

Ashton Community Science College

Teaching and Learning Policy

Review Schedule:

Named Owner:	Mrs M Pilkington (Assistant Headteacher)
	Mrs J Hoyle (Deputy Headteacher)
Date Of Creation:	September 2020
Last Review:	September 2025
Next Scheduled Review:	September 2026
Overview of Amendments to this Version:	sections re-ordered Homework update

Rationale:

Teaching and learning is the core business of Ashton Community Science College. In order to maintain the highest possible standards across the school, we expect consistency in certain aspects of practice in this area. We also recognise the vibrancy and diversity which derive from the wealth of talent, skills, subject specialisms and teaching expertise across our staff. With these points in mind, this policy sets out the parameters of what is required from both staff and students. They are not designed to stifle the creativity and innovation of staff, but rather provide the framework of consistency against which these things can flourish. They are designed to ensure teachers can teach and learners can learn in a secure, supportive and aspirational environment.

Aims:

The policy provides guidance for the planning and delivery of learning experiences at Ashton such that:

1. Students of all abilities are challenged to attain and achieve at their very best in all subjects.
2. Students make at least good progress in all subjects over time and increasingly students exceed expected levels of progress.
3. Learning experiences are consistent and accessible for all students at all times.
4. Learning environments are safe and supportive spaces where students are secure to take risks, make mistakes and ask questions to further their learning.
5. Students are celebrated in their successes and supported through their failures so that they can develop their self-esteem and resilience through their academic work.
6. Students are afforded the opportunity to gain knowledge, practise skills and develop understandings that will stand them in good stead for gaining qualifications, but also for becoming successful citizens beyond their time at Ashton.
7. Staff are clear as to the high expectations they should have of the students they teach.
8. Students are clear of the demands made upon them and the benefits of aspiring to the high standards set.
9. Staff are clear as to the minimum requirements of lesson delivery and teaching at Ashton.
10. Staff, students and other stakeholders can develop a shared sense of community with a clearly defined culture, language and ethos with regard to the learning experiences which are generated within it.

Six components of great teaching

In answer to the question 'what makes great teaching?', the Sutton Trust defined effective teaching as 'that which leads to improved student progress'. In their report, they state that evidence has shown that focusing on the following six components can improve student outcomes and also that good quality teaching will likely involve a combination of these attributes manifested at different times; the very best teachers are those that demonstrate all of these features.

1. (Pedagogical) content knowledge

The most effective teachers have deep knowledge of the subjects they teach, and when teachers' knowledge falls below a certain level it is a significant impediment to students' learning. As well as a strong understanding of the material being taught, teachers must also understand the ways students think about the content, be able to evaluate the thinking behind students' own methods and identify students' common misconceptions.

2. Quality of instruction

Includes elements such as effective questioning and use of assessment by teachers. Specific practices, like reviewing previous learning, providing model responses for students, giving adequate time for practice to embed skills securely and progressively introducing new learning (scaffolding) are also elements of high quality instruction.

3. Classroom climate

Covers quality of interactions between teachers and students, and teacher expectations: the need to create a classroom that is constantly demanding more but still recognising students' self-worth. It also involves attributing student success to effort rather than ability and valuing resilience to failure (grit).

4. Classroom management

A teacher's abilities to make efficient use of lesson time, to coordinate classroom resources and space, and to manage students' behaviour with clear rules that are consistently enforced, are all relevant to maximising the learning that can take place. These environmental factors are necessary for good learning rather than its direct components.

5. Teacher beliefs

Why teachers adopt particular practices, the purposes they aim to achieve, their theories about what learning is and how it happens and their conceptual models of the nature and role of teaching in the learning process all seem to be important.

6. Professional behaviours

Behaviours exhibited by teachers such as reflecting on and developing professional practice, participation in professional development, supporting colleagues, and liaising and communicating with parents.

The above components are what shape our Teaching and Learning expectations. We also work hard to ensure that teachers give a consistent message.

At Ashton, we expect all staff to follow the same routines and expectations. (The Ashton Way) All staff, from the most experienced to ECTs, will follow the same routines, pedagogy of engagement and language. This will be monitored regularly and if support is needed to implement any of the routines it will be put in place quickly.

Expectations of behaviour

To be ready to learn and benefit from learning experiences, students are expected to:

- arrive punctually and prepared for all lessons.
- behave with respect at all times towards their peers and all members of school staff.
- be in the correct uniform.
- have the appropriate equipment for their lessons, including sports kit, ingredients etc.
- move with care around school buildings so as not to endanger themselves or others.
- participate and engage positively with the learning experiences on offer, striving for success at all times.

To provide the best possible learning experience, teachers are expected to:

- arrive punctually and prepared for all lessons.
- be research driven and reflective.
- behave with respect at all times towards students.
- ensure that they deliver lessons with a focus on students: learning more, remembering more and to be able to do more.
- know and use students' first names.
- manage behaviour effectively – 'consistently, firmly and fairly' – using the behaviour referral system as appropriate.
- show a passion for their subject.
- seek to engage students fully in their learning using judicious praise and encouragement.
- exhibit high professional standards of dress, appearance, language and behaviour.
- challenge students through high expectations in all things.
- plan and deliver lessons which are in line with the 5-year curriculum plan.
- ensure progress for all students, irrespective of ability.
- ensure students make links with their learning through the use of sequenced and interleaved learning and learning journeys.
- Ensure all students experience the same curriculum and challenge, irrespective of their starting points.
- apply sanctions and issue rewards fairly and as appropriate.
- ensure students are using high quality talk in lessons and that poor grammar, or use of vocabulary is corrected.
- ensure that literacy is embedded into teaching with explicit teaching of reading, vocab, writing and talk.
- Provide students with opportunities for retrieval, review and reflection.
- encourage self-direction and independence in students' learning and the self-management of students' behaviour.
- mark students' work in line with school policy and provide purposeful feedback to allow students to move forward.

To ensure a positive, purposeful and secure learning environment, classroom routines should ensure:

- students are welcomed into classrooms.
- the starts of lessons are quiet and orderly with students engaged quickly in retrieval activity.
- registers are completed in a timely and accurate fashion at the start of lessons.
- students sit according to a seating plan.
- the school's behaviour policy is applied consistently.
- school expectations with regard to uniform and equipment are adhered to.
- students are dismissed from lessons in an orderly fashion.
- students have the required equipment in their packs and that these are placed on the desk at the start of the lesson.

Expectations of teaching

Planning:

- It is not an expectation that formal lesson plans be submitted for any lesson.
- Planning should be collaborative and in line with the 5-year curriculum plan.
- Planning should take into account recent research and pedagogical approaches.
- Planning should consider the rationale behind selecting specific pedagogical and assessment approaches.
- Planning should acknowledge that pedagogical choices may vary for the same curriculum content, as what is effective in one context may be inappropriate in another.
- Planning should recognise the risk of 'lethal mutations' in pedagogy, where modifications to a teaching technique can undermine its original effectiveness.
- Planning should take into account previous learning and misconceptions.
- Planning should enable students to retrieve knowledge, the teacher to model good practice and the students to apply the knowledge and skills
- Planning should have progress, the national curriculum and learning as its core drivers.
- Planning should allow students the opportunity to discuss learning and progress with their teacher and the rest of the group.

Teaching:

- Should focus on the content, knowledge and skills being learned ~~rather than on the activities.~~
- Should use modelling to ensure students can see how to answer questions.
- Should scaffold learning where necessary to ensure that all students are able to access the curriculum.
- Should deliver content, knowledge and skills in a relevant and purposeful manner for all students.
- Should ensure that learning has 'stuck' via regular and rigorous assessment through appropriate means.
- Teaching should consider different pedagogical approaches in order to ensure learning takes place.
- Should include explicit teaching of reading, writing and ~~communication~~ **oracy** skills when appropriate.
- Should include quality question and answer phases to check understanding and push students' thinking further.
- Should include purposeful opportunities for students to work independently so that students are working harder than staff.
- Should stress the importance of good presentation for all forms of work.
- Should include a range of learning experiences designed to engage and motivate students.

Expectations of homework

Homework plays a crucial role in supporting and consolidating students' classroom learning or preparing for future learning via pre-reading and pre-learning of facts. It gives students the opportunity to embed new concepts and ideas learned in class, practise skills, revise and internalise information and research new topics for themselves. Homework also helps develop independent learning, self-management and discipline, responsibility and good organisational skills which are invaluable as our students move through the school and on into the working world. Students should be encouraged to see the value of homework for themselves and their wider learning.

Homework should only be set if it is valuable and relevant to learning. Therefore, there is no requirement for teachers to set homework weekly.

The setting of homework

Students should understand that they may receive homework for each subject and so, on occasions, may have 5 homework tasks set in one day.

- Key Stage 3 homework tasks should take approximately 20 minutes per subject
- Key Stage 4 homework tasks should take approximately 30 minutes per subject with the caveat that GCSE studies may require a longer homework task to be set

The exception to this would be if homework slots were combined to allow one longer homework task to be set rather than a few shorter ones, however, the length of time given to complete the work should allow students to complete it over several nights.

SEND

The needs of all students should be considered when homework is set and appropriate adaptation and reasonable adjustment must be made where needed for individual students, especially those with SEND. This may be via scaffolding or a different task for example.

Expectations re completion

If homework is set, then the expectation must be that it is completed and to an appropriate standard by all students. Where this is not the case, it should be addressed.

If homework is not completed

- an appropriate sanction would be for students to complete the homework at an allocated time. (In this case, the punishment of losing 'free' time at school also supports the completion of homework)
- the non-completion should be logged on synergy as a de-merit

If students struggle with the completion of homework or homework tasks, they will be encouraged to discuss the issue with their class teacher or Head of Year to find a solution. Attendance to homework clubs will be encouraged.

Expectations of marking and feedback

Marking

The provision of high-quality marking and feedback is crucial to maximising the impact of teaching and ensuring learning gains are as great as possible.

The expectations on teachers with regard to marking, assessment and feedback are set out explicitly in the Teachers' Standards. In particular, a teacher must:

- set goals that stretch and challenge students of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions.
- encourage students to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study.
- be accountable for students' attainment, progress and outcomes.
- guide students to reflect on the progress they have made and their emerging needs.
- demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject.
- know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements.
- make use of formative and summative assessment to secure students' progress.
- use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons.
- give students regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage students to respond to the feedback.

At Ashton, we therefore believe that marking

- Should be purposeful and done where and when it will result in learning gains for students. It should not take place 'just for the sake of it'. Not every page needs to be marked and 'tick and flick' should not be done.
- Should give teachers a clear picture of where students are up to in their learning, what progress has been made and the current strengths and weaknesses in students' learning.
- Should have a regular formative focus and deliver effective advice for improvement which students can act upon.
- Should necessitate further follow-up work from students.
- Should, where appropriate, include marking by peers so students gain insight into marking frameworks, successful outcomes and ways to improve their own work and that of others.
- Should adhere to the school marking policy including the use of literacy codes. Improving literacy is the responsibility of all staff within the school. Professional judgement should be applied regarding the number of errors identified and corrected within a piece of work. Marking should prioritise both tier 2 and 3 vocabulary, sentence punctuation and common errors. School literacy codes should be used to identify errors in written work as follows:
 - **Sp** – Spelling mistake. The mistake should be circled and marked SP.

- **C** – Capital letter missing/ incorrectly used. The mistake should be circled and marked C.
- **P** – Missing or incorrect punctuation. The mistake should be circled and marked P.
- **G** – Grammar mistake. The mistake should be circled and marked G.
- **//** - New paragraph needed. // should be inserted in text at the relevant point.
 - ✓ - Correct answer or good point made.
- ✓✓ - Excellent answer given or point made.

Departments are free to add subject-specific marking codes where appropriate. These should be displayed in classrooms alongside the generic codes.

- Marking should be regular, relative to the number of times that the subject teacher sees the class. Each faculty should stipulate what constitutes 'regular' within their faculty documents.
- Not all work needs to be formally assessed, although all work should be checked for accuracy and presentation.
- Opportunity should be given for students to self- and peer-assess work according to given mark criteria.
- Use a range of marking and feedback strategies such as: live marking, whole class feedback, using the visualizer and through the use of online platforms such as Teams.

Feedback

- Effective feedback can take different forms. It is expected that, over time, a variety of written and verbal feedback will be given to students. Different subject areas may rely more heavily on one form than the other.
- All written teacher feedback should be legible.
- Students should be clear about the success criteria for the work being marked. These should link to Learning Outcomes and allow for accurate assessment of the quality of work produced.
- ~~Formally assessed work should be given formative 'What Went Well' and 'Even Better If' comments which draw on the Learning Outcomes.~~
- All feedback comments should be diagnostic and sharply focused allowing students to appreciate clearly where and how they have succeeded, and where and how they can improve their work. **These comments may give more or less direction and scaffolding depending on student ability, and teachers should give careful consideration as to how best to support the improvement through their comments.**
- ~~'What Went Well' comments should highlight students' successes in relation to the Learning Outcomes.~~
- ~~In addition to 'What Went Well' comments, marking should recognise and acknowledge good progress, skills and presentation through praise and reward with merits.~~
- ~~'Even Better If' comments should be specific enough for students to further their learning and improve their own work. The comments may give more or less~~

~~direction and scaffolding depending on student ability, and teachers should give careful consideration as to how best to support the improvement through their comments.~~

Student response

- ~~There should be evidence of students acting on feedback from 'Even Better If' comments and literacy corrections~~ Time should be built into lessons on a regular basis so students can act on feedback from formal marking.
- ~~Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT) should be built into lessons on a regular basis so students can act on feedback from formal marking.~~
- During DIRT, students should be issued with **Green** pens should be used to make improvements and corrections to work. Green pens should also be used by students to proofread their own work prior to submission, or for their peers to correct their work.

The monitoring of the impact of teaching, learning, marking and feedback will be carried out by subject leaders and SLT on a regular basis as an integral part of the ongoing Quality Assurance procedure. These procedures will include:

- Department specific work scrutiny.
- Books looked at during routine lesson drop-ins.
- Subject reviews.
- Student voice.

Expectations of the presentation of work

Students are expected to take pride in their work and produce work of an acceptable standard

- Work of an unacceptable standard should be challenged and improved.
- All written work should be legible. Illegible work should be returned for rewriting unless the student is receiving specific support and intervention for poor handwriting.
- Formal writing should be completed in blue or black ink, not pencil.
- Pencil should be used for diagrams.
- Titles must be present and neatly underlined in pen using a ruler.
- Dates must be present and neatly underlined in pen using a ruler.
- Loose sheets should be glued into books.
- There should be no graffiti or doodling on the covers or inside exercise books.