

Heartlands Academy Teaching & Learning Policy

Department Owner	Operations (National)
Section Owner	Education
Approver	E-ACT Education & Personnel Committee
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Learning and Teaching Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Effective teaching reflects the commitment and determination of all staff to ensure that every student succeeds. It requires methods that engage students in productive learning and the imagination to make learning vivid and relevant. It requires the skill to build on what students know and to evaluate how well they are achieving. It presupposes subject expertise that allows teachers to challenge students at the highest level.

2. Aim

2.1 To maximise the learning potential of every student through the highest quality of teaching.

3. Characteristics of Good Teaching are as follows:

- Teachers show good command of areas of learning and subjects
- Plan effectively with clear learning objectives and suitable teaching strategies
- Interest, encourage and engage students
- Challenge students, expecting the most of them
- Use methods and resources that enable all students to learn effectively and make good progress
- Make effective use of time and insist on high standards of behaviour
- Make effective use of teaching assistants and other support
- Where appropriate, use homework effectively to reinforce and extend what is learned in school
- Promote equality of opportunity and inclusive practice

4. Characteristics of effective learning are as follows:

- Students acquire new knowledge or skills in their work, develop ideas and increase understanding
- Students show engagement, application and concentration and are productive
- Students develop the skills and capacity to achieve personal success

5. Characteristics of Good Assessment are as follows:

- Students' work is assessed according departmental policy and academy expectations
- Assessment is used to inform planning and target setting to meet the learning and personal development needs of individual students and groups.
- Students understand how well they are doing and how they can improve.

6. Policy Monitoring

6.1 This policy will be monitored by the following people:

- Ø Headteacher
- Ø Deputy Headteacher
- Ø Leadership Team
- Ø Heads of Department
- Ø Teacher Self Monitoring

6.2 Monitoring will be by learning walks, sampling of students' work and talking to students and talking to staff. Heads of Department will monitor according to their

monitoring programme. The Subject Self Review process is implemented by the Head of Department and supported by the SLT link.

6.3 Evaluation informs the SIP and DIPs.

7. Quality of Learning and Teaching

7.1 In the first instance it is the class teacher's responsibility to monitor and evaluate the quality of Learning and Teaching in his/her classroom. The Head of Department is responsible for monitoring all Learning and Teaching within their particular curriculum area while the Deputy Headteacher will have the overall responsibility for the Quality Assurance System of Learning and Teaching across the school.

Appendix 1: Teaching

1. How good is teachers' command of subjects and courses?

Teachers' expertise in their subject at and beyond the level required for the courses they teach, including their up-to-date expertise in vocational areas, are essential starting-points for effective teaching. Students should be learning from experts. Deficiencies in subject knowledge and competence are likely to have a significant adverse effect on what students achieve. Teachers need a good command of the assessment requirements of the awarding body in subjects and courses that are externally moderated and examined. They also need a good understanding of national programmes, such as National Strategy, and how to implement them.

Effective plans reflect a clear understanding of what needs to be learned, and how students will be taught. Teachers' knowledge is also demonstrated in the way they:

- explain new ideas in ways that make sense to students, and answer their questions accurately;
- provide relevant first-hand experience, drawing on different contexts, a wide body of knowledge including, where relevant, the world of work, links with other subjects or the diversity of cultures, to develop understanding of concepts, and their significance and students' capacity to apply them in different situations;
- cater for the more able in the subject and those with special educational needs;
- know and use the most appropriate and up-to-date resources that interest and challenge students and promote effective independent study.

2. Do teachers plan effectively, with clear learning objectives and suitable teaching strategies?

Planning should indicate that thought has been given to how knowledge, understanding and skills are to be built up. It should be judged by how well it supports Learning and Teaching, not by any preconceived idea about its format or detail. It is important planning for lessons gives support staff a good framework for adapting the work and modifying approaches for individual students with SEN and difficulties.

Learning objectives should:

- be clear
- build on what has gone before
- be understood by students
- involve flexibility and a range of approaches to achieve them
- take account of students' differing needs.

Activities should be:

- appropriate to meet the objectives
- evaluate how well the learning objectives are met, whether they are realistic and what steps teachers take to assess the learning in planning further work

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3. How well do teachers interest, encourage and engage students?

Teachers' success in capturing students' interest is seen in their attentiveness, how well they engage in activities, wrestle with problems, and how eager they are to ask and answer questions. It is also evident in the care that students show in their written and other work. Students are influenced strongly by teachers' enthusiasm for their subject. Imaginative lessons that are vivid, real and relevant motivate learners.

Good teaching:-

- coaxes and manages reluctant learners
- relates well to learners
- encourages students to try out new tasks and work independently
- values what students know

Teaching is unsatisfactory if students are easily distracted or become disaffected, or if they see little relevance in what they are doing.

4. How well do teachers challenge students, expecting the most of them?

Effective teaching extends students intellectually, creatively and physically. Teachers show high expectations by:-

- teaching that is closely matched to students' needs linked with individual or group curricular targets;
- questioning and intervention that provide challenge and extend students' learning
- clear models to show how students should approach their work and behave;
- suitably demanding use of materials and learning resources.

Teaching is unsatisfactory when there is lack of challenge, for example in mundane tasks or unnecessary routines and indiscriminate praise or acceptance of work that is not good enough. Students' work that is always marked right and is almost certainly too easy.

5. To what extent do teachers use methods and resources that enable students to learn effectively?

Methods, resources and organisation should result in high standards of work and behaviour. If any students or groups are not learning effectively, strategies should be developed to address this.

An effective range of methods and resources include:-

- ways of teaching and resources that excite, inspire or motivate students to contribute and develop their ideas;
- teaching strategies reflecting different learning styles
- techniques that are adjusted well to achieving the learning objectives, such as well-informed exposition and demonstration or questioning that probes understanding;
- practical work, investigations and problem-solving exercises that develop students' skills, creativity and understanding;
- judicious grouping of students that enables the teacher and other staff to work with them effectively and the students to collaborate where appropriate;
- good quality materials that help students learn;

- opportunities for students to apply skills and knowledge in English language and literacy and mathematics across the curriculum;
- considered use of ICT and e-learning to promote effective learning;

Teaching is unsatisfactory if it is over-directed or, conversely if there is too little intervention or direct teaching.

6. Do teachers make effective use of time and insist on high standard of behaviour?

Good teaching establishes a productive climate for learning. This is likely where the focus is on learning rather than controlling behaviour, and where students' contributions are valued. Features that reduce the incidence of inappropriate behaviour include:

- a prompt and stimulating start to the lesson;
- clear and efficient organisation of activities and groups;
- fair and clear exercise of authority;
- effective support for students by the teacher or other adults;
- mutual respect and properly established work habits;
- relevant activities that engage the interest of the students;
- an emphasis on self-discipline and mature behaviour;
- consistent and effective implementation of behaviour management policy;

7. Do teachers make effective use of teaching assistants and other support?

Teaching Assistants and other support should contribute to the achievement of learning objectives for individual students, groups, or the whole class.

Effective use is made when:-

- the skills and expertise of assistants and support staff are sufficient, known by the teacher and used well;
- they are well briefed so they are fully aware of the learning objectives, and how they are to be met;
- they carry out a useful range of support tasks, so freeing the teacher's time for teaching;
- they are involved in planning, staff meetings and have access to professional development

8. Do teachers use homework effectively to reinforce and extend what is learned in school?

Homework should effectively complement work in class, extend learning and promote students' achievement.

Homework should:-

- challenge
- be helpful and interesting
- be tailored to individual needs and capabilities
- make reasonable assumptions about students access to resources at home

9. How well do teachers promote equality of opportunity and inclusive practice?

Students' individual needs are met when:-

- all students are treated with respect and their contributions valued and encouraged;
- teaching methods and resources are without bias, free from stereotyping, and are properly matched to meeting the needs of all students;
- sensitivity is shown to students' individual circumstances, beliefs and cultures in the way questions are asked or ideas promoted;
- the school has due regard for the SEN Code of Practice and follows the Code of Practice for Promoting Race Equality

Students who have Special Educational Needs

Work should be matched to students' needs and students should make progress. Individual plans should include clear targets that are appropriately few in number and sufficiently practical for subject teachers to implement. There should be a clear rationale for deciding whether the students are supported in class or are withdrawn from lessons.

Gifted & Talented

Work should be matched to these students' needs and challenge should be appropriate. Students from Minority Ethnic Groups.

Good teaching:-

- shows interest in and sensitivity to the different cultures represented in the school
- draws on students' own experiences
- uses culturally sensitive language
- is alert to differences in non-verbal communication
- identifies underachievement and takes action to counter it

For students with English as an additional language (EAL)

Good teaching will involve:-

- specific development of speaking and listening skills;
- provision of effective models of spoken and written language;
- use of the first language among learners when appropriate to support learning;
- high-quality, culturally relevant visual aids and other resources;
- partnership teaching, involving EAL specialists;
- the use of bilingual support assistants who are well qualified and briefed appropriately
- identify those who need support not just at the early stages of learning English but also at more advanced levels when level of English may fail to keep pace with academic potential

Appendix 2: Learning

Learning is the outcome of effective teaching and support, combined with students' personal qualities including their attitudes to work and school.

1. To what extent do students acquire new knowledge or skills in their work, develop ideas and increase their understanding?

There will be times when teaching is aimed at consolidation, but in most lessons there should be new learning if students are to make progress at the rate expected for their age and capability.

In individual lessons, all students should achieve and learn. Over a course of lessons, there should be appropriate coverage of the scheme of work and progress relative to students' starting points.

Students should:-

- be able to explain confidently and clearly what they have learned;
- be creative and show initiative when asked to apply what they have learned to new situations;
- understand how current learning relates to previous work and what comes next;
- ask questions that show a desire to learn.

2. To what extent do students show engagement, application and concentration and work productively?

Teachers should expect students to put in sufficient effort to develop good learning habits and derive satisfaction from their work.

Students are likely to show interest and understanding when the teaching is stimulating. Effective teaching relates new learning to old, encourages learners to connect ideas and to think imaginatively. Students will then work intently and consistently produce work of a good standard.

Good teaching encourages students to manage their time well and to complete work in the time available.

3. To what extent do students develop the capacity to work independently and collaboratively?

Good teaching supports learning as follows:-

- those who find it difficult to settle to work are helped to become more self-reliant;
- learners work collaboratively on tasks and share responsibility for completing them;
- learners use their time and make the most of the choices they are given;
- learners plan their time to complete tasks, including homework, to deadlines;
- learners select and use sensibly the most appropriate tools and equipment for their work;

- when working along, learners focus on the task in hand and are productive when closely supervised and when working independently

Appendix 3: Assessment

1. To what extent do teachers assess students' work thoroughly and constructively?

Assessment should be used as a natural part of Learning and Teaching. It should be effective in diagnosing students' strengths and helping them to recognise and overcome their weaknesses. Good teachers target their questions and pitch them to match their understanding of students' capabilities. They use students' answers to deal with any misunderstandings or to deepen knowledge and understanding.

Assessment, verification and moderation procedures should follow the awarding body requirements. Students should be encouraged to comment on and assess their own work, and understand and use the criteria that teachers use to assess their work.

Assessment is more than responding to national tests and examinations. However, statutory requirements should be met for assessment in the relevant subjects of the National Curriculum. Teachers' assessments should be consistent with the results of National Curriculum tests and external examinations.

The effective school builds on its assessment procedures when identifying students with special educational needs and takes into account the Code of Practice. There should be consistent approaches across all departments that enable the school to identify those whose progress is not adequate and where adjustments may need to be made to the teaching. Staff should be clear when they need to make additional provision, in liaison with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), at the school action phase.

2. How well do teachers use assessment to inform their planning and target-setting to meet the needs of individual students and groups?

Assessments might guide planning through:

- Analysing students' oral and written responses so as to adjust the pace, content or methods of teaching;
- Review of students' progress, including whether targets have been met at the end of a unit of work, to inform teaching and target-setting for the whole class, groups, or individuals.

Assessments should lead to regular reviews and refinement of targets and teaching programmes.

For example:-

- information about students' attainment on entry to the school should be used to determine their programmes for learning and as a basis for checking their progress;
- assessments are followed through and students are supported where this is needed;
- targets for individual students of all abilities are agreed, and the basis for any change to them;
- changes are made to teaching approaches as a result of assessment;

- assessment contributes to planning work for gifted and talented students and those with special educational needs or disabilities, and the outcomes are considered in reviews;
- staff respond to signs that students are underachieving.

3. Do students understand how well they are doing and how they can improve?

In the best practice, students:

- know that making mistakes is inevitable, and that they can learn from sorting them out;
- appreciate that work that is always right may well be too easy;
- have a clear view of how they are doing in different subjects and courses and what they must do to improve;
- have a view of their work that is consistent with that of their teachers.