Wootton Academy Trust

Teaching and Learning Policy

2. SUMMARY

- This policy explains Wootton Academy Trust's approach to all aspects of teaching and learning and aims to enhance the quality and consistency of the learning experience for all students.
- It applies to all staff and to all students, from entry in Year 9 to Year 13.
- It links closely with recommended good practice and provides both structure and opportunities for innovation.
- The responsibilities of staff in the management and development of teaching and learning are outlined.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the quality and consistency in teaching and learning at Wootton Academy Trust Schools.

4. SCOPE

This document applies to all staff and students at the school.

5. CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Leadership Team drafted this policy on behalf of the WAT board of Directors. Middle Leaders were presented with a copy of the draft policy in September 2017. Comments were requested within a 2-week consultation window. Any comments made were considered by Leadership Group before being presented to the Local Governing Body.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1   The Board of Directors and Wootton Upper School Local Governing Body have responsibility for …

- Ensuring that this policy is in place, monitored continually and reviewed periodically via the Local Governing Body.
- Ensuring that any complaint arising from the operation of this policy is dealt with in accordance with the Wootton Academy Trust Complaints Policy.
- Encouraging, supporting and acclaiming good practice.

6.2   The Vice Principals are responsible for
- Implementing this policy on a daily basis.
- Monitoring the work to the Assistant Principals with responsibility for evaluating the quality and consistency of teaching and learning throughout the school via Quality Assurance (QA), SLT Link meetings with middle leaders, learning walks, work sampling, lesson observations, data analysis, Year Leaders, CPD, SEND, student leadership, Pupil Premium and disadvantaged students
- Ensuring staff, students and parents are aware of their responsibilities within this policy.
- Monitoring the implementation of the document and reporting to the relevant Local Advisory Body, termly on these matters.
- Encouraging, supporting and acclaiming good practice. Celebrate learning.

6.3   The designated Vice Principals/Assistant Principals (Teaching & Learning) are responsible for:

- Ensuring staff, students and parents are aware of their responsibilities within this policy, eliciting their support for it and allowing them an opportunity to comment on its effectiveness.
- Providing training and CPD for those with responsibilities within this policy.
- Ensuring that staff are aware of initiatives and recommended good practice in terms of teaching and learning.
- Providing opportunities for colleagues to share and celebrate good practice.
- Communicating with new staff and newly qualified teachers to highlight teaching and learning policy and practice.
- Reviewing learning walks, work samples, lesson observations, appraisals, QA, and data to inform the school improvement plan, including relevant CPD, homework, pupil profiles.

6.4   Subject leaders are responsible for:

- Monitoring and supporting the implementation of this policy by teachers working in the department and informing their line manager accordingly.
- Regularly discussing items relating to teaching and learning at departmental meetings.
- Highlighting and disseminating effective teaching and learning practice both within and across departments.
- Conducting Learning walks, work samples and lesson observations and appraisal reviews in line with the Appraisal Policy.
- Maintaining an up to date Head of Subject file.
- Implementing the SIP across the department.
- Evaluating the quality and appropriateness of homework set in their department and making changes accordingly.

6.5   Heads of Year are responsible for:

- The academic care of students, that is, knowing that students (both individually and across the cohort) are meeting or exceeding progress data.
- Monitoring the central database to check the progress of individuals and the year cohort as a whole.
- Monitoring the quality of curricular targets through individual meetings, and in annual reports home to parents.
- Students to have the opportunity to celebrate learning. Students should leave our classrooms with a feeling of achievement and progress.
- Monitoring the work of tutors with regard to PSHE, CIAG, SMSC.

6.6   Subject teachers are responsible for:

- Ensuring lessons are planned and structured effectively in order to accommodate the needs of all students.
- Keeping updated regarding latest developments in terms of effective pedagogy and practice.
- Planning for innovative practice to enable all students to access planned learning objectives.
- Meeting the Teacher Standards.
- Implementing the SIP in their lessons and with their Tutees.
- Developing student potential by applying Assessment for Learning principles and setting realistic and challenging targets to move students on to the next level of learning.
- Students to have the opportunity in lessons to celebrate learning. Students should leave our classrooms with a feeling of achievement and progress.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Introduction

Teaching and learning are core functions of our school.   Our primary focus is to ensure that students make at least good progress in their lessons. We promote an active and inclusive culture of learning, ensuring that students are inspired and fully involved in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding across all subject areas.   It is our aim to motivate all students to have high aspirations and a desire to fulfil their potential both in and out of lessons.

We aim to develop independent and creative learners by encouraging teachers and students to work in partnership to create an active and stimulating learning environment. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child's learning and are supported in doing so.

Our key learning and teaching themes are:

Active Learning
Differentiation
Higher order questioning
Marking and Feedback (WWW.EBI.MRI)
Literacy
Pace and challenge

These themes are regularly incorporated into lessons and help to facilitate the progress of all our students.

7.2 Active Learning

In Wootton Academy Trust Schools, active learning is valued and promoted.

Student-led tasks are prominent and "hands on" activities are encouraged to ensure full student engagement. Ideally, an 80/20 percentage balance between student activity and teacher talk is aimed for, in favour of student-led learning. Tasks are challenging and relevant to learning objectives. Students are actively engaged in activities that make them think about and comment upon information presented, rather than simply listening to the teacher talking. Students will analyse, synthesise and evaluate information through working regularly with other students.

Co-operative learning is a form of active learning where students work together to perform specific tasks in pairs or small groups (e.g. "think / pair / share" and reciprocal teaching activities) and this style of learning is prominent in our classrooms.

Paired work and peer assessment is used regularly in Wootton Academy Trust Schools and this presents significant learning opportunities through the use of dialogue. Students are encouraged to actively listen to the viewpoints of others and to offer their own opinions. They are expected to challenge each other constructively and to share, evaluate and develop individual and collective ideas.

Group work is encouraged across all levels of ability, supported by teacher intervention as appropriate to maintain momentum. Students are able to explore and develop their understanding of key issues and are able to develop their social and team-working skills. Students are provided with opportunities to practise and learn from each other and to extend their decision-making and problem-solving skills. They are able to develop a sense of empathy and to understand the views of others.

Group work is fully inclusive and groupings should be flexible and usually defined by the teachers to suit specific tasks. Students should be familiar with clear structures, rules and procedures and are aware that contributions are made, and listened to, by all group members.

The level of teacher talk is at a minimum. Whole-class teacher explanations are concise and used to present key concepts and ideas and to demonstrate skills and processes. Effective explanation skills are used to engage and support students in active learning and higher order thinking. Teacher talk is used to establish interactive dialogue in which the teacher and students articulate ideas to develop knowledge and understanding, creating an appropriate level of challenge to enable students to make good progress.

7.3 Differentiation

Staff use differentiated activities to ensure that all students make progress in their learning. Individuality is recognised and the challenge of managing diversity is embraced. Differentiation addresses the individual needs of students through an appropriate range of resources and strategies. Teaching assistants and other adults should be actively involved in planning and differentiating lesson activities. Pupil Profile sheets are used to identify support d interventions for SEND and disadvantaged students.

Student targets underpin teaching and learning in lessons. Teachers must be aware of individual student needs and aim to match learning objectives, success criteria and lesson tasks to these needs. Differentiation strategies will be varied and based on assessment information

Data-led classroom based interventions are the first strategy used to address under-achievement. Strategies used should initially focus on support within the classroom where a guided learning approach is encouraged, whereby small groups of students are targeted within a larger class. Teaching Assistants, where available, are used to facilitate this guided learning process. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that lessons fit into existing schemes of learning and enable the whole class to progress, not just the targeted group.

Teaching assistants are valued as an integral part of the lesson and their role is focussed on developing learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work in partnership to ensure that learning objectives are achieved by all groups of students. Ideally, teaching assistants are involved in the planning, and preparation of work.

7.4 Questioning to Promote Higher Order Thinking

Questioning is used regularly during all phases of lessons to promote higher order thinking skills. While many questions are planned, both individually and in sequences, some may be intuitive in response to a particular aspect of the lesson, or in order to address a perceived weakness during a lesson. Teachers move around to ask questions so that all students come within their range of vision. *"Bloom's Taxonomy"* is used to promote understanding at all levels, ranging from closed, factual questions to more divergent, stretching questions. At Wootton Academy Trust Schools, there is a focus on higher order questions in order to extend students by offering challenge and by presenting increased cognitive demands.

Students are encouraged to develop their own questioning skills and to regularly ask questions of both their teachers and peer group. A climate is created where students feel safe to make mistakes and take risks in answering questions. A range of strategies are used to ensure a fully inclusive approach to questioning.

7.5 Marking and Feedback linked the marking and feedback policy of (WWW/EBI/MRI)

Formative assessment is an integral part of lesson delivery. Assessment for Learning is used regularly in lessons at Wootton Academy Trust Schools to promote student progress and to ensure that every child knows how they are performing and understands what they need to do to improve further. Through regular and targeted feedback parents / carers also know how their child is performing, the required improvements and how they can support their child in achieving their targets. Students must be given an opportunity to respond and react to teacher feedback. Tasks must give learners chance to refine their approach.

Six characteristics of AfL are evident in all our classrooms:

- **Learning objectives are shared with students**

  Learning objectives are presented in student-friendly language and are embedded within lesson planning. Objectives should be used as a basis for questioning and feedback during plenaries throughout a lesson. All students must be clearly aware of the required learning in each lesson and can articulate this confidently and accurately when questioned. Students will know and recognise the standards they are aiming for.

- **Targets are aspirational in order to stretch students from the very start of their education at Wootton Academy Trust Schools**

  Students will be aware of their current and their targeted performance in all subjects (MEG - level or grade) and have clear success criteria. Students should be familiar with subject level descriptors and mark scheme criteria.

- **Students are involved in peer and self-assessment**

  Students should be actively encouraged to reflect upon their work and to identify their personal strengths and weaknesses. They are encouraged to work closely with their peers (either in paired or group work activities) and to assess the performance of each other. Students focus on how to improve and analysis is based on clearly defined assessment criteria. Students are given time to reflect upon their learning.

- **Students are provided with feedback which leads to them recognising their next steps in learning and how to take them (EBI – Even Better If)**

  AfL is provided using both verbal and written feedback which presents personalised information to enable all students to progress their learning. Feedback is supplied throughout lessons and provides constructive, specific guidance explaining what each student has done well, how to improve further and what needs to be done to make the required improvements.

- **Confidence is promoted that every student can improve (MRI - My Response Is)**

  Teachers have high expectations of all their students and aim to build confidence and self-esteem by identifying small steps to enable students to see their progress. Students should be encouraged to improve their work, and to explain their thinking and reasoning within a secure classroom ethos.

- **Both teachers and students are involved in reviewing and reflecting on assessment information**

  Robust assessment data will be used consistently to inform learning and progress judgments. Assessment data will also be shared regularly with students and used to identify areas of strength and weakness. Data will be used precisely to target the required next steps in learning. Where possible, assessment information should be shared on a one-to-one basis with students. As a result of reflective assessment practices, planning can be adjusted and tasks evaluated to ensure maximum impact.

7.6   Literacy

Teachers will highlight the importance of subject specific literacy with pupils, the links between reading, writing and speaking and listening, to ensure progression in development in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Teachers will demonstrate high expectations over the standard and presentation of all written work. Assessment will include the marking of literacy, SPaG. Teachers in every subject are responsible for developing the literacy skills of all students. Effective planning should incorporate the explicit teaching and learning of literacy related skills. A weekly literacy focus is set to reinforce literacy skills across the curriculum. A weekly 'word of the week' extends vocabulary skills across the curriculum. A Literacy wall is in place in every classroom.

7.7   Pace and Challenge

Challenge and pace is necessary for progress in learning. To be outstanding, our students must be able to explain why they are doing an activity, what to do to improve and feel confident enough to take risks in learning. They must work with sufficient independence for the progress to be made permanent. Teachers have the key task, to assess accurately, the most appropriate level of challenge, pace and support for the different groups of learners within a class. Teachers have the task of mediating cognitive conflict so the learners are able to achieve resolution. Increasing challenge and pace involves adjusting the quality not necessarily the quantity of learning experiences. For learning to be challenging students should experience higher order thinking opportunities. That is; applying, analysing, transforming, synthesizing, creating or evaluating in addition to recalling and comprehending.

7.8   The Learning Environment

We aim to offer an inspirational and stimulating learning environment for all our students.

Our classrooms should be fully inclusive, recognising the abilities and aptitudes of each individual student. Students should feel empowered to make positive contributions to each lesson and genuinely believe that their contributions are valued. Students must not be afraid to take risks in their learning and will be encouraged to do so. Students should enjoy their lessons and have fun in the process of learning. Classroom displays will be up-to-date, relevant and accessible, designed to capture attention and generate interest. Students will be encouraged to produce their own work for display purposes.

 Inclusive questioning methods are essential. The use of adequate thinking time before responses are essential. Conferring, discussion and refining answers should be promoted. Praise should be given for individual contributions and mistakes should be seen as excellent learning opportunities.

Classroom management procedures must be firmly established and students will be fully aware of classroom guidelines and routines; consequences and rewards should be used consistently and appropriately reflecting Wootton Academy Trust's Behaviour Policy. Seating plans, where appropriate, should be carefully considered to maximise learning potential. And these will be open to change to accommodate different types of work (e.g. group work) and individual student needs.

Teachers, where practical, should meet and greet students at the start of each lesson. Teacher should use the school behaviour management procedures and also Reprimand In Private, Praise In Public (RIP and PIP)

7.9   Lesson Planning

Teachers are responsible for planning their lessons in order to maximise learning. A standard lesson planning template should be used for all observed lessons. (Ref. Appendix 1). Similarly, a standard lesson observation form is used for all formal observations.

Lesson plans must include learning objectives and intended learning outcomes for different groups of students (e.g. PP/ SEND / Gifted). Groups of students should be clearly identified on lesson plans and seating plans and opportunities for differentiation and assessment must be identified.

Teachers should understand how students learn in a particular subject. Planning involves understanding the learning steps involved and the potential barriers. It is essential that this is shared with our students - the learning process, and measures of student progress are made explicit in every lesson. Objectives and outcomes should make cross-curricular links and seek to remove misconceptions. When planning learning, teachers should reflect on students' prior attainment and frame objectives and outcomes that link with those learning needs. Lesson plans should indicate how learning is being personalized for identified cohorts.

In the planning of learning, it may be necessary to differentiate expected learning outcomes for different groups of student over the course of the lesson, unit of work or key stage. We encourage all students to strive for the most challenging objectives. Outcomes should, where possible, link directly to grades or levels being worked towards.

7.10   Lesson Structure

Lessons in Wootton Academy Trust Schools must have a clear and appropriate structure. Differentiated learning objectives will be highlighted within the lesson so that all groups of students are clear regarding the learning outcomes. Objectives will be shared with students in student- friendly language and referred to at an appropriate point during lessons.

Where appropriate, lessons will have an engaging starter activity which is used to connect with students and to establish the pace of the lesson. Starters should be interactive wherever possible and fully inclusive, enabling learners to link prior and future learning. Reflective plenaries should take place at appropriate points during lessons to assess learning and provide time for immediate reflection of key learning points. A summary plenary should take place at the end of each lesson to link learning objectives and intended learning outcomes for all groups of students.

7.11   Cross-curricular Skills

Literacy and numeracy must be promoted across the curriculum. Where opportunities present themselves, cross-curricular themes should be highlighted and literacy and numeracy skills should be explicitly identified, practised and developed.

IT is viewed as an integral part of the curriculum and used on a regular basis within lessons when appropriate to do so. IT will be used as a basis for independent learning, encouraging students to judge when and how to use IT media and to make accurate judgments regarding the reliability of IT based information. Students should be encouraged to use the School's Virtual Learning Platform to develop their independent learning skills.

8. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND POLICY REVIEW

The designated Deputy/Assistant Principals (Teaching & Learning) will collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments and action as appropriate.

The policy will be reviewed annually by Wootton Upper School Local Advisory Body.

9. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

9.1 Associated Policies

- SEND Policy
- Assessment Recording and Reporting Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Gifted and Talented Policy
- Homework Policy
- Quality Assurance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Appraisal Policy

9.2 Appendices

9.2.1 Lesson Planning Template

9.2.2 Lesson Observation Form

9.2.3 National Teacher Standards

9.2.4 Learning Walks form

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