

Teaching & Learning Policy

Secondary Academies

2020/2021

Review Date	Reviewer	Adopted	Implementation
	L Powell		September 2017
September 2018	L Powell	4 June 2018	September 2018
September 2019	L Powell	September 2019	September 2019
September 2020	L Powell	September 2020	September 2020
September 2021	L Powell		

1. Aims

Teaching and learning lies at the very heart of everything we do as a Trust. We have high expectations of our students and therefore also of the quality of teaching that our students receive. As a result of this, we can see the clear and measurable impact that this has on the achievement and outcomes of students not only at key stage 4 and 5 but also at incremental stages building up to this.

We believe:

- Every child has the right to a high-quality education, no matter their starting points and/or educational and social needs.
- Every classroom should be one filled with learning, where students can build on their knowledge of topics in subjects and opportunities are provided to extend this learning outside of the classroom.
- Learning is a mutually celebrated experience, where students are given praise and rewards for exceptional performance and where they can also learn and build from their mistakes.
- Students should be sufficiently stretched and challenged in lessons to ensure that they fulfil their potential and can compete with the very best students both regionally and nationally.
- Students should be given opportunities to develop their independence and resilience so that they become confident learners who can draw on a wide range of skills and strategies to problem solve.
- Classroom environments should reflect our core teaching and learning ethos so that students receive the same learning experience across the breadth of the curriculum.
- The professional development of teaching staff and those who also support in the classroom is fundamental to delivering effective teaching.
- Classrooms should be ‘literacy-rich’ to develop and support students’ literacy skills and close the word gap that already exists on entry in year 7.
- Numeracy, SMSC, STEM should be sufficiently developed and embedded across the curriculum, making appropriate connections to life in the real world in order for students to see the relevance to their learning and to prepare them for life after school.

2. Expectations

a. Planning

All teachers are expected to plan lessons for the classes they teach using the whole trust ‘Sequence of Learning’ template. Lessons should adapt the scheme of work that accompanies the topic to suit the needs and starting points of the learners in their class. Sequences of learning should reflect the day to day planning that teachers do, reflecting on what has worked in the lesson or what was unfinished and needs reviewing in the next lesson. A copy of a blank Sequence of Learning can be found on Staff Pod. Staff will also have up to date context sheets (updated after each data capture), seating plans and any SEND information available. Due to the pandemic the Trust has introduced an online planner. Staff plan their lessons in the usual Sequence of Learning template. This is to ensure all staff and students stay close to the curriculum plan, ensuring a seamless transition between in school and live online learning. Staff are expected to plan as normal if school closures lead to online learning.

b. Marking and Feedback

We expect all teachers to mark and give prompt feedback to learners. We understand this takes the form of verbal and written feedback. For all written feedback, teachers are to use the WWW, EBI and Yellow Box strategy. This ensures that we retain the same quality of written feedback across and within departments across the trust.

WWW – What Went Well (strengths displayed by student in relation to lesson learning objective).

This may be in the form of a tick, highlight or comment.

EBI – Even Better If (targets to improve student achievement in relation to lesson learning objective)

Yellow Box – Identified opportunity to improve student work/ student reflection on EBI

Heads of department will set in-department specific marking expectations, such as the expected turn-around time for marking, but for all other teachers of core subjects, this time must be at least every two weeks.

Teachers are also required to mark for literacy in lessons. Full and ongoing training is provided for staff and all classrooms are equipped with a poster for students to refer to.

c. Delivering Outstanding Lessons

We aim to have 100% of lessons at good or better with much of this outstanding. As well as whole school CPD sessions to develop teaching practice, we have a very much ‘open door’ policy in classrooms where teachers are free to observe good practice as well as being coached by fellow professionals. All teachers and leaders who observe lessons are provided with full lesson observation training which includes triangulation of evidence meetings at the start of the year to ensure consistency. We also reflect on recent educational research disseminated by the Research School in order to ensure that we are maximising the most effective strategies in the classroom.

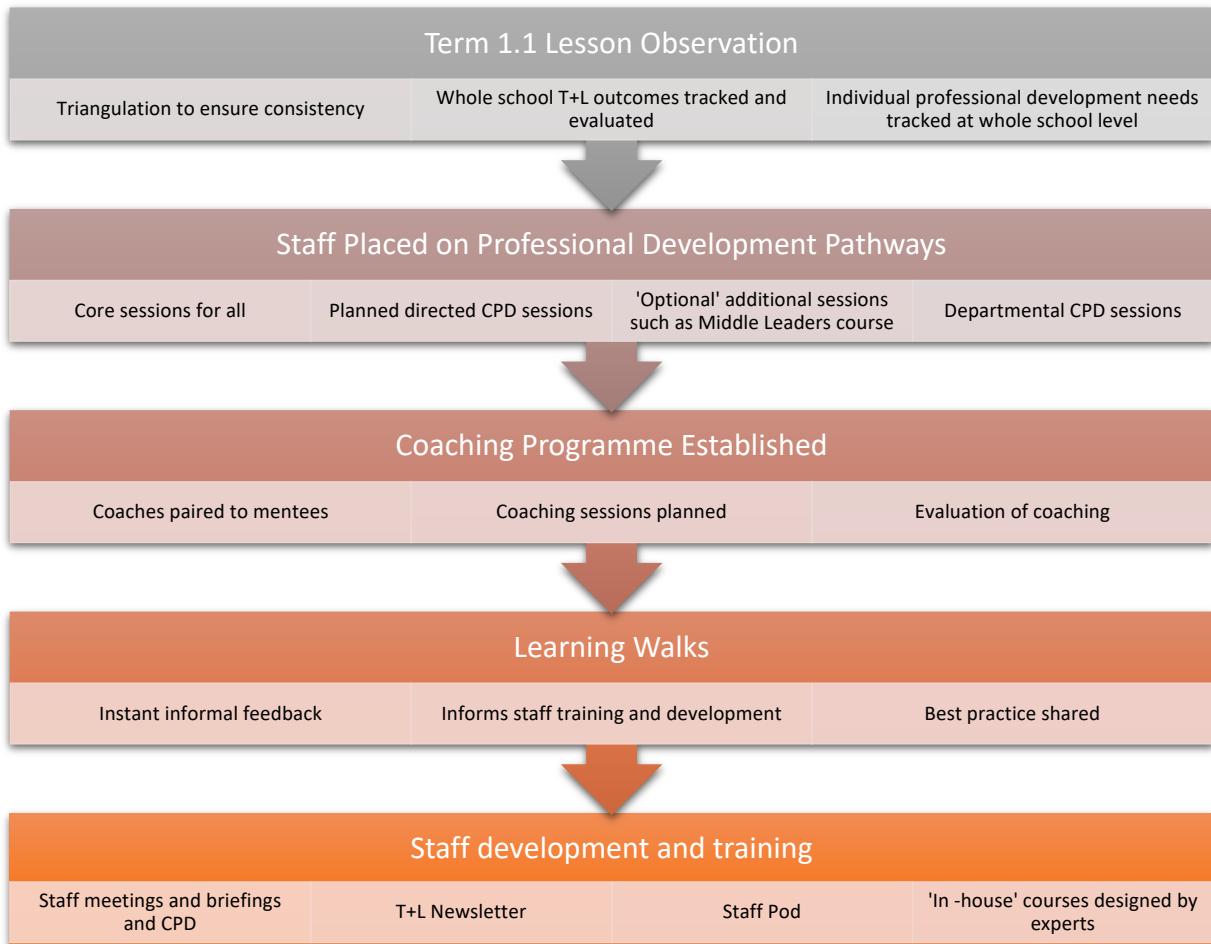
Great lessons will:

- Demonstrate excellent teacher subject knowledge.
- Be well planned, taking into account students’ varying starting points and needs.
- Begin promptly with the teacher meeting the class, taking the register and ensuring a prompt start to the lesson.
- Activate prior learning so the children can make connections to new learning and build on previous knowledge and skills.
- Utilise retrieval practice (using the SMART strategy) to improve and strengthen students’ memory retention of previously taught material.
- Have a pace that is well suited to the learning needs of the class yet offers the opportunity to stop and reflect on misunderstandings and misconceptions.
- Teacher questioning which probes and challenges children’s thinking and allows them to develop oral language skills such as listening, interpreting, analysing, reasoning, hypothesising, presenting and discussing.
- Provide challenge for learners. The lesson will make use of scaffolding yet will remove this structured guidance and support at the right time to enable students to think for themselves and apply their learning.
- Use ongoing assessment to adapt teaching to suit the needs of all learners.
- Enable children to develop their metacognitive skills so that they can become self-sufficient leaders who are resilient enough to tackle difficult tasks.
- Provide children with opportunities to express their views and opinions in an environment that is safe, respectful and nurturing of their views.
- Ask thoughtful and challenging questions that probe and check understanding of the learning.
- Support children in their understanding and awareness of the world by embedding SMSC into learning.
- Have excellent behaviour so that the environment others work in is conducive to good quality learning.
- Offer children timely and effective feedback – both written and verbal.
- Use self and peer assessment to develop learning conversations within lessons.
- Use homework to prepare students for future lessons or reinforce learning that has already taken place.

d. Homework

We believe that successful completion of homework can have a considerable effect on the outcomes of learners over a sustained period of time. The homework will be discussed verbally and instructions and deadlines will be uploaded to the digital platforms used across the Trust. Students are expected to check daily to see what homework needs to be completed and handed in. Parents also have access to this information so they can support their child at home. Sanctions will be given for any incomplete or poor quality homework. Each school has a homework policy.

3. Teaching and Learning Model



4. Quality Assurance

We have a robust system in place to ensure that we retain high quality and consistency in our expectations across the curriculum. This is led by the Teaching and Learning Lead in each academy and is supported by the senior and middle leadership team. Half-termly quality assurance checks allow us to identify specific whole school training needs and identify staff who may require additional support. Feedback is given promptly to all staff involved in the process and actions that require a follow up are taken when and where required. This information is also stored in the HOD folder for future reference. Planners will be quality assured at the end of each half term with marking being quality assured at the start of the following half term. There are also separate checks to ensure that all students are being given sufficient homework and that homework is challenging, worthwhile and good quality. We do also quality assure the work of vulnerable and at-risk groups such as Pupil Premium students and those with a special educational need. In both

instances, we will cross check their work with that of others to ensure that our expectations for all learners is the same. Full details of the Quality Assurance schedule is provided in the digital Staff Handbook on Pod.

5. Professional Development

During performance management meetings, staff will be provided with the opportunity to discuss their own professional development needs. This could involve development at a leadership level or developing an aspect of teaching practice. Staff will be placed on a professional development pathway that will suit their needs where they will be expected to complete a set of 'Core' modules along with more personalised 'Directed' sessions. These sessions will be delivered by outstanding professionals who are experts in their field. Each year, the sessions at both Core and Directed level will feed directly from the Teaching and Learning Action Plan. Training and development is interwoven through CPD, meetings and briefings, the Teaching and Learning Newsletter, emails and Staff Pod. The CPD we offer as a Trust is also informed by evidenced based practice led by the Research School (see section 7). Subject departments are also given time to develop and enhance teacher expertise and subject knowledge.

6. VLE: Pod



The development of the Staff and Student Pod has provided greater scope to transfer information to teachers and students alike. There is a dedicated section in staff Pod named 'Teacher's Toolkit' which houses all our lesson planning templates as well as a variety of high quality and effective teaching and learning resources. All these resources are editable and are suitable for use across the curriculum. Core training session materials are often loaded into here for easy reference in the future or for access for teachers who may have missed the session itself. There is also a variety of literacy and numeracy resources and ideas for all staff to use.

7. Research School

In April 2017, The Academy at Shotton Hall was named as a 'Research School', one of only 23 across England. This appointment is the only such one in the region, making Shotton Hall and the Trust a focal point for educational research in the North East. As a Trust, we use educational research to inform the decisions we make as a school and endeavour to ensure our staff professional development pathways are underpinned by evidence-based practice.

8. Virtual School / Contingency Planning

Schools within the Trust responded quickly in the move to online learning for the first lockdown in March 2020. Each school created a 'Virtual School' and used Teams / Office 365 to deliver lessons and set work. Training for staff and students with regards to Office 365, Teams and Student Pod is ongoing and the Trust has invested in technology and resources to ensure a further transition into online learning would be as seamless as possible. Senior leaders and heads of departments have reviewed curriculum plans in order to recover any lost learning and address any gaps in students' knowledge. In preparation for local or national lockdowns we have introduced an online planner for staff. Staff are expected to mark work as normal, following health and safety procedures. A multitude of work is being carried out with students to ensure they are prepared for another lock down or self-isolation. Students and parents are being provided with a host of materials (videos and PDF guides) to ensure they are competent in use of email, OneDrive, student Pod and Teams. With variable numbers of students self-isolating, this ensures they can access classwork and

don't fall behind. We are also, where appropriate, using the of streaming live lessons via Teams for students at home.

9. Further information

For further details and information for anything referenced in this policy, please also see Section 7 of the Staff Handbook. This can be found on Staff Pod.