

Teaching and Learning Policy

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Related Policies:

- Feedback Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Dyslexia Policy

Contents

Contents

1. Statement of Philosophy.....	1
2. Aims.....	2
3. Procedure - What does this look like in practice?	2
4. Mixed Attainment teaching	5
5. Monitoring and Evaluation of Learning and Teaching.....	6
6. Bibliography and resource materials:	6

1. Statement of Philosophy

Teaching and Learning is at the heart of what we do at Royal Wootton Bassett Academy.

It is central to our work as educators and it stems from the Academy's aims and ethos. Every student is uniquely gifted and should be valued accordingly. Students of all ability levels will be given equal opportunities to learn in order to achieve their full potential.

Our purpose is to create a learning environment which fosters motivation and allows all students to flourish. We strive not to simply teach knowledge but to empower our students by teaching them how to learn. Students are encouraged to believe that anything is possible and their potential is boundless (Growth Mindset). As a school we also seek to actively challenge and overcome any inequalities and disadvantages that exists.

As a Dyslexia friendly school, we will identify and respond to the "unexpected difficulties" that a dyslexic learner may encounter. In these situations, teaching staff will support a range of diverse learning needs in mainstream settings and are empowered to do this by school procedures and systems. Royal Wootton Bassett Academy recognises that teaching staff, are key to the success of students overcoming their difficulties. Please refer to our Dyslexia Policy for further details.

This policy clarifies what we see as best practice and it fully embraces the aims and values of our Academy.

Our primary aim is that Royal Wootton Bassett Academy is a school that students and staff want to come to because learning is exciting and enjoyable. Everyone associated with the school will be

proud to be so and our students will leave us well prepared for the global challenges of the 21st century and as lifelong learners.

2. Aims

Our aims are:

- To provide a personalised learning experience for every child that takes full account of their individual needs, interests and aspirations.
- To develop whole school leadership of aligned approaches to professional learning that create conditions for staff and students to thrive and reach their potential.
- To identify and share good practice in learning and teaching across all curriculum areas.
- To engender life-long learning skills, independence, curiosity and confidence, and to raise student progress.
- To increase teacher expertise and knowledge in their own subjects, general pedagogy, quality evidence informed practice and professional standards.

The Academy's leadership is committed to enable teachers to focus on teaching, and for our students to focus on learning in the most effective ways.

We pride ourselves on a research-led and evidence-based approach to inform the planning of our whole school professional learning programme and consult with other professional organisations, such as the EEF, to ensure our CPD is high quality, and continues to follow the guidance for best practice.

We are a metacognitive school: this means students are given explicit instruction on how to learn in the most effective ways, which includes being taught how to plan, monitor, evaluate and improve their work using a range of strategies. Students are also taught how to self-regulate and be prepared for effective learning and to support the learning of others through positive mind-set and collaboration, taking care of their mental health and emotional well-being, understanding healthy eating and sleeping habits, and developing effective personal organisation skills to support them as life-long learners.

3. Procedure - What does this look like in practice?

Teachers are supported to engage with evidence-based practice to inform their classroom teaching and that evidence should be used alongside experience to support our daily practice. This is achieved through providing time for specific training in whole school CPD, learning forums, department development time, instructional coaching, bespoke coaching where necessary, and weekly additional bitesize learning foci.

It is expected that teachers evaluate the impact of their teaching through regular personal reflections, reviews of student work and data, informal and formal peer observations, and student voice. This combined evidence is used for quality assurance of Teaching and Learning and to inform the planning of CPD support.

- **Highly effective teachers are experts in their subject.** They understand the requirements of the knowledge-based curriculum and design schemes of learning to build lessons in a logical sequence, helping students make progress as they build on prior knowledge and have a clear understanding of the end goal, aligned with the progression curriculum model. Wherever possible, our teachers teach within their subject specialisms, and are given support to continually develop their own subject knowledge and expertise alongside both general and

subject specific pedagogy.

- **Highly effective teaching is built on strong relationships between teachers and their students.** Teachers need to get to know their students so they can meet their needs and build mutual respect. Teachers need to be given support to build these relationships. Where necessary, individuals may be given targeted support by lead practitioners, line managers and other relevant colleagues if they need further training and guidance to build and maintain positive relationships with students.
- **Teachers must be given relevant information so they are fully informed about their students.** All staff will ensure there is a clear, consistent behaviour strategy in place which is easy to administer and supports teachers to maintain a calm and focussed learning environment: this applies to any part of the Academy campus, or learning activities which extend into the wider community.
- **Teachers must implement the behaviour policy consistently.**
- **Lessons at Royal Wootton Bassett Academy** are not expected to follow a single rigid format: teachers should use their professional expertise and knowledge of their classes to adapt material and deliver the lesson in the most appropriate way for the students and the subject they are teaching. Nevertheless, all teaching, whether it is in a lesson in school, remote or online “live lessons”, or independent distance learning, is underpinned by the following five principles of good practice:
 1. **High expectations**, both for learning processes and levels of progress, and for the behaviours that enable learning to take place.
 2. **Knowledge of how students learn:** Teachers’ professional learning is driven by a whole school aligned CPD programme to support engagement with evidence-based practice, which will enable teachers to develop a good working knowledge of the application of cognitive science in their teaching to create the best possible chances of success for students.

Teachers should:

- Be responsible for their own CPD; interact with the CPD entitlement for their career stage through discussion with their line manager
- Continuously update their subject knowledge and teaching practice in line with current developments and initiatives;
- Discuss learning and teaching in Department Development time in order to share good practice;
- Plan their own CPD programme in conjunction with their Line Manager as a result of the Appraisal/Performance Management process and by reflecting on the Teachers’ Standards 2012 document.;
- Keep a record of CPD activities they have attended and the impact of this CPD on their practice.
- Involve themselves in optional CPD on areas of professional interest;
- Follow the approved procedure for requesting a place on an external course. (We are not able however to fund or part fund higher education costs e.g. under/postgraduate

study).

3. **Follow Rosenshine's principles of instruction:**

- Establish and maintain clear routines for learning to reduce cognitive load.
- Plan lessons to provide regular opportunities for recall.
- Present new information in small steps.
- Provide models and scaffolds for difficult tasks.
- Use questions regularly to check for understanding.
- Use probing questions and strategies such as “no opt-out” and “cold calling” to promote deeper engagement and thinking.
- Plan opportunities for deliberate practice, both guided and independent.

4. **Provide effective feedback:** Effective feedback will enable students to know two crucial things:

- What am I doing well in this subject?
- How can I improve?

Formative feedback should be regular, timely, positive and constructive. The purpose of feedback is to diagnose misconceptions, to allow intervention and correction of errors; to increase motivation, to encourage and reward effort; and to develop greater sophistication and depth of understanding to promote progress. There are many effective ways to provide feedback:

- Regular low stakes knowledge tests
- Live marking with individual questioning to improve understanding
- Whole class feedback after sampling a cross-section of student books
- Modelling and worked examples
- Teacher keeps lists of class errors/misconceptions to re-teach in another lesson
- Questioning (Planned, probing, targeted)
- Sets of exam questions either self-marked; peer marked or teacher marked
- Structured peer or self-assessment

After feedback is shared with the class, students are directed to complete an iACT (Improvement and Correction Time) task to correct and misconceptions, improve work or embed learning.

During the COVID 19 measures, it was advised that there should be reduced frequency of handling books to avoid possible contamination. Therefore, using more live feedback methods and less reliance on writing in books was an important shift in practice, both for health and safety measures, but also to enable students to be given frequent and regular feedback – which is in line with current evidence based best practice EEF Marked Improvement.

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Presentations/Publications/EEF_Marking_Review_April_2016.pdf

5. **Promote resilience and independence:** This is achieved in a number of ways:

- Explicit teaching of metacognitive strategies alongside subject content to develop students' independent learning and reflection skills.

- Setting and monitoring of appropriate homework, which is relevant, linked to the curriculum, and offers opportunities for review that tests, practice, and provides consolidation and extension of learning.
- Students are accountable for their work – this includes sharing examples using the visualiser in class, handing in homework to meet deadlines, and taking responsibility to seek help and further information when they need it.
- Parents play a key part in their child's success: they are responsible for supporting home-learning. This includes, where possible, ensuring their child has necessary equipment, resources and space to study, and working cooperatively with school to maintain constructive dialogue about their child's learning and well-being. (Certain students may be entitled to some resources from school, such as study guides and laptops, but parents are responsible to communicate and share information to enable the school to fulfil this obligation).
- Knowledge of the importance of the growth mindset is regularly communicated to students and their parents and carers, and embedded into our language of learning.

4. Mixed Attainment teaching



Mixed Attainment groups where students are mixed socially and not by attainment reflects an inclusive society. UCL Institute of Education's research in mainstream schools showed that other than a few highest attainers, setting showed no impact for many but had a negative effect on the most disadvantaged. In fact, these students made less progress than the students in higher sets; the gap got wider. It is our philosophy that classes at Royal Wootton Bassett

Academy are taught within mixed attainment groups, the only exceptions being for subjects that have tiered examination entries at GCSE (Maths and Science) where groups would be mixed within 'bands'.

Within mixed attainment classes, teachers should:

- have high expectations of all the students in the class
- plan rich accessible tasks for all pupils and ensure they receive feedback
- encourage a classroom climate where learners support each other
- use levelled questioning techniques (Echo can help with strategically targeting students for questioning)
- change in-class groupings regularly
- concentrate on the learning process rather than task completion (when students and staff talk about individual learning gains)
- reiterate to students that being stuck is desirable, and how to get 'unstuck' is the most important step in learning
- differentiation by outcome and feedback rather than by task
- use open choice resources rather than limiting by levels
- know their pupils really well and respond
- plan for difference for the same work
- Teachers and TAs to work with all students
- use memory aids, prompts and concept mapping

5. Monitoring and Evaluation of Learning and Teaching

Classroom teachers are responsible for the progress of all pupils in their classes and for self-evaluating their own performance and professional development. This can be achieved by:

- Self-evaluation of their own subject knowledge and understanding of changing educational initiatives;
- Self-evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of their own teaching and classroom management through auditing progress against Teachers' Standards;
- Monitoring pupil progress to ensure they achieve well against prior achievement and similar groups nationally;

This will form the basis of choosing a CPD path for the year, and instructional coaching focus, recorded in Perspective as Performance Intention (PI) 2. Throughout the year, teachers will gather a range of evidence through:

- Pre-meeting notes/identification of an area of practice for the focus of professional development
- Attendance records at Learning Forums/professional development
- Line Management meeting notes where the progress made has been discussed
- Agreed action steps, plans or a few self-recorded bullet points to record the key decisions from coaching sessions: the specific action steps, the time frame, the specific class and curriculum etc.

In addition, the headteacher (or delegated to members of staff) may undertake learning climate walks, or "student follows" in order to gauge the experience that students receive in the classroom. Climate walks will not make judgements on teachers, but can be used to direct and support teacher development, or inform discussions within coaching.

"Student follows" are undertaken on a two-weekly cycle where a cohort of students who have been selected as the focus for the cycle are followed in to their classrooms for an observer to see their experience of learning first hand. We encourage staff at all levels to participate in student follows.

The information collected from Climate Walks and Student follows will be analysed to see if there are any interesting observations about how students learn that can be fed back to teachers and the Personalised Learning Team, any common observations across the cohort of students that could identify any potential CPD strands in the future to address student needs. A summary of the finding of each student follow cycle will be provided to the Leadership Team, and relevant pastoral teams.

6. Bibliography and resource materials:

- Rosenshine's Principles in Action., Tom Sherrington 2019
- Teaching Walkthrus, Five Steps to Instructional Coaching., Tom Sherrington and Oliver Cavigliolo 2020
- Teach Like a Champion 2.0., Doug Lemov 2015
- Why Don't Students like School? Daniel Willingham 2010
- Stop Talking, Start Influencing., Jared Cooney 2019
- Mindset - Updated Edition: Changing The Way You Think To Fulfil Your Potential., Carol Dweck 2017
- Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils November 2015 (DfE), Caroline Sharp et al. 2015



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