Learning and Teaching Policy

Introduction

This policy is the most important of all school policies. It reminds us of the core purpose of the academy and the criteria by which we are judged. It is focused on the needs of students. The policy will be reviewed each year to incorporate newly learnt good practice.

Queen Elizabeth's is a high-achieving academy. This success is not accidental but derives from the high quality of the teaching and support staff and the importance placed by the academy on learning, teaching and achievement.

Key learning principles

- every student has the right to be successful and the ability to achieve

- each student must know what to do in order to improve and how to do it. High expectations on their own are not enough

- consistency of experience is fundamental. We are a team and consistency makes us greater than the sum of our parts

- our job is to enable learning to take place; not to process and record what we find.

Please read the Learning and Teaching Policy carefully and discuss in your departments how it can be best implemented. Keep up this debate during the school year, particularly in relation to specific year groups or individual students. All staff are learning leaders in the academy but some staff have particular responsibilities (Subject Leaders, Heads of School, SENCo, Lead Teachers and SLT).

Please use the staff handbook to familiarise yourself with our procedures.

Angie Francis
Headteacher

Learning and Teaching

- Students should be taught how to learn and how to reflect on their learning

- Learning objectives are to be shared and reviewed

- Clearly structured lessons promote learning

- Achievement should always be recognised and rewarded

- Underachievement needs to be challenged, not processed

- It is important that teachers create and maintain a purposeful learning environment

- Teachers can gain much from guided reflection with a colleague and the sharing of good practice

Learning and Teaching

Learning and teaching are interactive. It is important that we teach students how to "learn to learn" in order to become independent learners and develop skills for life-long learning. In this context, learning opportunities are provided for staff on a regular basis.

Learning to Learn

It must be made explicit to students what they need to do to be successful in their learning. This could include:

- discussions with students about their learning
- explanation of learning habits which are vital to success **– see 'Learning at QEGS, Alford'**
- explanation (by teacher, between students, by students to whole group)
- scaffolding (writing frames, sentence starters)
- modelling (sharing students' work, working through examples, guided writing, sharing planning and demonstrations)
- developing effective study skills (e.g. revision techniques, recording notes, summarising)
- formative feedback and target setting on how to improve
- peer coaching within/across year group/s

Learning objectives are to be shared and reviewed

If students are to take more responsibility for their own learning, they need to know what they are expected to learn and how they can achieve it. Providing objectives allows students to engage with the process of learning.

i. Teachers must make the learning objectives explicit to all students. This will usually happen at the beginning of the lesson but could happen at other stages in the lesson. This can be done in a variety of ways:

- written or projected onto the board
- orally
- written by students in their books
- printed on handouts

ii. These objectives must be revisited throughout and at the end of the lesson. This can be done in a variety of ways:

- students review their learning against the lesson objectives
- teacher questions (with differentiation)
- students record 2 key points (individually or in pairs)
- teacher recaps

The Structure of Lessons
Clearly structured lessons promote learning.

i. Lessons must have a clear start. This will include starter activities such as brainstorms and demonstrations as well as a review/recap of previous learning.
ii. Lessons must have a clear finish, which will include a review of learning objectives (see above) but may also include quick-fire questioning to correct misapprehensions, and a preview of the next lesson. Ample time should be allowed for the setting of Home Learning.

Activities should be varied, purposeful and appropriate to meet the needs of all students.

Students learn in different ways. Recognising this and planning for it provides stimulus and is inclusive.

i. A range of teacher-led and student-centred activities should be used

ii. Teachers need to use a range of teaching strategies to take account of the learning needs of all students. Differentiation is a powerful tool for student learning in the classroom and at home. This will take many forms and can include:

- differentiation by outcome
- differentiation by task
- differentiation by question
- developing and adapting resources both to support and to extend students, taking into account all students' needs
- the use of student groupings

iii. Students should have the opportunity to work in a variety of ways, such as individually, in pairs, in small groups and in whole class situations.

Achievement should always be recognised and rewarded
Student achievement should always be celebrated. This can be done in a number of ways:

- using the school reward systems eg Merits, Headteacher Commendations and Achievements Assemblies
- displaying students' work (on display boards, on plasma screens)
- the regular use of praise in lessons

Underachievement needs to be challenged
All students are capable of achievement and underachievement. Identifying and challenging underachievement is the responsibility of all teachers. A teacher needs to initiate change, not to process underachievement by simply recording and reporting. High expectations are not enough on their own; action is needed to ensure they are met.

i. Identification

- teachers must familiarise themselves with relevant data as it becomes available (for example, VR, SATs and CATs scores) and use this to inform expectations and monitor progress.

- teachers should address barriers to learning which may prevent students from achieving, such as disruptive, passive behaviour or lack of confidence.

- teachers must be aware of other factors, such as SEN and G&T needs, as well as any social and emotional influences that may affect learning, and differentiate accordingly.

- regular department discussions must focus on promoting achievement and result in actions that challenge underachievement.

ii. Challenge

Subject teachers should:

- talk to students about their learning in order to establish reasons for any underachievement. Targets must be reviewed. Progress must be recognised.

- use appropriate sanctions when work or behaviour fails to meet an acceptable standard. If students fail to respond to sanctions then the Subject Leader and Head of School must be informed.

- give regular, short term, achievable, meaningful targets and learning goals.

Subject Leaders should:

- ensure Schemes of Work and assessment tasks are appropriate, rigorous and sufficiently challenging. The implementation of Schemes of Work must be monitored. Schemes of Work and assessment tasks must be reviewed and amended as appropriate.

- regularly lead the department in levelling work against age-related expectations.

- monitor and track the progress of individuals and groups of students against relevant data. Subject Leaders must liaise with Heads of School.

- use appropriate actions to support students and staff in challenging underachievement.

Heads of School should:

- use a variety of sources of information to have an overview of achievement levels within their year group.

- liaise with students, staff and parents regarding actions to tackle underachievement.

It is important that teachers create and maintain a purposeful learning environment

The way in which teachers manage the classroom will have a significant effect on students' learning and behaviour. Students learn and progress in a structured and stimulating environment.

- punctuality and regular attendance are essential for staff and students.

- a register must be taken for every lesson.

- students must enter and leave the classroom in silence at the instruction of the teacher. On the teacher's arrival students are expected to be silent and stand up behind desks or tables in silence.

- teachers must dismiss students in silence and in time for their next lesson.

- the seating of students is very important and should be at the direction of the teacher. Strategic seating can challenge underachievement and promote learning.

- lessons must last the full duration and students must not be dismissed early.

- teachers must ensure that classrooms are left clean and tidy. If furniture is moved, it should be returned to its original position. Any graffiti or other damage if it occurs must not be tolerated and must be reported to the school office / site manager immediately and a senior member of staff informed.

- teachers are responsible for managing stimulating displays which should be changed regularly.

Teachers can gain much from guided reflection with a colleague and the sharing of good practice

Peer or co-coaching is a sustainable and on-going form of professional development. In providing support and opportunities for reflection and evaluation, coaching enhances practice and enriches teaching as participants gain in confidence and take risks within an open, mutually supportive culture.

Staff should:

- observe at least two lessons by different teachers during the year, independent of the coaching process
- develop coaching skills such as listening, questioning, reflection via training opportunities
- ensure that reflection, evaluation and resultant action are central and integral to the process
- try to keep up-to-date with current thinking on good practice

The Coach should try to:

- ensure that the coached teacher perceives positive aspects about his/her teaching and notes areas for improvement
- facilitate reflective practice so that the coached teacher evaluates his/her own performance and, via dialogue, determines future action

The coached teacher should:

- have a specific, narrow focus (aspects of 'learning at QEGS' model this year). Not all foci will necessitate lesson observations – this will be determined by the nature of the focus.
- focus on an aspect of teaching which s/he wishes to develop and improve
- work with one or two colleagues of his/her choice with whom s/he can be open, trust and feel comfortable.

Assessment

- Assessment must be formative and used to inform learning

- Assessment for Learning strategies must be used to encourage all students to 'learn to learn'

- The Literacy and Written English policies should be followed

- Home Learning must be planned, differentiated and meaningful

Assessment

The Assessment for Learning Strategy underpins our assessment practice throughout the whole school. Effective assessment and marking of work are fundamental to successful learning and teaching. All assessment information should be used formatively.

Formative Assessment

The aim of formative assessment is to give students clear guidance about how to improve their work. Students must be told of the assessment criteria (whether it be OGSU or levels/grades) for both class work and Home Learning tasks.

i.   All work that is formally assessed should receive formative comments. This will usually be in writing. When formative feedback is given verbally by the teacher, it may be appropriate for it to be recorded by students in exercise books or files.

ii.   Opportunities must be given for students to act upon the guidance. This could be done through class or Home Learning, for example:

- a starter or a plenary activity
- discussion with the student
- a peer assessment activity
- re-drafting pieces of work
- re-doing work that has been given a 'U' grade

iii.   A formative comment should:

- Be preceded by praise or a statement regarding the strengths of the piece of work
- be clear, concise and accessible for students
- highlight achievement
- be diagnostic
- indicate how improvement can be achieved, usually consisting of one or two targets
- be personal by using the student's first name
- encourage and support the student in a constructive way, showing sensitivity to individual learning or personal difficulties (as cited in SEN Register and Confidential Personal Information)
- encourage students to take ownership of their learning

iv.   Peer- and/or self-assessment should take place at least once a term in every subject area. The aim of peer- and self-assessment is to enable students to be actively involved in the assessment process and give them ownership of their learning.

Whole Year Assessment Tasks

i.   There must be a minimum of three cross-year assessment tasks per year in every subject area. These tasks can be set for class work or Home Learning.

ii.   The task must be common across comparable groups.

iii.   There are many types of cross year assessment tasks including:
- an extended piece of written work
- an investigation/project
- a practical task
- whole class presentations, sometimes using ICT
- an oral or aural activity
- a mid topic test
- an end of unit test
- the November/January or end of year examination

Assessment of Class Work and Home Learning

i.   It is essential that staff record grades for all assessed class work and Home Learning in their mark books as this will allow individual progress to be monitored

ii   Current Performance, Projected and Target Grades must be recorded in teachers' mark books and used to inform discussion

iii.   With past examination questions/papers, grades/levels should be given. The relevant assessment criteria and grade/level boundaries should be used when assessing these tasks and these should be shared with pupils.

iv.   When the teacher is marking work, class work and Home Learning will be marked and returned within 2 weeks. The depth of marking should relate to the nature of the task set.

v.   At KS5, notes/folders must be checked for accuracy and content at least once a term (there must be visible evidence that notes have been checked – for example, a teacher's signature).

Presentation

Teachers must ensure that work is presented to the highest possible standard at all times, excluding rough and draft work

i.   Teachers must not allow students to deface books, folders and planners

ii.   All written work should have titles underlined, a date and an indication whether work is class or Home Learning

iii.   When completing ICT-based work, presentation remains very important and should be carefully checked and marked for grammar and spelling errors.

iv.   It may be appropriate for students whose special educational needs lead to presentational difficulties to use ICT for Home Learning and to be given time in class to complete work legibly.

Home Learning

Learning takes place inside and outside the classroom. To support students, Home Learning must be planned, differentiated, meaningful, clear and set regularly.

i.   Home Learning must be set according to the Home Learning timetable and put on the intranet. This enables students to plan their time effectively.

ii.   A variety of Home Learning tasks can be set, such as:

- questions
- research
- thinking
- reading
- extended writing
- past papers
- notes
- learning / revision.

iii.   **All Home Learning must be assessed**. This can be done in a variety of ways, such as:

- marked by the teacher
- peer-assessment / self-assessment
- orally
- by testing.

iv.   Home Learning tasks must be planned and must not be 'finish off' work. Whether Home Learning is set at the beginning or the end of a lesson, it must be clearly explained and ample time given for clarification.

v.   Students must be clear about the purpose of the Home Learning and how it will be assessed.

vi.   Students must be given clear written instructions of the Home Learning task, the deadline and how to complete the work.

vii.   All Home Learning tasks must be put on the intranet.

viii.   It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that Home Learning is written in the students' planners. It may be appropriate to provide SEN students with pre-printed Home Learning tasks and to forward the same information to mentors (and possibly parents). The on-line curriculum is an invaluable resource for access to Home Learning tasks and guidance for students and their parents.

ix.   Where appropriate, the previous Home Learning should be recapped upon in the lesson, clarifying misunderstandings and giving feedback upon positive aspects.

Inclusion

- Every student is entitled to a positive, meaningful learning experience

- Every teacher has a responsibility to meet the educational needs of **all** students

- SEN/G&T information must be recorded and used by teachers to inform learning and teaching

- Every teacher is responsible for promoting Literacy, Numeracy and ICT

Inclusion

Every student at Queen Elizabeth's has the right to receive the highest quality education. It is our responsibility to ensure that their educational needs are met. Ensuring inclusion involves:

- setting suitable differentiated learning challenges
- responding to students' diverse learning needs
- working to overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment
- personalising learning

Different groups of students have specific needs, which the school supports in a number of ways:

SEN

i.   Information on students with Special Educational Needs is distributed by the SENCo and should be kept with the confidential information at the back of the staff handbook. This information must be recorded in all mark books and targets must be discussed with students.

ii.   Information regarding the progress of these students is required from teachers and mentors on a regular basis (often weekly for Y11 students). It is imperative that this is returned promptly when requested.

iii   The SEN department will support staff in meeting the needs of students. This will include enhanced mentoring, providing information, guidance on appropriate teaching strategies and the adaptation and provision of teaching resources. Their role does not include administrative duties such as photocopying, nor should they be asked by subject staff to work with pupils other than those specified.

Gifted and Talented

Each department is responsible for identifying those with particular ability in their subject and ensuring that their needs are met. A register of those identified as 'Gifted & Talented' will be distributed by the Lead Teacher for G &T and this should be kept at the back of the staff handbook, with relevant information recorded in mark books. The SENCo, Lead Teacher for
G & T and Headteacher organise a programme of activities for these students (eg Extended Project for Y9 and Summer School) and the SENCo and Lead Teacher can be consulted for advice on strategies to meet their learning needs.

Teaching Assistants

i.   The school will assign TAs to support the teacher in meeting the diverse learning   needs of pupils with statements

ii.   They will work with teachers both within the classroom environment and outside the classroom at the direction of the teacher and SENCo

iii.   It is the responsibility of the teacher to provide appropriate guidance to the TA. The teacher is responsible for the planning of work

iv.   There should be regular communication between teachers and TAs about how teaching can be structured to support students. TAs will have in-depth knowledge of the student being supported.

ICT, Literacy & Numeracy

ICT, Literacy and Numeracy skills underpin learning across the curriculum. These must be addressed in all groups, in all subject areas.

These policies can be found in the staff handbook.

Supporting Learning

Every teacher, in whatever role, has a responsibility to support students in their learning

Supporting Learning

Students' learning and personal development is supported in a number of different ways across the academy. If an academic concern arises, it should be referred to the Subject Leader. If the problem is of a personal or serious nature, it should be referred immediately to the Head of School.

Role of Form Tutors

i.   The Form Tutor has an integral role in supporting students' learning and personal development. The role of the Tutor is focused on learning and teaching. It does not revolve solely around administrative tasks.

ii.   The Tutor sets the standards and expectations of students for the day. A partnership exists between the Tutor and the Head of School in order to monitor the academic and personal development of students within the form.

Registration

i.   Registration periods are part of the school day and should contribute to the learning and teaching process in the academy

ii.   Registration periods are formal occasions and silence must be maintained while the register is taken.

iii.   In weekly registration and tutorial sessions, Form Tutors should aim to talk to students on an individual basis to monitor personal and academic progress

iv.   Students must always be engaged in meaningful activities during tutor time

v.   Tutors must arrive to registration on time. Tutors are role models and punctuality is essential.

vi   Tutors must escort their form to assembly and stay with their form for the duration of the assembly

vii   Form rooms must be left tidy at the end of registration

Heads of School

Heads of School are responsible for the personal and academic wellbeing of all students within their year groups. They work in partnership with the Senior Leadership Team, Form Tutors and Subject Teachers in promoting the school ethos across the year groups. They are available to discuss the individual needs of any student within their year groups. Any academic or personal concerns regarding a student should be discussed with the Head of School.

Subject Leaders

i. The role of the Subject Leader is to manage learning and teaching within their curriculum area

ii. Any concerns with the academic progress of an individual student must be referred to and discussed with the appropriate Subject Leader

iii. Subject Leaders will support the professional development needs of individual staff members within their curriculum area

Senior Leadership Team

The SLT is responsible for the overall management and development of learning and teaching across the school.

Students' advice to teachers

Year 12 Student Observers (Rebecca Daniel, Nicole Dixon, Hannah Elias. Lauren Gest and Nel Hales) developed the following in July 2011 at the end of their training for being student observers:

1. Structure your lesson so that learning develops throughout. Include a starter which prepares the pupil for the lesson ahead (using learning objectives), a main activity taking up the majority of the lesson and a plenary to check learning against the assessment criteria.

2. Ensure within the lesson there are fun, enjoyable and interactive activities such as: educational games, role play and investigations.

3. Use a range of resources such as: text books, the internet and media equipment.

4. Cater for all learning styles (Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic).

5. Be interested in the pupils as individuals and give thorough feedback to indicate to the pupil where they need to progress further.

6. Challenge your pupils! (e.g. higher order questions, extension work - differentiation)

7. Be consistent with the expectations of your pupils and the sanctions you give out.

8. Keep your pupils motivated (through appraisal, rewards and target setting) and encourage them to do their best whilst striving for their goals.

9. Be professional but incorporate humour into your teaching and avoid being condescending towards your pupils.

10. Love your subject and your students will love it too!

LEARNING at QEGS ALFORD

Understanding

Questioning
Getting below the surface. Always wanting to know more

Making links
Seeking connections, relevance and meaning

Thinking flexibly
Looking at things from different angles and considering various options. Being prepared to change your mind

Logical thinking
Thinking rigorously, methodically and carefully

Being resourceful
Making good use of all available resources

Accuracy
Attention to detail and accuracy in your learning

Managing your Learning

Planning
Working learning out in advance

Keeping track
Monitoring and adapting along the way

Apply past knowledge
Learning from experience

Individuality
Understanding yourself as a learner

Responsible risks
Willing to try new things

Reflecting
Looking back on your learning, finding ways to improve and setting high standards

Who you learn with

Interdependence
Being flexible and able to work alone or in teams

Collaboration
The skills of learning to work together, contributing and building on ideas in a team

Empathy and listening
Understanding others' thoughts and ideas

Learning from others
Picking up others' good learning habits and values

Focus

Engaging
Being absorbed in learning

Self control
Avoiding distractions and thinking before acting

Noticing
Being aware of detail and the bigger picture

Perseverance
Dealing with difficulty and following tasks through to a conclusion

Humour
Using humour to help learning

Amazement
Being enthused by your learning

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Staff Handbook 2011/2012

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