

Learning and Teaching Policy

Introduction

Learning and Teaching: why we exist as a school

Educational research stresses the importance of students and teachers being aware of the nature of learning. As students and educators, we aim to develop our understanding of learning through reflecting on our own classroom practice and on the best thoughts of others. Greater involvement in the process of learning, whether learning a subject or the craft of teaching, promotes understanding and better practice.

This policy underpins the Academy's approach to improving the learning of all of our students. We aim to challenge and support all students by creating a clear, orderly, supportive, stimulating, challenging and fair learning environment.

The quality of learning is the most important aspect of the Academy, and the quality of teaching is one of the most important factors contributing to this.

Aims and Objectives

- To ensure that consistent high quality learning and teaching takes place throughout the Academy. This demands we create a safe environment conducive to learning, in which students and teachers are encouraged to reach their highest level of personal achievement through acquiring and developing their knowledge, understanding and key skills.
- To promote the importance of reflection on and research into learning and teaching.
- To support the induction, development, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation of staff and students. This will enable managers to carry out their responsibility for monitoring the quality of learning and teaching according to agreed standards.

Key Principles

- Every student has the right to be successful and to achieve their potential.
- The delivery of a successful curriculum requires teachers to know and understand the potential of each student they teach.
- The quality of teaching can only be assessed by evaluating the learning of students.
- Each student must know what to do and how to do it in order to improve.
- Every lesson must constitute a learning opportunity for each student in a group.
- Consistency of experience is fundamental to good progress.

To ensure effective learning, the Academy adopts a policy of consistency and minimum expected standards. This policy should be read in conjunction with all other academy policies.

Learning and Teaching - First Principles

- Students should be taught how to learn and how to reflect on their learning.
- Learning objectives must be shared and reviewed.
- Clearly structured lessons promote learning.
- Formative assessment is a constantly evolving dialogue that recognises and celebrates positive progress and that refocuses efforts on the next steps in learning.
- Teachers must create and maintain a purposeful learning environment.
- All achievement must be recognised and rewarded.
- Underachievement must be challenged, not processed.
- Encouragement to exceed expectations must be the norm in teacher-student interactions.

Skills for Learning

Literacy, numeracy and ICT are key skills with a significant impact on students' learning. We aim to support each other to deliver these key skills across the curriculum. Student progress is monitored through assessing of their work.

The principle underpinning the development of key skills is our belief that excellence will only be achieved by all teachers working in partnership. Through systematic collaboration we aim to support each other to develop effective teaching and learning strategies that will result in students experiencing consistency in all subject areas.

Literacy for Learning

Literacy consists of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. All subjects are responsible for the development of these key skills. Students also focus on their literacy skills during their personalised learning time when they read books or engage in word games or discussions based on non-fiction or fiction writing.

Numeracy for Learning

By developing students' numeracy, we aim to equip students with the ability to think logically and solve problems. Numerate students are able to fulfil their potential, aspire to academic excellence and become independent students.

ICT for Learning

We aim for students to develop an outstanding level of ICT capability to support other areas of their learning and empower them to be independent and lifelong students.

Learning and Teaching

Teaching is all about enabling students to learn. Teachers need to choose activities carefully to promote this.

Effective Learning Activities

We offer opportunities for students to learn in different ways. These include:

- Whole class work
- Investigation and problem solving
- Watching television and responding to music or tape recorded material
- Research and finding out
- Debates, role plays and oral presentations
- Group work
- Use of the computer, ICT in the classroom
- E-learning activities (interactive whiteboards, tablets, educational software etc.)
- Designing and making things
- Pair work
- Fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest
- Participation in physical activity
- Independent work
- Creative activities
- Reflecting on what has been learned

Effective Teaching Activities

Our students learn best when it is made explicit to them what they need to do to be successful in their learning. This could include:

- Discussions with students about their learning.
- 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).
- Opportunities to review and reflect on the learning.
- Open-ended, thought provoking and challenging questions; lessons where students understanding is developed through active, practical and first hand experiences, involving individual and collaborative talk, exploration, questioning, prediction and investigation, so that the lesson makes a difference.
- Formative feedback and target setting on how to improve.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the student's level of attainment. Our prime focus is to develop their knowledge and skills. We have high expectations of all children, and believe that all students should be included in the full range of educational opportunities and that their work at Victory Academy should be of the highest possible standard.

Victory Academy will ensure effective learning by providing clear expectations for the development of outstanding learning.

PLAN - PLAN FOR LEARNING

Good planning - both of individual lessons and of longer term Schemes of Learning - is the single most important ingredient of successful learning.

Planning will take account of different variables - progress, structure, management, assessment, activities, learning styles, outcomes and homework. This policy is designed to ensure that all lessons operate with a clearly defined Academy style and that consistency is achieved in the delivery of the lesson.

PLAN - PLAN FOR PROGRESS

If students are to take 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.

1. 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. Learning objectives must be displayed in every lesson, either:
 - Written or projected onto the board
 - Printed on hand-outs

2. Learning objectives must be phrased in language that focuses on what students will know, understand or be able to do as a result of their learning. It is good practice for the words "I can" to open every objective.

3. Learning objectives should be differentiated and include outcomes for all, most and some.

4. The learning objectives must be revisited throughout and at the end of the lesson. This can be done in various ways:
 - Students review their learning against the lesson objectives
 - Teacher questions with differentiation by ability
 - Students record 2 key points (individually or in pairs)
 - Teacher recaps

PLAN - STRUCTURED LESSONS

Clearly structured lessons promote learning.

Teachers must ensure that transition between phases of a lesson, activities and tasks are clearly signposted to students and effectively managed to maintain pace and ensure effective use of time.

- In an hour lesson, significant time must be given to a learning activity that moves on every student at an appropriate pace. This could be more than one activity and should be more than one task.
- Learning should be reviewed at stages during the main activity.
- The main activity must build on students' prior attainment as well as linking to the lesson objective(s). Therefore it will be adapted to meet the needs of each group.
- Lessons must end with a plenary review of learning objectives. The closing plenary may include quick fire questioning, student explanations of what they have learnt, recap of learning points, a take home message and a preview of the next lesson.

PLAN - ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

Assessment has two roles in education. Assessment for Learning is designed to support students in advancing their learning. Summative assessment is a tool for determining how much learning has taken place. Any summative assessment should be relevant to the student and valid for the learning that has taken place

Students must be given clear guidance about where they are and how to progress to the next level/grade. This will encourage students to reflect on the standard of their own work. In Assessment for Learning, specific marks, grades or levels are not awarded; advice ("targets") about how to make clear progress in the next piece of work is given instead.

The Assessment Policy requires that there will be occasions when a piece of work is set and then graded or levelled. This summative assessment is used to inform students, parents and teachers about the progress of students. These assessments are made half-termly and are reported to parents each term in the Progress Reports.

The Assessment Policy is adhered to across Victory Academy.

DELIVER - VARIED AND PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES

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

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

The teacher should:

- Use a range of teacher-led and student-centred activities.
- Use a range of teaching strategies to take account of the learning needs of all students.
- Be actively engaged with the students at all times during the lesson.
- Provide opportunities for students to work in a variety of ways, such as individually, in pairs, small groups or whole class.
- Differentiate for the students within their groups. This can include:
 - ⇒ Differentiation by task
 - ⇒ Differentiation by questioning
 - ⇒ Developing and adapting resources to support and extend students, taking into account all students' needs
 - ⇒ Differentiation by outcome
 - ⇒ The use of student groupings

MANAGE - ENVIRONMENT

Teachers must ensure a purposeful learning environment is maintained.

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.

- Teachers must ensure that classrooms are left clean and tidy. If furniture is moved, it should be returned to its original position.
- Teachers are responsible for managing stimulating displays which should be changed regularly.

MANAGE - CLASSROOM ORGANISATION

- Lessons must begin promptly. The teacher should greet students at the door.
- The seating of students is very important and must be at the direction of the teacher. Strategic seating can challenge underachievement and promote learning. Teachers must have a seating plan for every class displayed in the classroom.
- Teachers should implement routines that promote learning. Good practice is to require students to place planner, pen and pencil on the desk at the start of the lesson.
- Punctuality and regular attendance are essential for staff and students
- Lessons must last the full duration and students must **not** be dismissed early.
- Dismissal at the end of the lesson must be controlled and prompt.

MANAGE - POSITIVE LANGUAGE

The ways in which staff communicate with students and with each other can be a powerful influence on student behaviour and attendance. It is good practice to:

- Use positive, genuine and specific language.
- Praise students for effort, achievement and good behaviour.
- Aim to use the ratio of 5:1 positive interactions in each lesson.
- Use calm and reflective language to model calm behaviour.
- Use polite language to model the tone of responses expected.
- Use language to build relationships and raise students' self esteem.

MANAGE - BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Good relationships have a critical impact on learning, behaviour and attendance.

Staff will actively build relationships during their lesson.

- Welcoming students to the class
- Using students first names
- Getting to know the students, speaking to each student individually over time.
- Having high expectations
- Following the school systems
- Giving choices
- Being consistent and fair
- Modelling good behaviour
- Giving praise and positive feedback
- Demonstrating respect
- Starting each day afresh

MANAGE - REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

- Teachers must ensure the classroom rules are displayed within their classroom and arrival rules are placed outside the door. Teachers must apply these rules, not allowing, for example, students to interrupt the lesson.
- Teachers will be consistent in following the Academy sanctions system to promote good learning in the classroom. [Further guidance can be found in the Behaviour Policy].

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Directors and Senior Leadership Team

Learning and teaching should be central to their thoughts when making decisions about, implementing, monitoring and evaluating all areas of the curriculum, assessment and the Academy in general.

The Board of directors and the SLT are responsible for:

- The Academy is appropriately staffed to ensure the curriculum is being taught.
- The Academy is resourced and the environment is made conducive to learning.
- Learning and teaching is regularly monitored to ensure that effective learning is taking place. All performance management will include one target for at least two 'good' or 'outstanding' lessons to be observed formally each year. Lessons graded 'inadequate' or 'required to improve' will be re-observed within the following 3 school weeks.
- Staff are encouraged to structure their teaching in order to improve learning.
- New staff are given an induction into the Learning and Teaching Policy and Learning Provider Handbook.

Curriculum Leaders

Curriculum Leaders will consider the Learning and Teaching Policy when planning, administering, monitoring and evaluating their department.

Curriculum Leaders are responsible for ensuring:

- Schemes of Learning are in place for all year groups with appropriate varied learning strategies.
- All students are given the appropriate information about their courses (syllabus, curriculum plans, modules).
- Marking and assessment criteria is clearly given to students.
- Regular assessment is recorded and student learning reviewed with appropriate target setting.
- Students are given guidance about successful strategies for learning and revision.
- The learning experience is consistent within the department (regular monitoring).
- Good practice is shared within the department.

Teachers are responsible for ensuring:

- A secure knowledge and understanding of the subject.
- The majority of lessons follow the 4 phase pattern.
- They plan for learning by ensuring:
 - ⇒ Lessons, activities and resources are planned
 - ⇒ Learning objectives of the lesson and expected outcomes are clearly explained
 - ⇒ Regular feedback is given to ensure learning is taking place
 - ⇒ Marking and assessment procedures inform the students about their progress
 - ⇒ Lessons are differentiated and liaison with LSAs is made where appropriate
 - ⇒ The learning is reinforced with a planned plenary or plenaries
 - ⇒ Time targets are set to ensure pace
- They ensure a variety of appropriate learning strategies are used so that students are challenged and motivated.
- They manage their classroom environment to ensure an orderly and safe learning environment with clear sets of routines and standards.
- They build an effective Classroom Climate.
- Academy policies on behaviour management, assessment and homework are implemented.

Students are responsible for ensuring:

- Willingness to engage in learning activities in a positive way.
- Strategies for learning are tried out to improve learning.
- The learning of others is supported.
- Appropriate equipment is brought to the lesson.
- Homework is recorded in planners and completed on time.
- Targets for improvement are agreed and set.

Parents can contribute by:

- Showing an interest in their child's learning.
- Being aware of and following Academy procedures and rules.
- Being willing to support activities related to the Academy.
- Being aware of their child's role within the Academy community.
- Ensuring their child arrives to the Academy on time, dressed appropriately and with equipment for learning.

Parents will **communicate with staff** effectively by:

- Reading and responding appropriately to Academy letters
- Making appointments to see staff about any concerns.
- Attending parent evenings, learning evenings and academic review days

Victory Academy aims to encourage all our students to find the most appropriate way to learn to the best of their ability. We aim to challenge and support all students in their learning by creating a clear, orderly, supportive, stimulating, challenging and fair learning environment.