

Teaching and Learning Policy

Teaching and learning is the business of the Evolution and Vocational Centre, it is therefore seen to be vital that all teachers share the same values and ethos in delivering lessons and supporting students. Our teaching and learning aims are:

- To provide an environment that is conducive to learning.
- To enable staff and students to fulfil their potential.
- To equip students with the skills for a successful future.
- To foster a lifelong love of learning.
- To ensure that all have equal opportunities in the classroom.

Planning

Good lessons involve careful planning. Schemes of work provide a longer-term context for each lesson. They also provide an outline scheme for a particular lesson, but staff will need to adapt this to meet the needs of each particular class/individual.

All lessons must be planned in advance to ensure that the correct resources can be collected and that the lesson meets the needs of each learner.

The Classroom Environment

The surroundings in which a lesson is taught can play an important part in its success. Accommodation should be clear of clutter, be stimulating, comfortable and clean. There should be attractive displays of students' work and other material relevant to the subject being taught. These should include key questions and key words as a support to the development of general literacy. Resources within the room should be well organised and thought given to the way in which furniture is arranged.

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We believe that good teaching and learning takes place when:

- Lessons are purposeful and delivered at an appropriate pace.
- The teacher has clear learning objectives and shares these with the class - "the big question".
- The lesson ends with a plenary in which students identify what they have learnt.
- The teacher inspires students by conveying his/her enthusiasm for the subject.
- The teacher selects appropriate resources and provides a variety of activities.
- The teacher differentiates tasks to meet the needs of all students.
- The teacher is aware of the need to appeal to the range of learning styles.
- The teacher seeks to involve each student and makes appropriate use of praise and constructive feedback.
- The teacher builds and maintains good relationships with the group, respecting each contribution and using humour where appropriate.
- A climate of mutual respect is maintained.
- High standards of behaviour are maintained through a consistent approach to discipline and adherence to the whole school behaviour policy.
- Equipment is used with accuracy and care.
- Teaching assistants/carers are used effectively with individuals and groups of students.
- The lesson ends with students knowing, understanding or being able to do more than when they came in.

Lesson Structure

All lessons are 45 minutes long and should contain the following

- A starter activity
- Lesson objectives shared with the pupils through the “Big Question”
- A “to do” list or activities shared with the class
- A variety of activities designed to appeal to the learning styles within the group
- A plenary

During each lesson you should typically endeavour to do the following:

- Review: establish links to previous learning
- Specify: learning objectives “the big question” and “to do” list.
- Assess/evaluate student performance: check that learning objectives met by student and use “to do” list to check off progress during the lesson.
- Assess/evaluate teacher performance: check effectiveness of lesson structure/presentation
- Summarise: revisit learning objectives. Highlight key points of learning
- Complete: learning journal evidence
- Conclude: establish link to next lesson.

The Starter

Some suggested starter activities

- List 5 things you learnt last lesson
- What was the most important learning point from last lesson
- Summarise what you know about a topic in five bullet points
- Draw a mind map of ideas about a certain topic
- Talk for one minute about a topic covered last lesson
- Odd one out
- Make up some multiple-choice questions to give to the rest of the class
- Spelling test on key words
- Any games/activities which stimulate thought and warm up the brain.

The Plenary

The recommended lesson structure promotes the use of a short plenary session, designed to draw out the learning and refer back to the lesson objective/Big Question.

The final plenary is an opportunity to round off and summarise the lesson, to underline what has been accomplished, it should involve returning to the “big question”. It helps pupils to focus on the most important rather than the most recent points, what they have learned and the progress they have made. It should aim to refocus pupils on the objectives that have featured in the lesson. It is also a time to look back and look forward and to relate work in the lesson to other work, to set homework and to record learning in the learning journal. For the teacher, the plenary is an opportunity to assess learning and plan accordingly.

Plenaries are also useful part way through a lesson; staging posts when the teacher draws the class together, it crystallises understanding and directs the class to the next phase of work. Reviewing the “to do” list is a quick and effective way of marking progress during a lesson and encouraging pace.

Homework

Homework can provide invaluable opportunities for students to further develop their skills and knowledge. It is however only valuable when it is accepted by the student, supported by parents

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and carers and marked by the teacher. Many of the students at the Evolution and Vocational Centre have had negative experience of education and it may be detrimental for them to be set homework until they feel more positive and have the self esteem to tackle work independently. Other students show good academic ability and need to be stretched and be given opportunities to work independently and further their skills. Homework should therefore be set at the teacher's discretion, as a meaningful task and with the agreement that its completion is supported by parents/carers. Where students are studying at GCSE level homework should become a regular activity enabling them to achieve at the higher levels.

Learning Styles

All students should be given an opportunity to discover the styles of learning which are most effective for them. In any sequence of lessons they should experience a variety of activities calling upon a variety of learning styles, but wherever possible focussing on their preferred style.

While most learners can work outside their preferred style, some cannot and this will usually be a kinaesthetic learner. If these students are not given sufficient opportunities to work in their preferred learning style, they will not only fail to progress but may also become disaffected and misbehave. Kinaesthetic Learners are the students who are disadvantaged in schools because so many learning activities are based on reading, writing and listening. This is partly because the majority of teachers are visual or auditory learners themselves and predominantly teach in their preferred learning style.

By understanding our own teaching style, and the different learning style of your students, it may be possible to identify ways of helping our students to learn.

Assessment (please also refer to our assessment policy)

We believe that assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process (AfL). The main purpose of assessment is to improve the quality of students' learning, to help them understand where they are at and the next steps to further develop their achievement/skills.

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for Learning is a process that provides information about an individual student's experience and achievement. It identifies what the student knows, understands and is able to do and provides information that can be used to plan future learning.

Assessment of Learning describes and labels past learning. It is a summary judgement about what has been learned at a specific point in time.

Good assessment for learning practice will:

- raise standards by taking students to the edges of their individual capability, aiming for the "aspirational" goals which now need to be set.
- raise standards of behaviour and improve students' attitude to learning;
- promote success for all;
- support the target setting process;
- enable frequent reflection on what students know now and what they need to know next;
- measure what is valued;
- support teachers' work in evaluating the curriculum.
- ensure the involvement of learners in their own learning journey

When good assessment for learning is taking place the teacher will:

- make standards and objectives explicit to all students;
- model what it should look like – for example exemplify good writing on the board;
- plan teaching to take account of what students know or are able to do;
- draw upon a wide range of evidence using a variety of assessment activities;
- encourage the active involvement of students in their own learning;
- provide frequent oral and written feedback which makes reference to learning objectives, identifies strengths and the next steps for improvement;
- promote inclusion by attending to the learning needs of all students, particularly those who are at risk of underachievement;
- engage students in questioning, allowing sufficient time for answers to emerge;
- provide opportunities for peer and self assessment;
- offer students a range of techniques to help them learn effectively;
- Emphasise positive achievement and promote confidence that every student can improve.
- Make clear the learning journey and clarify steps to progress towards goals.

Recording and Reporting

Teachers are expected to keep a clear and up-to-date record of the progress made by their students. This should include the assessment of effort and understanding in each lesson, which is fed back to care homes daily and regular assessment relating to examination outcome levels or progress within topics/curriculum areas. These assessments are expected to be based on day to day performance in lessons and regular assessments, both written and verbal. Whilst individual learning styles are important it should be remembered that students will need to perform in certain ways to achieve accreditation. Their ability to perform in certain situations will be based on how much practice they have had within these more formal assessment situations.

Teachers will be asked to complete termly overview reports on the school's information management system which assess the progress of each student. Teachers will also be asked to write full annual reports for each student and to contribute to annual review days for parents/guardians and carers.

Student EHCP's, PEP's and their Plan, Do, Review Record detail the students targets within education, they are created between the student and SENCo/tutor and then shared across the school and home setting. These will necessarily evolve and develop over time. Plan, Do, Review records include teacher comments on progress as these are entered over a term. PDR's should collate student targets from other documents such as PEP's. One Page Profiles record how students learn best and are a useful document for new education providers and new staff.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Self-evaluation enables us to identify and share good-practice and to identify how to improve the quality of teaching and learning within The Evolution and Vocational Centre. It also allows us to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, set development targets and identify PPD needs. This process will thus inform the school development plan.

The aim of self-evaluation is to raise standards. It should be an open and supportive process where the emphasis is clearly placed upon celebrating success and sharing good practice.

Procedures

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To monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning there will be lesson observations and learning walks, conducted by the Head Teacher. Lesson observations will use the Ofsted criteria for effective teaching and learning, but should also have a focus agreed prior to the observation. Individual and peer observations of lessons are also valuable tools that allow teachers to share good practice and support each other.

Students also have a key role to play in helping us to make judgements about the quality of teaching and learning. Their views will be requested through regular discussions, questionnaires and samples of work will be scrutinised in staff meetings.

Evaluating the quality of teaching – Ofsted Criteria

Outstanding (1)

- All of the requirements for good are met.
 - All of paragraphs 2(1), 2(2)(a)–(j) and 3(a)–(h) in part 1 and all paragraphs in part 2 of the independent school standards are met.
 - Apart from where there is an exemption in place, the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are met.
- Much of the teaching in all key stages and most subjects is outstanding and never less than consistently good. As a result, almost all pupils currently on roll in the school, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and the most able, are making rapid and sustained progress.
 - All teachers, including those within the Early Years Foundation Stage and/or sixth form, have consistently high expectations of all pupils. They plan and teach lessons and provide learning opportunities that enable pupils to learn exceptionally well across the curriculum.
 - Teaching within the Early Years Foundation Stage is exceptional with an excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning. Children’s play is extremely purposeful and all activities and incidental opportunities are maximised to enhance and accelerate children’s learning, both inside and outside.
 - Teachers systematically and effectively check pupils’ understanding throughout lessons, anticipating where they may need to intervene and doing so with notable impact on the quality of learning.
 - The teaching of reading, writing, communication and mathematics is highly effective and cohesively planned and implemented across the curriculum.
 - Teachers and other adults authoritatively impart knowledge to ensure students are engaged in learning, and generate high levels of commitment to learning across the school.
 - Consistently high quality marking and constructive feedback from teachers ensure that pupils make rapid gains.

Teachers use well-judged and often imaginative teaching strategies, including setting appropriate homework that, together with clearly directed and timely support and intervention, match individual needs accurately. Consequently, pupils learn exceptionally well across the curriculum.

Good (2)

- All of paragraphs 2(1), 2(2)(a)–(j) and 3(a)–(h) in part 1 and all paragraphs in part 2 of the independent school standards are met.

Apart from where there is an exemption in place, the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are met.
- Teaching in most subjects, including English and mathematics, is usually good, with examples of some outstanding teaching. As a result, most pupils and groups of pupils on roll in the school, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and the most able, make good progress and achieve well over time.
- Within the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers are skilled at recognising how children learn and provide a highly stimulating range of learning opportunities, both inside and outside.
 - Teachers have high expectations. They plan and teach lessons that deepen pupils’ knowledge and understanding and enable them to develop a range of skills across the curriculum.

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- Teachers listen to, carefully observe and skilfully question pupils during lessons in order to reshape tasks and explanations to improve learning.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught effectively.
- Teachers and other adults create a positive climate for learning in their lessons and pupils are interested and engaged.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning and progress regularly and accurately at all key stages, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They ensure that pupils know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.

Effective teaching strategies, including setting appropriate homework, and appropriately targeted support and intervention are matched well to most pupils' individual needs, including those most and least able, so that pupils learn well in lessons.

Non-association independent school inspection handbook, May 2014.

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