

Walderslade Girls' School Teaching and Learning Policy

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Document Change History

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Mission Statement

“To nurture and develop all people in our Trust so that they reach their full potential academically, vocationally, and personally, including being positive role models for future generations in the community. We will achieve this by providing high quality values-based education that cultivates employability and life skills making our schools the first choice for young people, parents, carers, staff and employers.”

Values

The values of Respect, Excellence, Collaboration, Independence, Perseverance, Enjoyment, Leadership, Integrity and Care are central to everything we do at the Skills for Life Trust.

Statement of Equality

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Purpose

At Walderslade Girls' School, our Teaching and Learning policy is designed with specific considerations for the unique needs and aspirations of our staff and female students. Our aim is to provide an educational experience that empowers girls to excel academically, develop strong character and become confident, compassionate and successful individuals. The teaching and learning policy aligns with our school's values and vision, creating a supportive and inclusive environment where girls can thrive.

We believe in fostering an educational environment that empowers girls to reach their full potential. We aim to inspire confidence, ambition and a strong sense of self-worth from all students, in all subjects. We strive to break down the gender stereotypes and provide equal opportunities for to excel in academic disciplines, including those traditionally underrepresented by women. By challenging and supporting our girls in their learning journey, we aim to equip them with the knowledge, skills and mindset necessary to overcome obstacles and achieve success in their chosen paths.

In addition to academic excellence, we value the holistic development of our girls. We emphasise

the cultivation of essential life skills, character development and social-emotional well-being. We integrate programmes and initiatives that nurture resilience, leadership qualities, empathy and a sense of social responsibility. We encourage our girls to explore their passions, engage in extra-curricular activities and develop a well-rounded profile that encompasses academic achievement, creativity, athleticism and community involvement.

As an all-girls school, we recognise the importance of providing positive female role models for our students. We promote the inclusion of diverse female voices in the curriculum ensuring that girls have access to a wide range of perspectives, achievements and contributions of women throughout history and across various disciplines. We actively seek to invite guest speakers, mentors and successful female professionals to share their career and life experiences to inspire our students.

We aim to create a supportive and nurturing community that celebrates the achievements of our girls. We emphasise the importance of building positive relationships between students, teachers and parents. We encourage open communication, provide mentorship opportunities and establish support systems to ensure that each girl feels valued, heard and supported throughout her education journey.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, but may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary.

Responsibilities

Teaching and Learning in our school is a shared responsibility, and everyone in our school community has an important role to play.

Teachers

Teachers at our school will:

- Follow the expectations for teaching and professional conduct as set out in the Teachers' Standards
- Follow the expectations as set out in this policy
- Update parents/carers on students' progress through termly reports on progress and yearly parent/carer consultation evenings.

Support Staff

Support staff at our school will:

- Know students well and differentiate support to meet their individual learning needs
- Support teaching and learning with flexibility and resourcefulness
- Meet the expectations set out in this policy

Subject Leaders

Subject leaders at our school will:

- Help to create a well-sequenced, broad and balanced curriculum that builds knowledge over time
- Sequence lessons in a way that allows students to make progress
- Use their budget effectively to resource their subject, providing teachers with necessary resources for learning
- Drive improvement in their subject, working with teachers to identify any challenges
- Timetable their subject to allocate time for students to achieve breadth and depth, fully understand the topic and demonstrate excellence
- Moderate progress across their subject/phase by, for example, systematically reviewing progress against a range of evidence and reviewing performance data
- Improve on weaknesses identified in the monitoring activities
- Create and share clear intentions in their subject
- Encourage teachers to share ideas, resources and good practice

Senior Leaders

Senior leaders at our school will:

- Have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality inclusive education to all
- Celebrate achievement and have high expectations for everyone
- Hold staff and students to account for their teaching and learning
- Plan and evaluate strategies to secure high-quality teaching and learning across the school

- Manage resources to support high-quality teaching and learning
- Provide support and guidance to other staff through coaching and mentoring
- Input and monitor the impact of continuing professional development opportunities to improve staff's practice and subject knowledge
- Promote team working at all levels
- Address underachievement and intervene promptly

Students

Students at our school will:

- Take responsibility for their own learning, and support the learning of others
- Meet expectations for good behaviour for learning at all times
- Attend all lessons on time and be ready to learn, with all necessary equipment
- Be curious, ambitious, engaged and confident learners
- Know their targets and how to improve
- Put maximum effort and focus into their work
- Complete home learning activities as required

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers of students at our school will:

- Value learning and encourage their child as a learner
- Make sure their child is ready and able to learn every day
- Support good attendance
- Participate in discussions about their child's progress and attainment
- Communicate with the school to share information promptly
- Encourage their child to take responsibility for their own learning
- Support and give importance to home learning

Governors

Governors at our school will:

- Monitor that resources and funding are allocated effectively to support the school's approach to teaching and learning
- Monitor the impact of teaching and learning strategies on students' progress
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher, and all relevant parties, to account for its implementation

Planning

Planning is a process not a product. It has one purpose; to enable high quality delivery which enables all students to learn.

All teachers need to be clear and precise about the knowledge/skills they want the students to learn in every lesson.

Planning is about hard thinking, not form filling. Teachers should spend time thinking about what they want students to learn first before they consider what you want them to do.

The questions teachers need to ask when planning a lesson are:

- Where are the students starting from?
- Where do you want them to get to?
- How will you know when they are there?
- How can you best help them get there?

Critical Questions

Critical questions are a powerful tool in teaching as they promote critical thinking, enhance comprehension, encourage active learning, develop problem-solving skills and foster inquiry, curiosity and effective communication. By incorporating critical questions into your teaching practice, students become empowered to become independent thinkers, lifelong learners and active participants in their own education. Teachers, students and support staff must understand the clear goal, whether that be at the end of an individual lesson, or at the end of a topic. Critical questions, instead of objectives, allows for progress to be evident and clear. This method also supports future planning, identifying students who may need more support or may need further stretching at a quicker pace.

Long Term Planning

Schemes of work must be in place to support teacher's individual lesson planning and should be saved in subject drives so that it is accessible to all staff within the department.

Schemes of work should be identified on the Department's Curriculum Map, published on the school website.

When planning individual lessons, teachers should be clear where they fit into their subject's overall curriculum. Teachers will know what prior knowledge needs to be taught before their lesson can be accessed by the students, and when they will be able to retrieve the key learning of a lesson in future lessons.

Short Term Planning

We do not expect teachers to produce individual lesson plans, but we do expect to see evidence of short-term planning (e.g., in teachers' planners or an electronic equivalent). Teachers may be asked to produce a lesson plan if areas of development in delivery highlight that lesson planning is weak.

The school's voluntary lesson plan does not need to be used in every lesson but is designed to support teachers with recording cognitive thought when planning a lesson. ECT's or underperforming teaching staff may be asked to create these prior to a lesson. Support staff may also ask for evidence of lesson plans to support their practice during specific lessons.

Planning to meet the needs of all students

Knowledge of the students; their prior attainment and specific needs, is a key part of planning.

Every class, where possible, should have a seating plan that accounts for the groups profile. Needs and abilities must be considered.

Teachers are expected to know the profile of the students they teach by looking at student data, including previous marksheet data, SEND profiles and any pastoral bulletins that may be of use.

High quality teaching is the first wave of intervention for meeting the needs of SEND students.

Stretch and scaffold should be planned over time to ensure a quality first approach which meets the needs of all students and groups, whilst maximising the use of any support staff in the room.

When planning, teachers should consider the different pedagogical approaches that we use to engage, motivate and challenge all learners, so that most students find an approach that fits for them.

Teaching and/or The Delivery of Content

“Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better.” (Professor Dylan William)

Teachers must be explicit about the key knowledge and vocabulary that all students must use. Students should be made aware of the knowledge and key skills you want them to learn and the language they are expected to understand and use.

We are all teachers of literacy. The quality of both students’ and teachers’ language, through instruction and questioning, are significant determinants of progress.

High Quality Teaching Strategies

Using high quality teaching strategies allow all students to access learning and succeed with even the most challenging content if scaffolded appropriately.

What a “typical lesson” will look like will vary from subject to subject and individual teachers may utilise a variety of strategies based upon their professional judgement and knowledge. Teachers must be given the flexibility to flourish in their own environment as long as solid progress is being met.

However, it is expected that the following high-quality teaching strategies are used effectively in the majority of lessons.

Challenge

Every subject’s curriculum design aims to challenge students appropriately, fostering critical thinking, problem-solving and creativity. Teachers employ a multitude of instructional strategies to cater to individual needs to ensure that all students are challenged appropriately.

We should have high expectations of *all* students *all* of the time.

It is good for students to struggle and for staff to allow this time for struggle. This pushes students outside of their comfort zone, discovering depth and connections between concepts in all subjects.

All students should be working harder than the teacher over time and should begin learning as soon as they arrive. All time within that lesson should be used wisely and effectively.

Explanation

Clear explanation of concepts, objectives and outcomes are essential for effective teaching and learning. Teachers will provide explicit instructions, breaking down complex ideas into manageable parts and use appropriate language and examples to enhance understanding. Teachers focus on developing students' conceptual understanding rather than relying solely on memorisation. Teachers emphasise the "why" behind concepts, encouraging students to make connections, apply their knowledge in different contexts and transfer their learning to new situations. This can only be done by expert explanation and instruction.

Teacher instruction should be planned with awareness of demands on students' cognitive load, by presenting new material in small chunks/steps.

1. Limit the amount of material students receive at one time.
2. Give clear and simple instruction and explanations.
3. Think aloud and model steps. These steps could be given as step-by-step guides and checklists.
4. Use more time to provide explanation and provide many examples. Think about dual-coding and other methods such as visual aids.
5. Ensure all students are listening, not just looking. Ask questions to re-engage students and be prepared to re-teach the concept if necessary.

Modelling

Teachers model desired skills, behaviours and processes to demonstrate expected standards and best practices. Through explicit demonstrations and think-aloud strategies, they showcase the thinking processes involved in problem-solving, analysis and decision-making. Modelling helps students develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter and enables them to apply the skills independently.

Teacher will be teaching every lesson to the top with expert instruction and modelling.

Fundamentally, to learn how to do something new, students need to watch and listen to experts guiding them through the process, step by step, before they can make an educated attempt themselves.

Effective modelling supports explanation and can help to make abstract ideas concrete.

1. Demonstrate the worked activity in front of students
2. Think aloud to show thought process
3. Show that it is ok to make mistakes and empathy

4. Integrate quick fire questioning
5. Provide model answers

Guided and Deliberate Practice

To enhance learning, students engage in guided practice where they receive structured support and feedback from staff. This includes scaffolded activities, small-group discussions and cooperative learning opportunities. Deliberate practice is integrated to promote mastery by providing opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills independently and receive constructive feedback for improvement. This period of time allows for staff to use effective class discussion, independent learning or effective questioning.

Students will be provided with the required time they need to practise new material in a number of ways in order to master it.

Responsive Teaching

Teachers regularly assess student progress through formative assessments, class discussions and observations. This information guides instructional decisions and enables teachers to adapt their teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of the students. Teachers will employ a variety of techniques such as flexible grouping, targeted interventions and personalised learning approaches to address individual strengths and areas for development. If learning is not yet secure for students, the lesson should be adapted or re-taught differently to support the progress of the students.

Questioning

Effective teachers ask a large number of questions skilfully, as questioning is our main tool to probe, check and extend student understanding. Teachers should ask lots of questions, to lots of students, and then use what they learn from this process to adapt and reshape teaching within and between lessons. The majority of questions should be done through cold calling, with targeted questioning used to support and challenge students. Ensure that questioning is effective and purposeful.

Retrieval Practice

Retrieval is a learning strategy that should be used regularly in lessons to support students with retrieving material that they have previously learnt from their long-term memory. It should be low stakes, completed without access to notes and used in a spaced manner. When used at the start of a lesson, as a starter activity, it can help to recap prior knowledge needed for the lesson in question and support the teacher with understanding the prior learning of the class.

Use of Effective Feedback

Feedback exists in many forms, but what matters is what students do with it. Effective feedback should:

- Be frequent and timely
- Always generate action and should be more work for the recipient than the donor
- Be specific and focused on the most prominent areas to improve

- Be accompanied by support in how to be successful and the next step

All HOD's should have a definition of good practice within their department and this should be displayed in the Department T&L document for each department. HOD's should expect to see certain methods of delivery, knowing their staff and their strengths and weaknesses. HOD's should be encouraging staff within their department to attend specific and tailored CPD to improve upon certain areas of T&L.

Inclusivity

Decolonising the Curriculum

We are committed to providing an inclusive and decolonised learning environment that values diversity, challenges systemic biases and promotes equitable educational opportunities for all students. This Teaching and Learning Policy aims to guide our efforts in fostering inclusivity within the curriculum to create a supportive and culturally responsive educational experience.

We strive to ensure that the curriculum reflects the diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives of our student body, as well as the local community. This promotes the inclusion of materials, examples and resources that represent diverse cultures, races, ethnicities, genders, abilities, religions and sexual orientations.

Addressing Protected Characteristics

We recognise and respect the importance of protected characteristics, such as race, gender, disability, religion and sexual orientation, in promoting inclusivity and equity in education. We incorporate an intersectional approach that acknowledges the unique experiences and challenges faced by individuals who belong to multiple protected characteristic groups. We ensure that our policies, practices and curriculum are designed to eliminate discrimination, bias and stereotypes. All classrooms must foster a safe and inclusive environment where all students feel valued, respected and supported. By addressing protected characteristics in education, staff can contribute to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment where all students are respected, supported and given equal opportunity to thrive.

Marking and Assessment

Marking and assessment (see Assessment Policy for more details) have two purposes.

1. It allows students to get feedback which they act on to make progress over time.
2. It informs a teacher's future planning and teaching.

Effective marking should be meaningful, manageable and motivating for the recipient whilst simultaneously being manageable and sustainable for the teacher. Teachers should have flexibility and a sense of adaptability in their practice, recognising when students require feedback to improve.

Marking must be primarily formative, may be selective, and be clear about what students must act

upon to improve their work. Students should make their classwork, where they can, yet formal assessments should be marked by staff. Based on feedback to students, teachers should structure their individual feedback to ensure that student strengths, challenges and learning preferences are highlighted. Teachers should provide targeted interventions, additional resources and personalised learning experiences to ensure students know how and where to improve.

By incorporating these approaches to effective marking and assessment, we aim to create a dynamic and engaging learning environment where students are inspired to achieve their full potential.

The Learning Environment

For there to be excellent learning behaviour, there needs to be the right classroom conditions, where all students feel safe, supported and valued. To ensure all students are confident in knowing what is expected of them in terms of work and behaviour, all teaching staff are expected to have:

High expectations – teachers should always have high expectations for learning and behaviour for all of their students

- Teach to the top, with necessary scaffolds to support those who need it
- Promote active engagement, not just compliance
- Establish a growth mindset culture, mistakes are celebrated, use language like “not there yet”
- Focus praise on effort and value the “struggle of learning”

Teachers build positive relationships with all students through positive behaviour management

- Welcome all students into your class by greeting them at the door
- Use positive framing to remind students of expectations and learning routines
- Use meaningful praise and rewards as much as possible
- Provide students with the opportunity to change their behaviour, before they are removed from the lesson, continuing with poor behaviour and accepting the resulting sanction is a “choice made”
- Have restorative conversations when necessary
- Demonstrate consequences are temporary – every lesson is a fresh start

Teachers have clear and consistent routines and procedures – so there is a safe, orderly learning environment and learning time is maximised

- Meet and greet students at the door
- Academic lessons should start with a clear CQ and a starter, preferably using retrieval. Lessons should start as soon as students enter the classroom
- Students should be in a seating plan
- Teachers have consistent classroom rules and expectations which are fair and reasonable, so that all students know exactly what is expected of them when they enter the lesson

Always challenge students when rules and expectations are broken. Ensure that behavioural issues are followed up and that there is a positive flow of communication between teacher, student and

parent/carer.

Home Learning

Home learning, or homework, will support students to further develop their learning outside of the classroom. It will be planned, meaningful and set-in accordance with the Homework Policy.

Attendance

We understand and recognise the vital role that regular attendance plays in supporting student learning and overall academic success. Our attendance policy is designed to promote a culture of punctuality, responsibility and commitment to learning.

Walderslade Girls School firmly believe that regular attendance is crucial for maximising educational opportunities and achieving academic excellence. Attending school consistently ensures that students can actively engage in classroom activities, discussions and collaborative projects. It also promotes the development of essential social skills, such as teamwork, communication and peer interaction. Regular attendance will support students to benefit the full breadth of the curriculum and allow time for feedback and continuous progress.

TEAMS/Google Classrooms

Work will be set of TEAMS/Google Classrooms for students who are absent due to COVID related issues or who obtain long term absence due to illness or behavioural issues. We have a statutory obligation to provide students with learning activities which they can tackle from home.

Ideally, students should be set work that allows them to keep up with the learning in class, however, especially students for practical subjects, this is not always possible and other activities/resources may be more accessible and appropriate.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Teaching and Learning

We will monitor teaching and learning across the school to make sure that all our students make the best possible progress from their starting points.

Aims of monitoring and evaluation:

- To make secure judgements of teaching and learning across the school
- To monitor and evaluate the progress of students
- To evaluate the performance of individual teachers against the Teacher Standards and check that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained
- To identify training needs across the teaching and support staff to drive the CPD programme.

SLT and HOD's will monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching on student's learning through:

- Conducting learning walks

- Book scrutinies
- Review of termly progress checks
- Gathering input from student voice and teacher questionnaires

Teacher workload

We acknowledge the importance of managing teacher workload to ensure their well-being and job satisfaction. We strive to provide a supportive work environment that encourages work-life balance and reduces any unnecessary administrative burdens. Collaboration and shared responsibilities are encouraged through effective team communication and streamlined processes. Regular reviews of workload distribution and resource allocation are conducted to identify areas for improvement and implement necessary adjustments.

Continuing Professional Development

“Be the best you can until you know better, and when you know better, do better and be better”. (Maya Angelou)

All staff at Walderslade Girls School will engage in high quality, research based, CPD and be open minded, reflective and proactive at continually trying to improve their teaching practice.

Teaching and Learning CPD will be focused on what will make the biggest impact to teachers and students, and staff will be given time to work collaboratively in subject specific teams to implement it. The aim is to ensure all CPD is embedded, reviewed and evaluated.

CPD at Walderslade Girls School is:

- Focused on Quality First Teaching
- Underpinned by the Teaching Standards
- Developmental
- Research Informed

Lesson observation will follow a coaching model and are a part of all teacher’s CPD.

We will provide ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their understanding of inclusivity and decolonisation within the curriculum. This will include workshops, seminars and resources to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills and pedagogical strategies.

Links with Other Policies

Homework Policy

Assessment Policy

CPD Policy

Performance Appraisal Policy

SEND Policy

