



Teaching and Learning Policy

Adopted:

Signed:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At St Mary Magdalene Academy we believe in the concept of lifelong learning, and in the idea that both adults and students learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone and that it is the responsibility of all at the Academy to create conditions for effective learning. Through a focus on personalised learning, we aim to fulfil every young person's potential by addressing individual needs, interests and aptitudes, we will support students to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices.
- 1.2 This teaching and learning policy lays the foundations for the whole curriculum, both formal and informal, and along with our Mission Statement forms the context in which all other policy statements should be read. It is written for the benefit of all members of the school community to ensure that all are aware of the fundamental principles underpinning the work of the Academy. The Christian ethos and values upon which the Academy was founded and the whole-school focus on Humanities and Global Citizenship inform this policy.

2 Aims for teaching and learning

- 2.1 We believe that people learn best in different ways. At our Academy we provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows all students to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.
- 2.2 Our aims for teaching and learning are that all students will:
- ◆ make progress in their learning, achieve their potential in terms of spiritual awareness and academic achievement and be proud of their achievements;
 - ◆ be confident, motivated, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners;
 - ◆ build positive relationships with other people, be tolerant and respect the rights, views and property of others;
 - ◆ develop a responsible, positive and independent attitude towards learning and work, in and their roles in local and wider society.

3 Effective learning

- 3.1 The outcomes of effective learning that we seek to instill in our students are:
- ◆ connected knowledge- of things, people and actions;
 - ◆ understanding of complexity;
 - ◆ wide range of skills and strategies;
 - ◆ engagement in and motivation for learning;
 - ◆ a reflective and self-directive approach to learning;
 - ◆ a positive attitude to/and enthusiasm for learning;
 - ◆ a sense of membership and participation in a learning community;
 - ◆ and most importantly the sense of achievement and sheer enjoyment that learning brings.

3.2 In order to become effective learners, students at our Academy, within a particular sequence of lessons, will be given the opportunities to:

- ◆ be aware of the learning objectives;
- ◆ be aware of their own potential;
- ◆ be involved in setting personal targets and goals;
- ◆ be observant;
- ◆ seek information independently;
- ◆ read in order to gain information;
- ◆ use ICT to get information and communicate appropriately;
- ◆ look for patterns and the 'big picture' of what is presented to them;
- ◆ pose questions and solve problems;
- ◆ communicate ideas and information through both speaking and writing;
- ◆ apply what they have learnt to unfamiliar situations.

4 **Effective teaching**

4.1 At St Mary Magdalene Academy we recognise the fundamental link between teaching and learning and the importance of personalising this for students by:

- ◆ using data and assessment information, together with the knowledge of factors which might influence students' progress, to shape teaching and assess its impact;
- ◆ matching high-quality teaching to the abilities and needs of different students underpinned by high expectations;
- ◆ using rapid focused responses when under achievement or barriers to progress are identified;
- ◆ building effective relationships between staff and students so that dialogue, questioning and reflection are a natural part of the classroom environment.

4.2 The partnership between home and school is a vital element in the success of every student and must be developed to the best possible degree. Parents/carers should feel welcome, informed and involved in their child's education. In addition regular and effective communication between teachers, support staff, school guardians and the senior management team is also essential in embedding personalised learning within the Academy.

5 **Responsibilities**

5.1 **All members of the school community**

Teaching and non-teaching staff, parents/carers, students, governors and visitors are expected to work towards the aims for teaching and learning by:

- ◆ valuing students as individuals and respecting their right to education in a caring, secure environment;
- ◆ fostering good relationships and a sense of belonging within the school community;
- ◆ providing a well ordered environment in which all are fully aware of behavioural expectations;
- ◆ offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life;
- ◆ encouraging, praising and reinforcing good relationships, behaviour and work

- ♦ working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another.

5.2 Teachers

At St Mary Magdalene Academy teachers are expected to work towards these aims and to create the best possible learning environment by:

5.2.1 Making lessons purposeful:

- ♦ managing the learning process through carefully planned, well-structured, paced lessons;
- ♦ following a three part lesson; starter, introduction and main teaching activity, and plenary. All lessons taught at the Academy follow this format;
- ♦ making learning objectives and success criteria explicit to students and using assessment for learning strategies to evaluate and improve learning;
- ♦ having appropriate expectations of the students; catering for differing abilities and interests but also building in challenge and unfamiliar situations;
- ♦ evaluating all lessons, to inform future teaching;
- ♦ delivering schemes of work which incorporate spiritual, moral and cultural elements as well as the Humanities and Global Citizenship specialism, where appropriate.

5.2.2 Making lessons interesting and stimulating:

- ♦ consciously showing enthusiasm for and interest in their subject and learning;
- ♦ having a thorough up-to-date command of subject matter and using this knowledge to help students make connections within and across subjects;
- ♦ varying teaching styles, learning activities and the learning environment to meet the needs of different types of learner (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, sequential and holistic learners);
- ♦ using ICT and multimedia presentation when and wherever appropriate to enhance the learning experience and outcome;
- ♦ using praise, positive reinforcement and showcasing students' work, highlighting reasons for success.

5.2.3 Creating an orderly environment and managing classes efficiently:

- ♦ being consistent about classroom procedures, including procedures for homework, and behaviour policy;
- ♦ ensuring, through assessment and accurate record keeping, that learning is progressive and continuous; in accordance with the assessment policy;
- ♦ ensuring that all tasks and activities that the students perform are safe. When taking students out of the Academy, follow the procedures outlined in the school visits policy.

5.2.4 Matching learning activities to all abilities and preferences:

- ♦ using evidence of prior attainment to gauge students' individual capabilities;

- ♦ ensuring that students have a clear and common understanding of the high expectations held of them individually, according to their ability and aptitude and of the targets to which they are working;
- ♦ being flexible enough to adapt a lesson plan to take account of students' contributions and the mood of the group;
- ♦ using appropriate differentiated materials and tasks which ensure students' active participation in lessons, for the most able as well as for those with SEN. For students with an IEP, this will be referred to in all planning;
- ♦ working pro-actively with teaching assistants to support less able or EAL students.

5.2.5 Developing positive and productive working relationships with students:

- ♦ providing unconditional respect to students, recognising that they are all individuals with different needs, treating them fairly, and giving them equal opportunity to take part in class activities;
- ♦ supporting students when necessary and appropriate outside lesson times;
- ♦ providing quality feedback, verbal and written to move students forward in their learning;
- ♦ valuing each child as a unique individual and being familiar with the relevant equal opportunities legislation covering race, gender and disability.

5.2.6 Creating further opportunities for learning:

- ♦ viewing themselves as learners and using action research within the classroom as well as using professional development, observations, discussions and INSET to improve and share good practice ;
- ♦ planning useful assemblies and family time and including opportunities for student participation and reflection;
- ♦ using extra- curricular activities to provide opportunities for extending learning beyond the classroom;
- ♦ making sure the classrooms are attractive, purposeful learning environments.
- ♦ providing additional resources for learning in classrooms such as dictionaries, ICT resources and for wider reading books.
- ♦ establishing links with the local and wider community and using international partnerships to enrich students' experiences.

5.3 **Students**

Students have a responsibility to work towards the teaching and learning aims by:

- ♦ having respect for the rights of others to learn;
- ♦ accepting the opportunity to become actively engaged and responsible for their own learning;
- ♦ providing feedback about their learning in a constructive manner;
- ♦ working constructively with and supporting other learners;
- ♦ adhering to the Home School Contract and their responsibilities outlined in it.

5.4 **Governors**

Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the Academy's approach to teaching and learning. In particular they:

- ◆ support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
- ◆ ensure that the Academy buildings and premises are best used to support teaching and learning;
- ◆ check teaching methods in the light of health and safety regulations;
- ◆ seek to ensure that our staff development and our performance management both promote good quality teaching;
- ◆ monitor the effectiveness of the Academy's teaching and learning approaches through the Academy's self-review processes, which include reports from subject leaders, the Principal's annual report to governors, and a review of the in-service training sessions attended by staff.

5.5 **Parents/Carers**

Parents and carers of St Mary Magdalene Academy pupils are expected to support the teaching and learning aims by:

- ◆ ensuring that their (son or daughter) attends school, punctually, unless there is a clear reason or absence;
- ◆ ensuring that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform, equipment and PE kit;
- ◆ doing their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
- ◆ informing the Academy if there are matters outside school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour;
- ◆ providing support for discipline within the Academy;
- ◆ being realistic about their child's abilities and promoting a positive attitude towards school and learning in general;
- ◆ giving due importance to homework and supporting their child to practise literacy and numeracy skills;
- ◆ where time allows, using their own talents in developing the school community, supporting functions and other school initiatives;
- ◆ fulfilling the requirements set out in the home-school agreement.

6 **Monitoring and review**

- 6.1 Teaching and learning will be monitored and evaluated as part of the Academy's Monitoring and Evaluation cycle, in which all staff are involved. These formal and informal systems include lesson observation, peer observation, teacher planning scrutiny, work sampling, and canvassing of staff, student and parent/carer views. Findings are used to inform staff professional development and the Academy's Development Plan.

- 6.2 The success criteria used within the Monitoring and Evaluation cycle, the success criteria in respect of the teaching and learning policy are outlined in section 3.2 above.
- 6.3 We are aware of the need to monitor the Academy's teaching and learning policy, and to review it regularly, so that we can take account of new initiatives and research, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. We will therefore review this policy every two years or earlier if necessary.

Appendix: Checklist for planning a good-outstanding lesson (not all aspects may be addressed in a single lesson)

Consideration:	Notes or tick
PREPARATION / GENERAL TECHNIQUES APPLIED TO ALL STAGES	
Physical Environment	
Displays around the room - Displays have purpose - used for teaching;	
Use space i.e. break-out areas/SEN room etc/check availability	
Rapport - Teacher 'enabling' student	
Show consideration for students: courteous; consistent standards; sensitivity; flexibility, humour	
Show interest in students: share interests/experiences that may not be school or work-related; move around the room - sit with students - consider effect of body language	
Ask the students about their learning experiences and what works well for them	
Encourage students to give positive recognition to each other	
Scheme of work - content/objectives/methods	
Exploit cross curricular links for themes/resources	
Make learning objectives specific, short term and of interest to the students	
Include 'process' objectives as well as 'product' i.e. HOW to learn ...	
Identify 'key words'	
Give opportunities for students to be working on different tasks	
Provide a variety of tasks, including something new and adapted to the students' interests	
Ensure students interact and are actively involved in activities and tasks	
Allow for different learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, sequential , holistic	
Use ICT to enhance the learning, not as an add-on	
Task- Grouping decisions	
Vary grouping to suit purpose. Consider: size; ability; friendship; random; leadership skills	
Efficient use of Teaching Assistant (planning, in-class, preparation, who they work with)	
Time Management	
Give specific time limit for tasks. Negotiate time changes as appropriate.	
LESSON START	
Registration/settling/Routines	
Establishment of routine and expectations- give reasons for rules	
Adherence to behaviour policy (Rules about uniform, behaviour, stationery, student planners, made clear)	
Questions/activity on relevant previous knowledge as a starter activity	
Making objectives clear - task goals	
Make clear the aims/objectives of the lesson and contextualise. (make students 'allies' in the learning process)	
State aims verbally in 'student friendly' speak! set lesson into context of work scheme (verbally) Break aim into short-term and specific goals	
List/negotiate concepts, skills, knowledge to be learnt.	
Give timing for each activity or negotiate timing for individuals. Emphasise learning aspects of tasks, knowledge aspect (these can be process and product objectives) - help students to become aware of the thinking processes involved. Break up task (plan - do -review)	
MAIN ACTIVITIES	
Exposition	

Refer to topical interest. Show your personal interest/enthusiasm in the subject	
Bring in unusual aspects so that students are asking questions - challenging preconceptions	
Create interest, curiosity or suspense in tasks. Use interesting exposition documentation	
Use child as a 'visual aid'	
Come in to topic at different levels and vary the approach to suit different learning styles	
Stimulus ...Why?(Students know what they want to learn)	
Statement to produce a brainstorming session	
Challenging statement. Set interesting challenging questions. Stimulate a reaction	
Create an 'information gap'	
Questioning Techniques	
Set ground rules for questioning : insist that all answers are respected - give 'safe environment'	
Ensure all students are involved	
Accept all answers - write on board and come back to them later to explain quality of response	
Consider appropriate question type: Open questions: explore area, invite creative thought Closed questions: knowledge based- application	
Beware questions that involve students guessing your answer	
Ask other students for their opinions on an answer given	
Development	
Keep appropriate pace in lesson.	
Be prepared to give other examples if one doesn't work or is not answered correctly.	
Develop autonomous learning - important for extension/exploration	
Practice/Experimentation - Teacher led activity with student involvement.	
Be adaptable/flexible- be able to change approach	
Appropriate construction of groups to match activity (e.g. Games, Problem solving.)	
PLENARY	
Comprehension	
Use a variety of styles to check - verbal, written, physical responses	
Question "What have you learnt today" "What have you learnt to do today"	
Refer back to long-term or short-term objectives and success criteria.	
Encourage feedback. Read out work. Showcase excellent work and give reasons for success	
Evaluation	
Help students to attribute mistakes and failures to things that can be changed (e.g. effort, the appropriate strategy) rather than their lack of 'ability'	
Create opportunities for students to evaluate their learning in relation to objectives and targets	
Allow students the opportunities to correct their mistakes and improve their responses before marking/after initial marking (i.e. to edit before final marking)	
Provide feedback that avoids social comparisons - that is positive, specific and based on student's own achievements and improvements - provides suggestions for future steps	
Extension - The results and outcomes	
Unusual demonstration, i.e. unexpected result/outcome.	
Use resource centre (CD-ROM; books; magazines). Set enquiry-based tasks 'find out about'	
Train in exam skills techniques/revision techniques	
Set projects which have a 'real audience' e.g. texts for students lower down in school;	
Differentiated homework	