



Teaching and Learning Policy

April 2019

Vision Statement:

“Be Extraordinary”

Mission Statement:

We believe that young people achieve their fullest potential when they have a vision of everything their lives could become. The Bible (John 10:10) quotes Jesus as saying, “I have come that they may have life and may have it in all its fullness”. As academies, we commit ourselves to inspiring our students, and equipping them with the resilience and determination to unlock their unique gifts and realise their highest aspirations. We aim to achieve this through following distinctively Christian principles, and focusing on four key areas, service, achievement, leadership and teamwork.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 5 April 2019

Due date for review: February 2020

Sentamu Academy Learning Trust

1. Teaching and Learning Statement of Policy

This teaching and learning policy is intended as a statement of the key principles that should affect the planning of teaching input and learning experience at a Sentamu Academy Learning Trust 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 Trust. This policy aims to develop strategies for teachers, subject leaders and members of the senior leadership team to take learning forward.

Please note that the Trust 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. On those occasions when a detailed lesson plan is required please continue to use the Academy's planning pro forma.

2. Learning objectives and 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 differentiated lesson 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 expected 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 their knowing where they are and what they need to do to improve.

3. Challenge and pace in learning

Challenge and Pace are 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 and 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; and

- 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

4. Engagement in learning

4.1. 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

4.2 Key points for teachers:

- Exciting 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. Real-world analogies, contemporary references or 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.

5. 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; and
- 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

6. 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 to do so;
- 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 to say - 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; and
- 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 Marking and Feedback Policy.

7. Quality Assurance

Each 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 senior and subject leader drop-ins and instructional rounds, to more formal approaches including learning walks and lesson observations.

8. Support

Staff at each academy have a range of resources available to support the development of teaching and learning. This includes less formal approaches, such as the use of IRIS Connect for self-reflection, teacher support plans, informal coaching and peer observation, through to more formal mentoring and coaching. Access to this range of support is available to all through the senior leadership of each academy.