

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar, Alford

A Selective Academy



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 Grammar, Alford 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.

The Learning and Teaching Policy should be read carefully and regularly discussed in departments as to how it can be best implemented.

Glen Thompson
Headteacher



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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.



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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 and Learning at QEGS skills 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 and skills 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 and Learning at QEGS skills
 - 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. When work is returned, time must be made available for pupils to respond to feedback, using purple pens.
- iii. Lessons must have a clear finish, which will include a review of learning objectives and Learning at QEGS (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 task;
 - differentiation by question;



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

NB It is unlikely that an observed lesson would be judged to be 'Outstanding' unless there is planned differentiation.

- 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 e.g. Merits, Headteacher Commendations and Achievements' Assemblies;
- displaying students' work (on display boards, on plasma screens);
- the regular use of praise in lessons;
- letters/emails/postcards/phone calls to parents.

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, 11+ scores, KS2 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 SEND 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;



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- 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 and ability-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 groups.
- 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 should line up outside the classroom and 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;
- Teachers must dismiss students in silence and in time for their next lesson;
- the seating of students is very important and must be at the direction of the teacher. Seating for Learning plans must be drawn up for all groups. 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. If any graffiti or other damage occurs, it 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.



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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. Through the performance management system, suggestions should be made of suitable staff to observe to meet professional development needs;
- 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 ('Embedding Response to Feedback', 'Whole School Literacy Focus' and 'Differentiation' 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 Whole School Literacy and Written English policies should be followed.
- Home Learning must be planned, differentiated and engaging.



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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 bands/grades) for both class work and Home Learning tasks.

- i. All work that is formally assessed should receive formative comments and understanding carefully checked in the context of the Learning Objectives. 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 and there must be evidence that students are responding to the feedback given, using purple pens. This can 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
 - a written dialogue in the student's exercise book.

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. Projected and Target Grades must be recorded in teachers' mark books and used to inform discussion.
- iii. With past examination questions/papers, grades/bands should be given. The relevant assessment criteria and grade/band 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).



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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. Identified access arrangements must be shown to be the normal way of working for a student.

Home Learning

Learning takes place inside and outside the classroom. To support students, Home Learning must be planned, differentiated, meaningful, clear and set regularly. Try to make it as engaging and enjoyable as possible so that students are motivated to complete the work to a high standard, but beware of setting work which will take far longer than the home learning allocation.

- i. Home Learning must be set according to the Home Learning timetable and put on the intranet with clear objectives within 10 minutes of the end of the school day. This enables students to plan their time effectively.
- ii. A variety of Home Learning tasks can be set, such as:
 - questions
 - research
 - thinking
 - reading
- iii. **All Home Learning must be assessed to provide meaningful information.** 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.



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- v. Students must be clear about the purpose of the Home Learning and how it will be assessed. Learning outcomes should be clear and put on the intranet.
- 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 Lower School students' planners. It may be appropriate to provide SEND students with pre-printed Home Learning tasks and to forward the same information to mentors (and possibly parents). The online 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.
- SEND/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:

SEND

- i. Information on students with Special Educational Needs is on the intranet and/or distributed by the SENDCo 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.



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- ii. Information regarding the progress of these students is required from teachers and mentors on a regular basis (sometimes weekly for Y11 students). It is imperative that this is returned promptly when requested.
- iii. The SEND 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 SENDCo, Lead Teacher for G & T and Headteacher organise a programme of activities for these students (e.g. Extended Project for Y9 and Summer School) and the SENDCo 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 (EHC plans).
- ii. They will work with teachers both within the classroom environment and outside the classroom at the direction of the teacher and SENDCo.
- 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.



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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. This should be done via the Behaviour Management and Academic Referrals systems on the school intranet.

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.



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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.

