



# Bolton Impact Trust

## Teaching and Learning Policy

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## Our Aims

At Bolton Impact Trust we believe that Learning is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and behaviours that are retained long-term and can be applied to a range of contexts.

Providing high-quality Teaching and Learning to all of our pupils is central to our Trust's beliefs and values:

**We believe everyone can achieve.**

**We inspire a love of learning**

**We transform potential into long-lasting success.**

We aim to:

- Ensure that the curriculum is ambitious for **all** pupils and that subject curriculums are well designed to build pupils' knowledge and skills sequentially and cumulatively
- Ensure that everyone in the Trust is committed to delivering consistent high-quality Teaching and Learning to all of our pupils
- Motivate and inspire our pupils to develop a lifelong love of learning
- Create learning environments that are innovative, motivational and impactful on children's lives
- Offer every pupil a learning package that is personalised and relevant to them, addressing their individual needs and supporting them to make the next steps on their learning journey
- Transform potential into long-lasting success

## Our guiding principles

Research tells us that pupils learn most effectively when:

- › Teachers are trauma-informed in their approach and create anxiety-free classrooms where pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- › They can manage their emotions and have the resilience to make mistakes and persevere.
- › They are engaged and encouraged to think hard about something.
- › Teachers structure pupils' learning so that they build upon and connect knowledge to what they already know.
- › Teachers deliver new material in manageable amounts at the right level for each child
- › Teachers model and share what success looks like.
- › Teachers regularly check for understanding and promptly address misconceptions.
- › Teachers revisit important content and concepts regularly so that pupils learn them securely and remember them.
- › Teachers give effective feedback that supports pupils to improve.
- › Every teacher understands the importance of the language and vocabulary, both spoken and written, specific to the subjects they teach. They explicitly teach these.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Leaders in the Trust Central Team will:

- Have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, personalised education to all
- Ensure that the curriculum is ambitious for **all** pupils and that subject curriculums are well designed to build pupils' knowledge and skills sequentially and cumulatively
- Ensure that the curriculum allows enough time for teaching, practising and revisiting content, and for addressing any gaps in pupils' knowledge as quickly as possible.
- Ensure that the curriculum extends pupils' language and vocabulary, both in spoken and written form, and increases their reading competency across all subjects. For primary-age pupils and for older pupils where necessary, the curriculum prioritises accurate and fluent word reading, spelling, handwriting and mathematics.
- Hold all leaders and staff to account for high quality teaching and learning
- Ensure that resources and funding are allocated effectively to support the Trust's approach to teaching and learning
- Have a professional development programme that draws on training, practice and coaching to build and sustain an effective team of teachers and support staff across the Trust
- Provide opportunities for staff to work collaboratively across the Trust to develop their practice
- Share next and best practice with leaders and teachers in the Trust via department meetings and the Teaching and Learning Newsletter

Senior Leaders in each academy will:

- Promote the Trust's clear and ambitious vision for high-quality, inclusive education to all
- Celebrate achievement and have high expectations for everyone
- Have an accurate, informed understanding of how well pupils are achieving and why,
- Ensure that pupils are making secure progress across the curriculum
- Ensure that pupils have age and phase appropriate knowledge and skills to progress to the next stage of learning. These include:
  - language and communication skills that enable them to access the full curriculum
  - accurate and fluent reading
  - compositional skills
  - accurate and fluent spelling
  - legible and fluent handwriting
  - mathematical knowledge
- Have an accurate, informed understanding of the quality of teaching across all subjects, including for pupils with SEND.
- Ensure that teachers have the expertise and knowledge to make well-judged adaptations to overcome barriers to learning for pupils, particularly those with SEND
- Hold staff and pupils to account for their teaching and learning , addressing underachievement promptly
- Make sure that Subject/phase leaders have the expertise and/or support they need to ensure that the curriculum achieves its aims

- Support teachers to have a secure knowledge and understanding of the curriculum(s) they teach and of how pupils learn, so that they make effective decisions.
- Manage resources to support high-quality teaching and learning
- Ensure that teachers and support staff are deployed effectively to improve achievement, especially for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Provide support and guidance to other staff through coaching and mentoring
- Actively promote engagement with all of the CPD opportunities provided by the Trust to improve staff's practice and subject knowledge and monitor the impact of all continuing professional development.
- Engage with initial teacher training, the early career framework and national professional qualifications to provide a coherent development pathway for all staff.
- Promote team working at all levels, for example by buddying teachers up to support one another where appropriate

Subject Leads across the Trust will:

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

Teachers across the Trust will:

- Follow the expectations for teaching and professional conduct as set out in the Teacher' Standards
- Provide high-quality, well-planned and structured lessons
- Ensure that they have high expectations of all pupils
- Ensure that work is challenging and engaging
- Structure pupils' learning so that they build upon and connect knowledge to what they already know
- Deliver new material in manageable amounts, in a meaningful context and at the right level for each child
- Model and share what success looks like
- Regularly check for understanding and promptly identify and remedy any gaps or misconceptions
- Create opportunities for pupils to regularly practise and retrieve what they have learned

- Give effective feedback that supports pupils to improve
- Explicitly teach the language and vocabulary, both spoken and written, specific to their subjects
- Use targeted interventions effectively, in conjunction with high quality teaching, for pupils who need additional support.
- Adopt a trauma-informed approach to teaching
- Ensure that their classroom environment is an anxiety free, safe and secure place where all pupils feel valued
- Ensure that their learning environment is safe, clean and welcoming and includes displays which promote high quality teaching and learning
- Engage with CPD opportunities offered by the Trust

Learning mentors and Support Staff across the Trust will:

- Follow the expectations for teaching and professional conduct as set out in the Trust's Learning Mentor Standards
- Know pupils well and adapt support to meet their individual learning needs
- Support teaching and learning with flexibility and resourcefulness
- Use agreed assessment for learning strategies
- Engage in providing inspiring lessons and learning opportunities
- Feedback observations of pupils to teachers
- Ask questions to make sure they've understood expectations for learning
- Identify and use resources to support learning
- Have high expectations and celebrate achievement
- Demonstrate and model themselves as learners
- Engage with CPD opportunities offered by the Trust

Governors and Trustees across the Trust 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 pupils' progress and attainment
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold senior leaders to account for its implementation
- Make sure other school policies promote high-quality teaching, and that these are being implemented

## Learning environment

Across the Trust we will ensure that the learning environments are kept safe, clean and ready for pupils to use them.

They will be arranged to promote learning through:

- Posters of material pupils have previously learned about and can identify
- Accessible resources for learning such as books, worksheets and other equipment
- A seating layout that allows everyone to see the board and participate
- Displays that celebrate and support pupils' learning

## Personalisation of the curriculum

Teaching and learning at the Forwards Centre supports pupils who may have missed significant parts of their education and who may have had a negative experience of learning which has badly affected both their academic self-worth and understanding of their place in society. It is designed to address gaps in both learning and the personal, social and emotional

skills in order that children may go on to be successful in the next stage of their educational journey.

The Forwards Centre curriculum is designed to enable all pupils to experience academic success so that each child also develops belief in themselves over time. The curriculum structure is clear and has well-defined end points. This allows rigorous baseline assessments to inform the planning of an appropriate curriculum 'climbing frame' for each child. Our curriculum then allows children the time and space to climb from a point and at a pace that is right for them and experience the same joy of learning new things that others experience and should be part of every child's life. It is designed so that we can use ongoing formative assessment to track each child's individual progress, treat them as individuals and celebrate their progress on its own merit rather than simply comparing with whole class age related expectations. This individualised approach ensures that no children are disadvantaged due to their academic level, SEND need or what point on their educational journey they are at or what time in the year they arrive. Every child can experience success.

Our centre runs on a clear set of published principles designed to create a therapeutic, emotionally regulated environment where children experience and learn the social norms and expectations, they will need to be successful in their next setting. Staff live life alongside each child and consistently model positive ways of coping with the challenges that the school day brings.

The curriculum has been planned and sequenced so that knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before. It has clear end points for each subject with clearly defined 'I know' and 'I can' statements' defining the knowledge and skills children need to acquire to reach those end point. There is a focus on the 'sticky knowledge' we want children to remember and an emphasis on the use of technical language and vocabulary for each subject. Every pupil is entitled to study the full breadth of the curriculum and develop the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in their next educational setting.

The Forwards Centre has a two-year rolling programme with a breadth comparable to the national curriculum along with the additional width that comes with working on an individual basis on barriers to success with excluded pupils with social emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. The two-year rolling curricular programme incorporates Reading, writing, maths, science, PSHE, computing, Humanities (History and Geography), the Arts (Art and Music) and PE.

## Planning

Planning is a process not a product. Its purpose is to enable high quality delivery which enables all pupils to learn.

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

Teachers should spend time thinking about what they want pupils to learn first before they give consideration to what you want them to do.

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

1. Where are the pupils starting from?
2. Where do you want them to get to?
3. How will you know when they are there?
4. How can you best help them get there?

When planning a lesson, teachers should be clear where this fits into their subject's overall curriculum. Teachers will know what prior knowledge needed to be learnt before a lesson is taught, and when they will retrieve the key learning of a lesson in future lesson.

Knowledge of the pupils; their prior attainment and specific needs, is a key part of planning. When planning teachers should consider the different pedagogical approaches we use to engage, motivate and challenge all learners, so that most pupils find a learning fit most of the time.

### Learning Intentions

It is important that teacher, pupils, support staff are all clear about the key learning that will take place in a lesson.

Teachers should make learning intentions explicit to pupils, all pupils should be able to explain what the key learning of the lesson is.

## Teaching

Teachers must be explicit about the key knowledge and vocabulary that all pupils must use.

Pupils must know 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 pupils' and teachers' language, through instructions and questioning, are significant determinants of progress.

What a "typical lesson" will look like will vary from subject to subject and individual teachers may utilise a variety of strategies based upon the "Forward Centre 5 ways" and their professional judgement and knowledge.

## Adaptive teaching

Teaching and learning at our school will take the backgrounds, needs and abilities of all pupils into account. We will differentiate or adapt learning to cater to the needs of all of our pupils, including:

- › Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- › Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)
- › Disadvantaged pupils

This may mean adapting the pitch of a learning activity but may also mean adapting the pace of the lesson, introducing sensory breaks or breaking activities down into small steps in order that a child does not feel overwhelmed. Over time, children may need less adaptation, however, staff are vigilant and recognise that pupils face multiple challenges in their lives and sometimes need more support and adaptation and sometimes less.

Other strategies that we use

- › Working with our SEN co-ordinator (SENCO), our pupils with SEND, and their parents/carers to establish the appropriate level of material to support these pupils to make good progress

- › Using support staff effectively to provide extra support
- › Providing writing frames and word banks

For more information see our SEND Policy and SEN Information Report

## Marking and Feedback

At the Forwards Centre, we recognise that effective marking and feedback are essential for helping pupils reach—and exceed—their academic potential. Thoughtful feedback supports pupils in understanding what they are doing well, where they have made errors, and how to progress further. Feedback is most powerful when it shapes pupils' thinking or practice, rather than simply identifying mistakes.

### Link to Learning Intentions

Marking and feedback are most effective when directly connected to clear learning intentions and success criteria that have been shared with pupils at the start of the lesson. Teachers use these intentions to focus marking on the key concepts taught, ensuring feedback is purposeful and manageable. Learning intentions are written at the top of each page—by staff or pupils depending on ability—and are highlighted green when achieved independently.

### Highlighter System

Green Highlighter – “Green is for Good”: Highlights where the pupil has successfully met the learning intention.

Pink Highlighter – “Pink means Think”: Draws attention to an area the pupil should revisit or improve.

### Marking Practice

Teachers mark in green pen, modelling the presentation standards expected of pupils.

Codes are used to provide quick, clear information and to support assessment:

S1 – Low-level support

S2 – High-level support

I – Independent work

⊙⊙ - Adult support given – worked example

WWW (What Went Well) – A positive comment linked to the learning intention, highlighted in green.

Fix It – Indicates an aspect needing correction or improvement (highlighted in pink). Once addressed, “Fixed” is written and highlighted green.

Challenge – A next step or extension task for pupils who have clearly demonstrated the intended learning without error.

SP – A spelling mistake (only for words within the pupil's phonics/spelling level), highlighted in pink with “SP” in the margin. Once corrected, it is highlighted green.



## **Feedback Expectations**

Pupils are given time in lessons to read and respond to feedback, ensuring it has an impact on their learning.

Marking focuses on what was actually taught, preventing unnecessary corrections and excessive workload.

Teachers provide actionable feedback and may set a challenge or follow-up task to move learning forward.

## **Assessment, recording and reporting**

At Bolton Impact Trust we believe that regular assessment is crucial to learning, because it provides both staff and pupils with valuable insights into understanding and progress. It helps identify strengths and areas for improvement, guiding teaching strategies and the personalised support given to our pupils. Additionally, assessments help to ensure that learning objectives are met and that pupils are developing the skills and knowledge necessary for future success.

Each curriculum subject in the Trust has a curriculum statement which specifies, in detail, the key knowledge that will be delivered to pupils throughout their course of study. This knowledge is what is assessed regularly through formative and summative assessments.

**Formative Assessments** – Teachers are expected to use formative assessments on a regular basis to ensure that they are checking what pupils know and understand and what they may need further help with. The Trust has established the ‘BIT 5 Ways’ which are a set of pedagogical approaches proven to be highly effective in improving outcomes for all pupils that all staff are expected to use in their teaching. The BIT ‘Five Ways to Check for Understanding’ and ‘Five ways to Retrieve’ have detailed examples and guidance for staff on how to use the different types of formative assessments to check what pupils know and can remember.

Some examples from the guidance are:

- Completion of knowledge organisers
- Low-stakes quizzes
- Free recall tasks
- Elaborative Interrogation
- Visual mapping
- Written tasks

**Summative Assessments** – Teachers are expected to use summative assessments at the end of a unit of work or a specific time period such as a term, year or key stage to evaluate pupils’ learning.

The Trust uses the ‘Insight’ system to record pupil assessment data and to monitor pupil progress from their baseline grade. A baseline grade is established after a pupil has spent a full half-term studying a subject.

As the key knowledge is delivered in each subject and pupils’ knowledge and understanding is assessed, staff are asked to record against each key knowledge objective a judgement of how much the pupil has understood on a scale of 0-3:

- 0 – Taught, but not yet understood
- 1- Some evidence, but not yet secure
- 2- Objective secured
- 3- Working at greater depth

There are no set expectations on how often staff report against these objectives throughout a term, but at the end of every term all pupils must be assessed against the objectives that have been delivered.

### **Moderation and Evaluation....**

We will monitor teaching and learning in the centre to make sure that all of our pupils make the best possible progress from their starting points.

The academy lead/deputy-head/assistant head and subject leads will monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning through:

- Conducting learning walks
- Reviewing marking and feedback
- Termly pupil progress meetings
- Pupil voice
- Planning looks
- Work looks

## Trauma Informed Approach

### What is Trauma?

Gabor Mate states, *“Trauma is a psychic wound that hardens you psychologically that then interferes with your ability to grow and develop. It pains you and now you’re acting out of pain. It induces fear and now you’re acting out of fear”*.

A commonly held definition of trauma is anything that threatens a person’s life or harms a person emotionally or physically. Scientists are investigating the long-term effects of trauma on people physically, mentally, spiritually and socially and have found that if a child has multiple traumas or a significant trauma resulting in high ACE scores before the age of three or four, you will see developmental delays later in their childhood. These delays will often manifest themselves in the classroom.

### Early Impact of Trauma on the Brain

Research has shown that early relationships play a key role on how our brains grow and develop. Therefore, children who experience abuse and neglect early in childhood are at higher risk of experiencing long term effects. A brain that has adapted to survive in a threatening or an unpredictable world may not work so well in an ordinary environment and can put a person at greater risk of experiencing mental health problems in the future.

Some of the impacts of trauma on the brain include:

- struggling to fit in
- being misunderstood
- Inability to recognise positive social cues
- difficulty in trusting new people
- struggling to enjoy fun experiences by placing too much focus on the potential threat
- lack of confidence
- feeling anxious
- struggle to build and maintain relationships

When children in the classroom environment become stressed, their brain is saying “you’re in trouble and not safe and you need to do something about it”. Therefore we need to create environments that encourage children to function in the social engagement zone of the brain so they feel safe and are able to learn. Gabor Mate believes that, *“Safety is not the absence of threat it is the presence of connection”*. A trauma informed approach to your classroom can help achieve this.

# Trauma Informed Classrooms

## What is a trauma informed classroom?

Taking on board the research above it is important that we create safe environments for our pupils to learn in, as well as building strong professional relationships with them. The following section explains how we can develop a trauma informed environment to ensure pupils feel as safe as possible.

A trauma informed classrooms recognises:

- when a pupil acts out in class, misbehaves or simply won't do their work, their behaviour may have nothing to do with being "naughty". In fact, their behaviour may have nothing to do with the teacher or the classroom at all.
- pupils have gone through some severe events in their lives and are carrying memories of those events with them. Furthermore their brains are different because of this trauma.
- every time a child experiences a traumatic event, their body repeatedly produces a stress hormone that reduces the connections between neurons. This deficit happens precisely in the areas of the brain dedicated to reasoning and learning. Therefore when a child encounters an adverse situation, they physically cannot manage the reasoning to deal with it. In the classroom, an adverse situation could be something as simple as a spelling test.
- the need for teachers to identify this response and help the pupil find appropriate coping mechanisms.
- the need to focus on behaviour management by looking at the whole body health of each pupil and ensuring they feel safe so they are able to get into the social engagement mode of the brain so that learning can take place.

## Importance of the adult in the classroom

The major factor of a successful trauma informed classroom is the adults within the classroom. Teachers/mentors who take care of themselves mentally will influence their pupils enormously. Self-care is crucial if you are to support pupils who have experienced trauma.

Teachers who have a healthy self-care approach and take good care of themselves can then have the capacity to nurture pupils with kindness and empathy because their cup is full. They are able to focus on supporting the pupils, and to maintain a balanced and calm approach

This can be better understood with the metaphor, *'teachers need to put on their own oxygen mask first before assisting the pupil to put on their mask'*.

## How do I create a Trauma-informed classroom?

The adults must ensure pupils feel safe both emotionally and physically. The following approaches can help with this:

- Ensure pupils feel welcome:
  1. Meet and greet pupils at the door
  2. Use their names frequently
  3. Smile and use good eye contact
- Ensure pupils feel safe:
  1. Adopt a calm approach and tone of voice **Pupils sense teacher's anxiety, so calm teachers helps create safe spaces.**
  2. Be predictable, have clear regular routines in your classroom
- Build positive relationship:
  1. Invest time in getting to know pupils
  2. Speak regularly with parents
  3. Create an environment of mutual respect
- Create a relaxing environment:
  1. Where available, allow pupils to access a cool down/cosy area to calm down when required
  2. Use displays well. Use warm colours and do not over stimulate with too many fussy displays
  3. Dim lighting if appropriate
  4. Build the use of soothing music into lessons when appropriate
  5. Adopt flexible seating for pupils who require small movement to self soothe e.g. wobble boards/rocking chairs
- Create a sense of community:
  1. Intervene in issues between pupils quickly and teach pupils to do the same
  2. Engage in active listening with pupils and teach them to do the same with each other
  3. Model empathy to pupils on a regular basis