines, shared learning priorities and a common language of learning.
- To support staff in providing a great learning experience for students through non-negotiable routines, regular monitoring feedback and CPD.
- To ensure staff continually reflect and seek to improve their own practice.
- To use data driven planning to ensure teaching meets the needs of students and helps to diminish the difference.
- To continually seek to improve teaching and learning across the Academy through whole school responsive CPD, appraisal and regular monitoring feedback.

Practice
Positive relationships are achieved by a friendly yet professional approach, based on praise, mutual trust and respect. PRIDE underpins great teaching and learning and our teachers' high expectations ensure students display a desire to learn and have high aspirations. All lessons begin with a meet and greet and students are expected to enter the classroom in silence. The Year 7 mantra also supports younger students in having a purposeful start to their learning.   PRIDE is used as a language for learning to promote a positive and purposeful learning environment; teachers are expected to make full use of the rewards system to ensure students are rewarded for demonstrating the PRIDE values. Firm knowledge of the whole-student leads to a greater understanding of their achievements as well as informing specific targets for individual improvement. Teachers are encouraged to make any relevant Social, Moral Spiritual, Cultural (SMSC) links so students can apply their learning to the real world and exhibit British values. We expect all students to have Pride in Work

and students have the opportunity to review their work after every learning cycle. Home learning is also used to support, challenge and extend students' learning and we value parental support in ensuring this is completed. Students are also expected to have Pride in Work when completing home learning.

We firmly believe that for students to reach their full potential, they must understand their current level of attainment, and take ownership of their progress in each academic year, in each learning cycle and in each lesson. Data driven planning is a key feature of teaching and learning and teachers use this to put in place suitable first wave intervention to close the gap. Data information primarily comes from end of cycle high stakes assessments. Assessment information is made accessible to students and is presented in a way that allows students to identify how to make progress and actively respond to it. The Assessment for Learning policy and every department's own marking and feedback policy ensures all students receive regular and specific feedback that enables great progress. After teacher feedback, all students have the opportunity to reflect on the progress they have made and complete My Action Points (MAP) activities. The purpose of MAP activities is to enable students to understand how to make progress in the future and to reflect on their current learning in a useful and constructive way.

We ensure that learning is great in every lesson by making learning explicit and by communicating its value. We believe that when a student can understand the intentions of the lesson and the value of their learning journey, they are most likely to be engaged and succeed. Teachers are expected to communicate clearly with students and to situate each learning experience into a wider learning context. This is done through ensuring success criteria is understood, relevant and referred to and that there is clear signposting to prior and new learning. The big picture should be referred to regularly so the purpose of learning is explicit for students and consequently increases motivation and engagement.

Teachers should plan lessons that cater for a variety of learning styles and students could experience active, interactive and innovative learning that allows them freedom to develop their independence and support their life-long learning. Teachers constantly strive to broaden their range of teaching and learning strategies and include a variety of approaches such as practical work, problem-solving and investigatory activities in their teaching. There is an increasing emphasis on working memory, high and low stakes assessment and building resilience with extended writing. Students are constantly challenged through effective directed questioning which prompts higher order thinking, reflection and engagement for all. All teachers are aware of the importance of giving specific instructions for learning and health and safety. Students are encouraged to work effectively in a wide range of social and academic groups. As such seating plans are easily changed on a regular basis through whole school use of MINT software.

Within individual lessons, teachers formatively assess student progress and reshape learning. Agile teaching is important in ensuring differentiation is effective in all classrooms. All lessons strive to provide appropriate challenge, coupled with accessibility for all. To ensure identified all students can access the learning, teachers are expected to establish excellent working relationships with Learning Support Assistants. It is expected that students will be given purposeful resources and tasks to stretch all. Teachers use a variety of strategies to support individual student needs in lessons. These include breakout groups, peer teaching, planned pathways for independent learning and the use of technology and e-learning to challenge and support learners. All lessons have a strong emphasis on student directed learning and so, peer to peer support and critique are key features of lessons.

All teachers recognise that all teachers are teachers of literacy. Subject specific language is embedded and used in learning and great oracy is always modelled, challenged and celebrated. To ensure there is a consistent approach to reading and writing, all teachers are expected to use the reading, writing and speaking processes in their lessons. Teachers are also expected to support the development of students' numeracy skills where possible. Please see the Literacy and Numeracy policies for further information.

Relevant education outside the classroom is highly valued. This can either be to enhance subject specific knowledge, or to boost personal development. Stretch activities at lunchtime allow students to enrich their learning and develop a new skill. Students also have the opportunity to participate in other learning

opportunities such as interdepartmental collaboration and subject specific days which enthuse, motivate and engage students. We believe that the skills of managing information, working with others, working creatively, self-management, problem-solving and decision-making are vital for the development of student independence and life-long learning.

All teachers at Dixons City Academy are constantly striving to improve teaching and learning and our 'can do' culture means change is embraced and all staff have a solution focused approach. We have always taken great pride in our investment in staff and value the importance of the professional development of all staff and their well-being. Our strong emphasis on quality assurance and staff, student and parental voice means we are continually seeking to improve our students' learning and value contributions from all. Our learning community is committed to encouraging and supporting all teachers to constantly reflect on their own practice and to strive for greatness in the classroom. This is well illustrated by our extensive annual whole school responsive CPD programme and the support of further professional study via the Masters in Teaching and Professional Enquiry.

Data Driven Planning (DDP)

Features of great DDP	WWW	EBI
MINT software is used for the identification of groups (i.e. SEN, PP etc).		
Specific learning strategies focus on removing barriers rather than just identifying them.		
Regularly updated with information from summative and formative assessment (i.e. when you mark, you add and/or tweak strategies).		
Has updated grades on it or a marksheet is attached with the most recent cycle data on it.		
Refers to skill gaps that need addressing.		
Comments and strategies are written in a positive way and appropriate for any audience.		
All DDP is in one wallet or section of a folder that is handed over when the visitor drops in. The wallet should also contain provision maps for SEN students and any other intervention planning documents.		
Next steps:		

Data Driven Planning (DDP)

Learning Walk Feedback

Visitor		Date		Period	
Teacher		Class		Ability	
Dept.		Context			
Data driven planning seen	Yes/No	Class data attached?		Yes/No	
Continued focus Dept./Individual					
Previous priority to improve					
Reason for learning walk					

Routines for Learning			Yes/No/NS (not seen)
Purposeful Start		a. Meet and greet/line up/punctual/calm exit	
		b. Stand up in silence/mantra for Year 7/purposeful start	
		c. Link to prior/new learning	
		d. Planners and equipment on desks	
Expectations		e. All teacher questions directed	
		f. Student work demonstrates understanding and pride in their learning (as in front of planner)	
		g. Positive climate, PRIDE used as a language for learning	
		h. Clear and specific instructions for learning, incl. H & S	
		i. Data driven planning evident (via conversation and plan)	
		j. Active listening demonstrated	
		k. Great oracy is always modelled, challenged & celebrated	
		l. Purposeful Home Learning set	

Two Best Features *Must link to learning priorities*	Priority to most improve learning *(2 max)*
1.	1.
2.	2.
Marking Grade (1 to 4)	

Learning Priorities	WWW	EBI
1. Students display a desire to learn and have high aspirations		
2. Planned differentiation for access and challenge for all students		
3. Success criteria are understood, relevant and referred to		
4. Big picture referred to regularly (purpose of learning)		
5. Students understand learning targets to improve (short/long term)		
6. Reshaping learning (agile teaching and differentiation)		
7. Subject specific language is embedded and used in learning		
8. Opportunities for enhancing quality extended writing/reading ('processes')		
9. Quality of questioning assesses and stretches all students		
10. Peer to peer support and critique is established and effective		
11. Regular and specific feedback (verbal and written) enables progress		
12. Forensic monitoring of students working for same time feedback		
13. Relevant Social, Moral, Spiritual, Cultural (SMSC) opportunities taken		

Next Steps (must be completed and state when it will take place) (possible options include HOD training/dept. training/coaching/observe others/CPD/DDP/SoL amendment/share practice)

White copy – Admin → HoD   Blue copy – Staff   Yellow copy – SLT Link