

Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy

September 2019



ST JAMES'
CE ACADEMY

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full – John 10:10

At St James' CE Academy, we provide a high-quality education within a learning environment that fosters Christian values and beliefs, and is safe, caring, purposeful and stimulating for all pupils. Each member of our school community is equally valued and respected.

We aim for all to have the confidence to succeed and realise their full potential in all aspects of their lives by developing:-

- an understanding of faith and diversity (Be welcoming and inclusive to all – Romans 15:7)
- aspirations and motivation for future success (Be the best they can be – Matthew 17:20)
- the ability to make informed choices, manage risks and to cope with change and adversity (Be strong and courageous to do the right thing – Deuteronomy 31)
- the ability to form worthwhile relationships based on respect for themselves and others at home, school and in the community (Love one another as I have loved you all – John 13)

Together we live and learn in the light of God

Headteacher: Mrs J Daniels

Statement of Policy

This teaching, learning and assessment policy is intended as a statement of the key principles that should affect the planning of teaching input and learning experience at St. James' CE Academy. The policy could be seen as a guide to support the planning and delivery of good and outstanding lessons on a regular basis. The recommendations should be seen as a realistic expectation for teachers' work in this school. They are not a reference book for every aspect of the planning of every lesson.

Each area is a reference to elements of teaching and learning. The references to good and outstanding teaching are intended to inspire but are, actually, descriptive of the best practice in the Academy.

We want this policy to develop as teachers, subject leaders and members of the senior leadership team develop strategies to take learning forward.

Please note that the Academy retains its policy of not expecting teachers to produce a detailed written plan for each individual lesson. In an ideal situation, with more planning time available, this request would be made. However, we do expect short term lesson planning to take place (however it is recorded) so that the principles and advice outlined in this policy can be put into practice. Reliance on schemes of work alone is not enough to facilitate this.

Learning Objectives & Lesson Outcomes

Learning objectives and Lesson Outcomes should be based on a good balanced understanding of learners' skills, knowledge and understanding, the learning gains they can achieve during the course of the lesson and of their future learning needs and direction.

They should take account of both subject specific and whole curriculum learning needs and direction.

Learning objectives (broad aims) and Lesson Outcomes (leveled outcomes) should develop knowledge, understanding, skills or attributes which are of long term relevance so that the specific content of a lesson is the vehicle for this longer term understanding of big concepts and acquisition of key skills.

Learning objectives and Lesson Outcomes should reinforce and extend the learning of all students in the class.

Key points for teachers:

- The planning of learning must **start** from a decision on key learning

objectives and expected learning outcomes. Ideas for learning activities and the use of resources should follow, not precede, this initial decision.

- The active use of teachers' pedagogical subject knowledge is essential in the planning of learning. Pedagogical subject knowledge involves understanding of how students learn in *a particular subject*; making decisions about what is important, understanding the learning steps required to make progress in the subject and how this links to learning across the curriculum, and understanding potential barriers to students' learning and common misconceptions and how to overcome these.
- When planning learning, teachers should reflect on students' prior attainment and frame objectives and outcomes that link this with learning needs.
- In the planning of learning it is necessary to differentiate expected learning outcomes into those that are likely to be achieved by different groups of students over the course of the lesson, sequence of lessons, unit of work, year or key stage.

Learning objectives and learning outcomes should be shared with students in an accessible way that enables them to perceive the direction of the lesson and their relevance to their learning. Writing them on a board is only one way of doing this. Learners should be encouraged to engage with the learning outcomes which could include identifying what a good one would look like. As a development of this it is worth exploring the opportunities for learners to take responsibility for developing their own objectives / outcomes based on them knowing where they are what they need to do to improve.

Challenge & Pace in learning

Challenge and Pace is necessary for *progress* in learning. For learning progress to be good or outstanding students must develop what they know, understand and can do, working with sufficient independence for the progress made to be permanent.

Teachers have the key task, when planning learning, to assess accurately the most appropriate level of challenge, pace and support for the different groups of learners that they teach.

It is a good sign if students experience planned, temporary, cognitive confusion in which their pre-existing understanding conflicts with new ideas. Teachers have the task of mediating cognitive conflict so that learners are able to achieve cognitive resolution

Increasing challenge & pace involves adjusting the quality, not necessarily the quantity of learning experiences. For learning to be challenging students should experience higher order thinking opportunities; applying, analysing, transforming, synthesising, creating or evaluating, in addition to recalling and comprehending. Pace should be driven by learning not activities.

Key points for teachers

- When planning lessons teachers need to develop a good balance between consolidation and extension. Therefore opportunities for higher order thinking and cognitive conflict, for all students, should be built into lesson

planning.

- Teachers should plan their use of time so that the pace of learning is at an optimum
- Good teachers question, explain and model to increase students' understanding.

However lesson activities should balance teaching input and opportunities for students to work independently and/or collaboratively

- Teaching input that leads to lack of challenge include: setting repetitive mundane tasks, unnecessary routines, the providing of too much support for learners, indiscriminate praise and acceptance of work which is not good enough
- A quiet lesson is not necessarily a challenging lesson. Students often require quiet periods of concentration when writing or thinking but extended periods of silence completing tasks which are too easy is detrimental to effective learning.
- For challenge to be achieved by students, teachers' use of language is crucial. It is essential that teachers communicate their belief that students can make progress through the continuous use of, "can do," language. Teachers need to make it very clear that students' efforts to be independent and their willingness to take learning risks are particularly important.
- A classroom climate free from ridicule in which the willingness to contribute and try something new is a vital element in building success in achieving challenging objectives. Emphasis on the value of the learning process as much as the outcome helps develop this

- Students value a positive approach to assessment (the practice of assessing present performance against their prior performance). They appreciate praise focussed on progress from starting point and distance travelled.

A key strategy for making challenging tasks achievable is for the teacher to scaffold by breaking them down into stages

Engagement in learning

In good and outstanding lessons students demonstrate a genuine motivation to learn.

They: understand what they are learning and why, are on task and attentive, show interest in the subject material, participate with enthusiasm in activities both independently and collaboratively, ask and answer questions, take care and pride when producing work

Assertive teaching and planning to optimise good student discipline is an important strategy for developing student engagement

Key points for teachers

- Exciting, humorous and enthusiastic teacher input is vital stimulus for student engagement. Use of ICT supported presentation must aim to maximise students' interest engagement and not become electronic, "chalk and talk."
- Short, pacy, relevant and challenging starter activities help create initial and sustained student engagement
- Teachers' direct input should be carefully planned.
- Demonstrations can help explain new ideas in a way that adds depth to understanding
- Inclusive questioning methods are essential. The use of, "individual think time," to facilitate students' response and "no-hands up," and conferring before answering to maximise expectations of participation are particularly recommended.
- Teachers should try to create a classroom in which students are enthusiastic about taking risks in their learning. Students should be praised for a willingness to contribute personal ideas and mistakes should be handled sensitively but as opportunities for learning
- There should be a balance within lessons and over a sequence of lessons between direct teaching and opportunities for independent learning and collaborative learning.
- Teaching strategies should, over time, enable students to have some variety and choice in ways to undertake learning activities.
- It is recommended practice, when sharing learning objectives, to stress the relevance of the lesson to students personally, to their local community or national/global issues
- The sharing of timings of activities with students is an effective way of maintaining the pace of a lesson
- Assertive teaching strategies which maximise student engagement through direct instruction in expected behaviour, proactive classroom management, the establishment of classroom rules, routines, rights and responsibilities and the targeting and praising of good behaviour are fully endorsed

Effective learning in everyday lessons

- Teachers demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They use questioning highly effectively and demonstrate understanding of the ways pupils think about subject content. They identify pupils' common misconceptions and act to ensure they are corrected.

- Teachers plan lessons very effectively, making maximum use of lesson time and coordinating lesson resources well. They manage pupils' behaviour highly effectively with clear rules that are consistently enforced.
- Teachers provide adequate time for practice to embed the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills securely. They introduce subject content progressively and constantly demand more of pupils. Teachers identify and support any pupil who is falling behind, and enable almost all to catch up.
- Teachers check pupils' understanding systematically and effectively in lessons, offering clearly directed and timely support.
- Teachers provide pupils with incisive feedback, in line with the school's assessment policy, about what pupils can do to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. The pupils use this feedback effectively.
- Teachers set challenging homework, in line with the school's policy and as appropriate for the age and stage of pupils, that consolidates learning, deepens understanding and prepares pupils very well for work to come.
- Teachers embed reading, writing and communication and, where appropriate, mathematics exceptionally well across the curriculum, equipping all pupils with the necessary skills to make progress. For younger children in particular, phonics teaching is highly effective in enabling them to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Teachers are determined that pupils achieve well. They encourage pupils to try hard, recognise their efforts and ensure that pupils take pride in all aspects of their work. Teachers have consistently high expectations of all pupils' attitudes to learning.
- Pupils love the challenge of learning and are resilient to failure. They are curious, interested learners who seek out and use new information to develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills. They thrive in lessons and also regularly take up opportunities to learn through extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils are eager to know how to improve their learning. They capitalise on opportunities to use feedback, written or oral, to improve.
- Parents are provided with clear and timely information on how well their child is progressing and how well their child is doing in relation to the standards expected. Parents are given guidance about how to support their child to improve.
- Teachers are quick to challenge stereotypes and the use of derogatory language in lessons and around the school. Resources and teaching strategies reflect and value the diversity of pupils' experiences and provide pupils with a comprehensive understanding of people and communities beyond their immediate experience.

Key points for teachers

- The determination of learning objectives so that they are manageable requires at the least a prior assessment of the expected outcomes to be achieved by all, most and some of the students
- Differentiation strategies should be effective but manageable. Differentiation by outcome is perfectly appropriate if the activities genuinely do allow all students to progress to the maximum and is supported by appropriate interventions with individual students
- The use of plenary activities (at appropriate times throughout a lesson) which make key learning points explicit and enable teachers and students to judge how far objectives have been achieved is highly recommended
- Meta-cognition is a particularly important method for achieving and sustaining effective learning. This involves the creation of clear opportunities for students to reflect on how they have learned in addition to what they have learned. Students should be encouraged (and supported) to reflect on which of their strategies were successful, what they could have done differently and how their learning can be applied to other contexts
- As a result of the lesson teachers should be in a good position to judge achievement of objectives and make an informed assessment of the next learning steps for individuals and

groups

- The facilitation of effective learning involves the development of cross-curricular skills in addition to subject specific objectives. Teachers of all subjects must have a concern to develop and improve students' literacy, numeracy, ICT and interpersonal skills

Assessment for learning

The key principles of assessment for learning should be a key influence on the planning of all learning experiences. Therefore it is important that ...

Teachers understand the need for a classroom ethos promoting confidence that all can progress. This is an essential prerequisite for effective learning.

Teacher assessment of prior attainment influences lesson planning, in particular the selection of learning objectives and expected outcomes.

Teachers respond to assessment information, when appropriate, by adjusting learning within and between lessons.

Students are involved in the assessment process through frequent opportunities to peer and self assess (including meta-cognitive reflection)

Feedback enables students to know and understand what they have done well and why, what to improve and how.

Students are aware of their current level of attainment and what and how to improve enabling the integral application of curricular target setting.

Key points for teachers

- Marking of students' output should be seen as key opportunities to evaluate students' understanding and progress and therefore feed into future lesson planning
- Use of oral whole class feedback in addition to individual written feedback is essential to reinforce key learning points
- Students must be expected and given time to respond to teacher feedback
- Very good feedback helps students understand what and how to improve and progress
- Self and peer assessment can involve short focussed tasks. These can be appropriate in any lesson. For example use of traffic lighting, whiteboards or even thumbs and hands for all students to respond to prompts questioning whether they feel they have attained learning objectives are a very effective way of integrating self assessment into any lesson.
- Very good practice involves the promotion of meta-cognition. That is students are asked to reflect not only on what they have learned but also how they have learned. This higher form of self assessment asks students to deliberately reflect on the processes they used to remember, understand, undertake tasks, solve problems and contribute to groups. Frequent meta-cognitive opportunity builds up a learners' capacity to transfer their learning between contexts
- Very effective teachers make (at least mental) assessment judgments throughout lessons; probing and evaluating students' understanding and progress. Reflection on students' responses to questions is a particularly powerful way of doing this.
- The application of curricular target setting focuses teaching upon key areas for development as determined by school self-evaluation.

Further details on feedback can be found in the Academy Marking and Feedback Policy.

Quality Assurance

The academy uses a range of methods to quality assure teaching and learning and measure the Quality of Teaching and Learning overtime. This includes informal approaches including SLT drop ins and instructional

rounds to more formal approaches including observations and learning walks.

Support

Staff at the academy have a range of resources available to support the development of teaching and learning. This includes informal coaching and peer observation, through to more formal approaches including formal mentoring and coaching and Teacher Support Plans.

Appendix 1

During the period of Home Learning, required by the closure of the school for the Coronavirus Pandemic, the school will endeavor to share learning activities with pupils through the use of technology. While this is beneficial to allow the children to continue to learn while away from school, this needs to be done in a manner that keeps all pupils safe online. In order to safeguard the pupils, children will be provided with age appropriate website links, have individual logins for any web-based learning packages they are directed to and also have their own usernames and passwords to access the learning activities shared through Google Classroom. In Foundation Stage, parents will continue to access their children's learning profile through Tapestry using their individual logins. Prior to closing the school on Friday 20th March 2020, all pupils received an age appropriate session reminding them of the importance of staying safe online and were given key advice on how to use technology responsibly. All staff communication with parents, for whatever purpose, will be through official school email addresses.

To ensure our pupils stay safe online during this period of Home learning, the responsibilities below will be followed:

Responsibilities of the Leadership Team

- Make appropriate resources, training and support available to members of the school community to ensure they are able to provide appropriate home learning tasks while also ensuring effective E-safety.
- Ensure that E-safety is promoted to parents and carers.
- Monitor and act on any reports on home learning E-safety issues as appropriate.
- Ensure an E-safety incident log is kept up-to-date.

Responsibilities of Teachers and Support Staff

- Promote appropriate online tasks and resources for safe home learning
- Model safe and responsible behaviours in their own use of technology.
- Embed E-safety messages in learning activities where appropriate.
- Be aware of what to do if an E-safety incident is reported to them.

Responsibilities of Technical Staff

- Support the school in providing a safe technical infrastructure to support home learning and teaching.
- Take responsibility for the security of the school IT systems.
- Report any E-safety-related issues that come to their attention to the school senior leadership team.
- Maintain a professional level of conduct in their personal use of technology at all times.

Responsibilities of Pupils

- Take responsibility for learning about the benefits and risks of using the Internet and other technologies at home.

- Take responsibility for your own and each other's safe and responsible use of technology at home, including judging the risks posed by the personal technology owned and used by pupils outside of school.
- Ensure they respect the feelings, rights, values and intellectual property of others in their use of technology at home.
- Understand what action they should take if they feel worried, uncomfortable, vulnerable or at risk whilst using technology at home, or if they know of someone who this is happening to.
- Discuss E-safety issues with family and friends in an open and honest way.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

- Help and support the school in promoting E-safety during online home learning.
- Take responsibility for learning about the benefits and risks of using the Internet and other technologies that their children use at home.
- Discuss E-safety concerns with their children, show an interest in how they are using technology, and encourage them to behave safely and responsibly when using technology.
- Consult with the school if they have any concerns about their children's use of technology with regards to home learning.