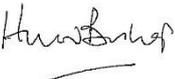




Blue Coat Church of England Academy

Teaching & Learning Policy

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Prepared by:		E. Perry
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	Signature	
Principal		Mr. D. Smith
Chair of Governors		Rev. H. Bishop
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Contents

Definition of Teaching.....	3
Definition of Learning	4
Planning and Implementation of Learning Activities:.....	4
Differentiation of learning strategies, activities, materials and outcomes	6
Assessment for Learning.....	7
Setting of appropriate home learning across the whole curriculum.....	8
Roles and Responsibilities.....	9

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

Teaching and Learning Policy

At Blue Coat Church of England Academy, we strive to introduce Christian aspects of teaching into all that we do, promoting care, respect and high standards in all aspects of Academy life. We aim to build self-esteem and to foster an environment where achievement, in all its forms, is recognised and celebrated.

Blue Coat Church of England Academy aims to equip all learners with the skills needed to succeed in a changing world. We aim to encourage all of our students to achieve their potential through a culture of high expectations for everyone, fostering 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 and to become active participants in society.

Definition of Teaching

Teaching includes the whole range of strategies that a teacher employs to promote learning and progress. At Blue Coat Academy, we believe that effective teaching involves:

- An up to date, secure knowledge and understanding of curriculum, assessment and pedagogy;
- Prioritising the knowledge, understanding and skills we choose to focus on, in order to deepen students' learning;
- Acquiring relevant knowledge about students and using that knowledge to inform our course design and classroom practice;
- Having consistently high expectations of all students;
- Aligning the three major components of instruction: learning intentions, assessments, and activities so that they are matched to the learning needs of all students;
- Articulating explicit expectations with reference to learning intentions, intended outcomes and success criteria;
- Differentiating learning tasks, materials, strategies and outcomes to meet the needs of all students, including the most able, SEND and EAL students;
- Equipping students with the skills to become independent and reflective learners, developing their capacity for life-long learning;
- The explicit teaching and assessment (where relevant) of cross-curricular skills, including: reading, writing, communication and numeracy;
- Formative, summative and diagnostic assessment at timely and relevant points to monitor, evaluate and inform the next steps towards students' learning and progress;
- Ensuring high standards of behaviour for learning in order to create a purposeful environment conducive to teaching and learning;
- Setting challenging and purposeful homework activities to extend learning beyond the classroom and also to provide a foundation for classroom study, in the case of 'flipped learning';
- Refining our curriculum and classroom practice based on reflection and feedback.

Definition of Learning

Learning is the process by which students make sense of new experience. Learning takes place when students construct their own knowledge and understanding of a subject, skill or values. Learning often takes place through personal interaction. Therefore, at Blue Coat Academy, we believe that it is important to promote activities that allow the learner to work with others to solve problems, to explore concepts and to develop language as a means of learning and a tool for thinking. At Blue Coat Academy, we believe that learning involves:

- Accessing prior knowledge, beliefs and attitudes as a foundation for interpreting and building new knowledge and understanding;
- The effective organisation of new knowledge and information. Students naturally make connections between pieces of knowledge. When those connections form structures that are accurately and meaningfully organised, students are better able to retrieve and apply their knowledge effectively and efficiently;
- Motivation; students' motivation determines, directs, and sustains what they do to learn. When students find positive value in a learning goal or activity, expect to successfully achieve a desired learning outcome and perceive support from their environment, they are likely to be strongly motivated to learn;
- The integration and application of skills. To develop mastery, students must acquire component skills, practice integrating them and know when to apply what they have learnt;
- Focus on a specific, clear and measurable target, incorporating an appropriate level of challenge;
- Acting upon timely feedback that explicitly communicates strengths and areas for development relative to specific target criteria in order to make progress in meeting that criteria;
- Harnessing opportunities to develop the full range of intellectual, social, and emotional skills;
- Self-direction. Learners engage in a variety of metacognitive processes to monitor and control their learning—assessing the task at hand, evaluating their own strengths and weaknesses, planning their approach, applying and monitoring various strategies, and reflecting on the degree to which their current approach is working. When students develop the skills to engage these processes, they gain intellectual habits that not only improve their performance but also their effectiveness as learners.
- Thinking hard. At Blue Coat Academy, we recognise that learners need the opportunity to process new information in order to be able to recall and apply this knowledge. We promote a wide range of learning opportunities to enable pupils to 'think hard'. It is the process of thinking, sequencing, decoding, rearranging and making links that lead to deep thinking and allow better understanding and recall. Students are regularly exposed to learning sequences that support independence and promote higher order thinking.

The aims of this document are to provide coherence of approach and consistency of expectation by setting out a framework for teaching and learning at Blue Coat Church of England Academy, within which there is flexibility and scope for creativity, so that teachers, parents/carers and students are all aware of and can work towards the highest possible standards of education for all.

Planning and Implementation of Learning Activities:

Rationale

It is important that teachers plan schemes of work and deliver lessons that enable students to work towards learning intentions and make progress towards 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 focused lesson implementation aids students in making progress over time.

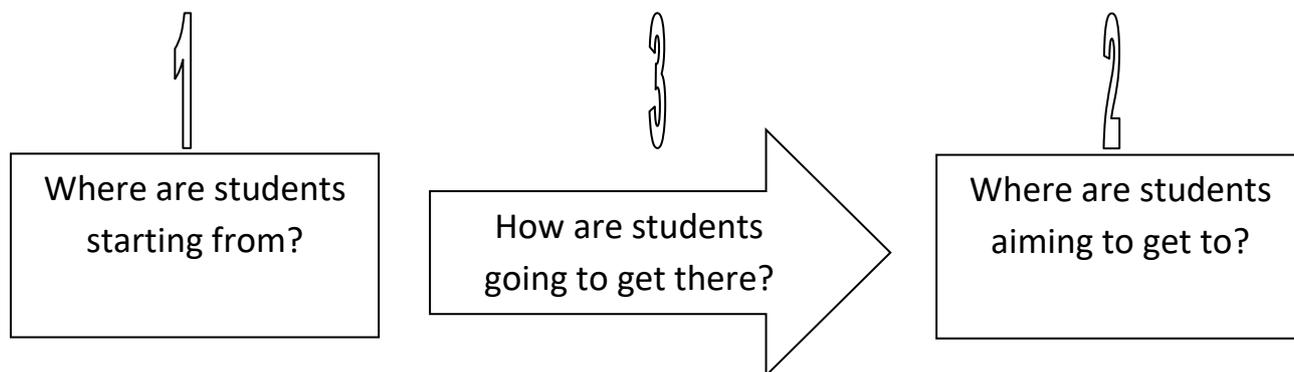
Schemes of Work

The Academy has an agreed format for long and medium term planning, which should be used by all departments. It is expected that schemes of work will:

- Clarify learning intentions and outcomes (including success criteria) for progress over time;
- Identify clearly the subject knowledge and skills (continuum strands or assessment objectives) to be taught;
- Include references to differentiated work to ensure all students are challenged in line with their ability;
- Provide opportunities for developing independent and collaborative learning;
- Detail literacy, numeracy and communication opportunities and how they will be taught;
- Include opportunities for a variety of assessment for learning strategies;
- Identify opportunities for formative, summative and diagnostic assessment, along with time built in for 'therapy' or in-class interventions to address the specific learning needs of individuals and groups;
- Identify relevant and challenging opportunities for home learning, supported by Show My Homework.

Lessons

When initially devising a new lesson, teachers are reminded to keep the lesson focused on the learning intentions and intended outcomes or success criteria, so that students move forward and make progress in their learning every lesson, relative to their starting points. The following diagram is intended as a tool to ensure that initial planning remains clearly focused.



Teachers at Blue Coat Church of England Academy should strive to ensure that their planning allows for the following criteria to be met each lesson:

- Use of assessment to inform planning - formative, summative and diagnostic assessment information should be used to plan tasks that are matched to students' prior attainment;
- Level of challenge - work should be pitched at a level that is appropriate for individuals and groups.
- Pace and depth of learning - the pace of learning should be optimised throughout the lesson to allow pupils make rapid and sustained progress. Pace is a synonym for momentum, not speed. Pace is the inertia that is observable when students are engaged in what they are doing because they are interested in it and want to do well. Activities should be completed thoroughly, not quickly.
- Opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy, and communication skills – teaching should include all relevant opportunities to develop reading, writing, communication and numeracy skills. These should be explicitly taught, modelled and cohesively planned as part of the lesson;
- Use of a range of appropriate strategies and tasks to engage students - strategies and tasks should engage and enthuse students so that they persevere when faced with difficult problems and are keen to succeed and to learn more. These should encourage students to process new learning.
- Use of questioning - questions should be designed to measure and extend students' understanding so that the teacher is aware of the degree to which pupils are secure in their knowledge and understanding;
- Assessment of learning during lessons – work and support for individual students should be adapted in the light of any misconceptions that are brought to light through questioning or checks on students' work;

- Marking and feedback – this should be frequent and regular, in line with whole school policy, providing students with very clear guidance on how work can be improved. Students need to be engaged in the process and should be encouraged to respond to teacher comments through further practice;
- Progress – ultimately, all students should make at least good progress in their learning relative to their starting points, and demonstrate full understanding of this;
- Use of teaching assistants - teaching assistants should be highly effective in promoting rapid learning for groups of students. Teachers should plan how best to deploy teaching assistants in order to meet the learning and development needs of individuals and groups. Communication of aims and objectives prior to the lesson or a sequence of lessons is vital to enable the TA to provide the most effective support;
- Home Learning – home learning should be an integral part of the lesson. It extends or provides the foundation for classroom learning and is treated as being equally as important as the lesson itself. This is set by staff at the Academy through Show My Homework and is monitored by Heads of Department and SLT.

Planning

It is acceptable for teachers at Blue Coat Church of England Academy to use a variety of methods to plan their teaching on a day-to-day basis, whilst adhering to the criteria contained within this policy. These methods could include use of Power Point, use of a generic teacher planner or another structured plan of their choice. This freedom of choice is to allow teachers to develop their own styles and to give them the freedom to be creative in their planning so that they may feel empowered to offer deep learning experiences, un-restricted by a set lesson plan or structure. However, whilst teaching staff are encouraged to adopt a style of their own and are not expected to teach in any specific way, regular monitoring of teaching and learning takes place at Blue Coat Church of England Academy to ensure the highest standards, in regard to planning, marking and assessment, ensuring the highest outcomes for students.

Differentiation of learning strategies, activities, materials and outcomes

Rationale

Differentiation should take into account the needs of all learners. Staff should plan to ensure that all learners are set challenging goals and make at least expected progress. At Blue Coat Church of England Academy, we recognise that different students have different needs, related to influences both within and beyond the classroom. Awareness of the needs of specific groups will enhance the provision for individuals. Staff are therefore expected to make use of the student information made available to them on SIMS, Health Care Plans, EAL Support Plans etc. when planning lessons and sequences of lessons.

Differentiation can take many forms and can often be grouped into differentiation by process (how students learn), and /or differentiation by content (what students learn).

Differentiation by process includes:

- Providing a range of alternative tasks;
- Deliberate grouping of students according to tasks (e.g. grouping all of the most able students together to work on a particularly challenging task; using 'jigsaw' grouping; mixed ability grouping for peer teaching etc.);
- Assigning roles to individual students (e.g. leader, scribe, questioner, spokesperson etc.);
- Support provided by a TA;
- Varying degrees of challenge within teacher questioning and response.

Differentiation by content includes

- The qualification/tier students are studying for;

- Developing and adapting resources to support, challenge and extend students, taking into account all students' needs.

Use of intervention strategies can help students to make greater progress. Teachers should make use of formative, summative and diagnostic assessment in order to identify students who are making less than expected progress and plan for in class 'therapy' or intervention. Where lack of progress is sustained, despite this intervention, subject leaders and the SEND/EAL Co-ordinator should be informed so that additional support can be provided.

Working with Teaching Assistants

- Teaching Assistants are most effectively deployed in the classroom when they are informed of, and involved in, the learning;
- Teaching Assistants should be provided with medium term plans/schemes of work in advance;
- Regular discussion of student progress and wellbeing should take place between the teacher and Teaching Assistant;
- Teachers should provide Teaching Assistants with appropriate guidance on their role within the lesson or sequence of lessons;
- Teaching Assistants should share their in-depth knowledge of the student or students being supported, particularly if progress differs significantly in other lessons.

Assessment for Learning

Rationale

Assessment procedures and practices should support the planning and delivery of each student's learning journey. Therefore, assessment for learning is a central part of everyday classroom practice at Blue Coat. Assessment for learning at Blue Coat is underpinned by the belief that every student can improve if they understand the aim of their learning, where they are in relation to this aim and how they can achieve the aim (or close the gap in their knowledge).

Assessment Criteria

Learning goals, teaching strategies and assessment criteria should be carefully matched. Students should know in advance what they will learn, as well as how and why they are to be assessed.

The most effective feedback guides students through the next teaching and learning steps, providing clear, descriptive, criterion-based information that enables them to determine their position on a learning trajectory in relation to their targets. At Blue Coat Church of England Academy, common student-speak assessment criteria within each department aids this process. Students are also provided with personalised learning checklists (PLCs) for each unit of work, enabling them to track their progress and to identify strengths and areas for development in the acquisition of subject specific knowledge, understanding and skills.

Diagnosis – Therapy - Testing

Diagnostic assessment is used in each department on an ongoing and regular basis, to identify those students who require additional support in order to master particular areas of knowledge, understanding and skill. These assessments may take the form of specific pieces of classwork or homework, 'mini-mocks' or formalised pre-public examinations.

Diagnosis of areas for development should be followed by 'therapy'; opportunities for students to re-learn key facts and processes, to practice a particular skill or to further develop their understanding of a concept or concepts.

Opportunities for this should be provided in class, although students may also be provided with additional or personalised home learning tasks, related to their own areas for development, as part of that 'therapy'.

Further testing should then take place to assess the extent to which students have mastered the areas of knowledge, understanding and skill covered by therapy sessions.

Opportunities for the cycle of 'diagnosis – therapy – testing' should be incorporated into all schemes of work, with ample time afforded for 'therapy' to ensure that students are able to address misconceptions and gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Red Pen Response

Assessment for learning is a reciprocal process, based on quality interaction between students and teachers. This learning dialogue is supported by our 'red pen response' policy, requiring students to respond to, and to act upon, the targets set by their teachers, in order to make improvements to their work. Within a supportive environment, students are encouraged to take risks and to make errors, understanding that wrong answers can assist learning just as effectively as right answers.

The most effective feedback guides students through the next teaching and learning steps, providing clear, descriptive, criterion-based information that enables students to determine their position on a learning trajectory in relation to their targets. Common, pupil-speak assessment criteria and level descriptors through subject continuums, within each department aids this process.

Peer and Self-Assessment of Learning and Progress

It is also vital that students develop the capacity for peer and self-assessment, actively participating in assessing their own and others' learning. At Blue Coat Church of England Academy, students are encouraged to take increasing control of their own learning through the assessment process. To develop the capacity for peer and self-assessment, students are provided with models of quality work; accessible criteria against which to assess such work and opportunities to compare their own work against such models and criteria.

Setting of appropriate home learning across the whole curriculum

Rationale

Home learning is an essential part of a successful education and helps support students' ability to learn in a variety of contexts. Home learning not only reinforces classroom learning, it also helps students to develop skills and attitudes they need for successful lifelong learning. It promotes independent learning skills, including the habits of inquiry and investigation. At Blue Coat Church of England Academy, homework is set via the Show my Homework program and accessed electronically by students and parents. Homework is monitored and quality assured by Heads of Department and Senior Leaders.

Effectiveness of home learning

Heads of Department and classroom teachers must ensure that home learning is purposeful and that it enhances the students' learning journey. It can be used both to consolidate and extend student learning in class and also to provide a foundation for future in-class learning. Home learning is most effective when tasks are structured, linked to the scheme of work and their purpose is clearly explained to students.

Homework practices should be consistent within and across departments, as detailed in our whole school homework policy.

1. Monitoring of Teaching and Learning

The model for the monitoring of teaching and learning is as follows:

- Regular formal and informal learning walks – this may include a variety of formats such as ‘drop-ins’, tours of the school, whole school or subject monitoring and review cycles supported by our external partnership links;
- Lesson observation;
- Peer review observations;
- Coaching observations;
- Work scrutiny – this may include a variety of formats, including calendared exercise book monitoring and pupil trails;
- Newly qualified teachers are additionally observed as part of their training and development needs.

Monitoring of teaching and learning is quality assured through a model of paired observation wherever possible. The monitoring of the quality of teaching also includes a comparison to pupil progress and outcomes in order to give a broader picture of the success of teaching over time.

Support for Classroom Based Staff

At Blue Coat Academy, we believe that effective teaching and learning is underpinned by staff CPD. We are therefore committed to supporting teachers to improving their teaching in the following ways:

- Observing good practice from colleagues;
- Calendared teaching and learning meeting cycles with specific opportunities to develop areas of teaching;
- Use of coaching – teachers working in pairs and small groups to enhance their own practice;
- Observing good practice in other schools through our network links or partnership schools;
- Internal CPD;
- External CPD courses.

Student and Parent Involvement

The views of students about lessons will also be sought as part of student voice. Parents also have a considerable contribution to make to students’ success in school. They are strongly encouraged to review their children’s school books, support students in responding to their teachers’ feedback and create the right environment and routines at home to enable homework to be completed. Liaison with the school is encouraged through use of text updates, the website, parental engagement evenings and Academy events.

Roles and Responsibilities

Students

- To engage in and take responsibility for their own learning by participating fully in learning activities in the classroom and beyond;
- To reflect upon their own progress towards attainment targets and set interim steps towards achieving these;
- To respond to teacher formative and summative assessment, acting upon targets set in order to make progress in their own learning;
- Following diagnostic assessments, to engage fully in ‘therapy’ or intervention sessions, both inside and outside the classroom as a means to making further progress towards attainment targets;
- To take ownership of their personalised learning checklists in each subject area, in order to identify key strengths and areas for development in relation to content and skills covered.

Form Tutors

- To support learners in setting challenging targets and strategies for meeting these;
- To encourage learners to reflect upon their own learning style and how they can best engage in their own learning and progress;
- To monitor the recording and completion of home learning activities;
- To provide opportunities during form time for developing the skills required for independent and collaborative learning;
- To provide opportunities during form time to develop the full range of intellectual, social, and emotional skills;

Subject Teachers

- To plan lessons which take into account prior attainment, specific learning needs and different learning styles in order to allow all students to access the curriculum;
- To provide reflective opportunities within the lesson in order to allow students to consolidate their learning and to reflect upon the cognitive process;
- To ensure that students make progress during lessons by using accurate and appropriate assessment techniques;
- To use questions which provide stretch and challenge to all learners;
- To be committed to learning themselves as reflective practitioners who strive to keep up to date with subject and curriculum knowledge and pedagogy;
- To manage behaviour to ensure that the learning environment is safe and conducive to teaching and learning;
- To maintain and clearly communicate high expectations of all students, to students;
- To communicate regularly with teaching assistants to clarify their role within the lesson or sequence of lessons being supported;
- To follow the guidelines set out within this policy with regards to the planning and structuring of learning opportunities.

Teaching Assistants

- To be committed to learning themselves as reflective practitioners who strive to keep up to date with relevant subject and curriculum knowledge and pedagogy;
- To maintain and clearly communicate high expectations of all students, to students, regardless of background or ability;
- To use questions which provide stretch and challenge to all learners, regardless of background or ability;
- To share their in-depth knowledge of the student or students being supported, particularly if progress differs significantly in other lessons;
- To communicate regularly with teaching staff to clarify their role within the lesson or sequence of lessons being supported;
- To follow the guidelines set out within this policy with regards to supporting the teaching and learning process within lessons.

Heads of Department

- To ensure that Academy/department policy is in operation through lesson observations, work monitoring and student interviews and that whole school priorities are shared through subject development plans;
- To encourage and make time for necessary training and the sharing of good practice in department and teaching and learning meeting time;
- To encourage the sharing of good practice and professional dialogue;
- To identify the teaching and learning strategies which would be best suited to delivery of curriculum content and material;

- To plan schemes of work which incorporate opportunities for learners to access the curriculum through the planned use of questions, different learning styles and reflective opportunities;
- To use and monitor the use of display to promote, reinforce and support teaching and learning strategies and assessment for learning;
- To follow, and ensure that others in their department adhere to, the guidelines set out within this policy with regards to the planning and structuring of learning opportunities.

Key Stage Progress Leaders

- To research, trial and embed good practice and innovation in strategies for teaching and learning;
- To disseminate good practice amongst colleagues both formally and informally at department and teaching and learning meetings and through delivery of staff training as part of the CPD programme;
- To support Heads of Department and subject teachers in the identification of student learning needs;
- To monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in regards to the attainment and progress of individuals and groups;
- To encourage the sharing and dissemination of resources and good practice across different curriculum areas;
- To lead on strategies for 'therapy' or intervention for cohorts, groups and individuals in preparation for end of Key Stage assessments;
- To support liaison between feeder primary schools to ensure progression in learning from year 6 to year 7.

Quality Teaching First Coaches

- To research, trial and embed good practice and innovation in strategies for teaching and learning;
- To disseminate good practice amongst colleagues both formally and informally at department and teaching and learning meetings and through delivery of staff training as part of the CPD programme;
- To support Heads of Department and subject teachers in the identification of student learning needs;
- To encourage the sharing and dissemination of resources and good practice across different curriculum areas;
- To support teachers in evaluating their own practice, identifying areas for development and responding to these.

The Senior Leadership Team

- To provide and evaluate the provision of staff training through a planned, comprehensive CPD programme within school, to enhance knowledge of and practice in employing appropriate and effective teaching and learning strategies;
- To encourage the sharing and dissemination of resources and good practice across different curriculum areas;
- To ensure that parents are kept informed of how they might support their children in developing their learning skills;
- To support liaison between feeder primary schools to ensure progression in learning from year 6 to year 7;
- To regularly evaluate the quality of teaching and learning across the Academy, on outcomes for cohorts, groups and individuals and to use findings to inform whole school policy and practice;
- To monitor adherence to the guidelines set out within this policy with regards to the planning and structuring of learning opportunities and to hold to account those who fail to comply with Academy policy.

Links to other policies:

- Special educational needs (SEN) and disability

- Information on Remote Education
- Whole School Assessment, Marking and Feedback
- Curriculum