

Bolton Impact Trust

Teaching and Learning Policy

Reviewed By	Alison Woosey Rebecca Leonard Melissa Smith
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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
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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

At Lever Park, we recognise that every pupil has unique strengths, needs, interests and aspirations. For pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, a personalised approach to teaching and learning is essential in ensuring access, engagement, and achievement.

We are committed to designing and delivering a curriculum that is flexible, responsive, and ambitious, while remaining inclusive of each learner's individual profile. Personalisation of the curriculum means:

- **Meeting individual needs:** Lessons are adapted to take into account students' emotional regulation, learning styles, and social communication needs, ensuring that barriers to engagement are minimised.
- **Flexible pathways:** Pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities for specific and varied learning routes, including vocational, academic, and skills-based programmes that reflect their interests and future aspirations. Pupils may work across a number of pathways during their time with us dependant on appropriateness and need.
- **Targeted support and intervention:** Individual targets are informed by assessment, prior attainment, EHCP outcomes, and regular input from staff, parents/carers, and pupils.
- **Personal Development at the centre:** The curriculum is shaped to build resilience, self-regulation, and confidence, recognising that emotional growth and academic progress are interdependent. Our school has a central drive for pupils' Personal Development and time and resources are spent to ensure pupils are given the entitlement to varied and rich opportunities.
- **Pupil voice:** Learners are encouraged to participate in shaping their own learning journey, helping to build motivation, ownership, and a sense of achievement.
- **High expectations for all:** We believe personalisation is not about lowering expectations, but about providing the right support, challenge, and opportunities for every young person to thrive. All pupils have access to a wide range of end-point qualifications and support for next steps post 16.

Through this personalised approach, we aim to empower our pupils to develop the knowledge, skills, and personal qualities they need to succeed both within and beyond school, preparing them for lifelong learning.

Adaptive Teaching

Lever Park Academy is committed to ensuring that every learner can access the curriculum and achieve their potential through high-quality, adaptive teaching. We recognise that students with SEMH needs may require different levels of support at different times, and that effective teaching must be flexible, responsive, and inclusive.

Adaptive teaching in our context means:

- **Flexible lesson design:** Teachers plan with a clear structure, but build in opportunities to adapt activities, resources, and delivery methods to meet the needs of learners in the moment.
- **Responsive practice:** Ongoing assessment of understanding, behaviour, and emotional readiness informs real-time adjustments to teaching, ensuring that all pupils are appropriately supported and challenged.
- **Reducing barriers to learning:** Adaptations may include differentiated questioning, scaffolding, varied modes of presentation, sensory regulation opportunities, and alternative ways to demonstrate learning.
- **Promoting independence and resilience:** Support is given in a way that builds confidence and skills for self-regulation, encouraging learners to take increasing responsibility for their progress.
- **Consistency and predictability:** Clear routines and expectations are maintained to create a safe and stable learning environment, while allowing space for flexibility to respond to emotional or behavioural needs.
- **Collaborative approaches:** Teachers, support staff, and specialist professionals work together to apply adaptive strategies consistently and effectively, ensuring alignment with pupils' personalised timetables, learning plans and EHCPs.

Through adaptive teaching, we aim to provide equitable access to learning, ensuring that every student can engage meaningfully with the curriculum and develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for lifelong success.

Marking and Feedback

Effective marking and feedback are central to promoting progress, self-esteem, and motivation. In our academy, feedback is designed not only to support academic achievement but also to build confidence, resilience, and a positive attitude towards learning and independence.

Our approach to marking and feedback is guided by the following principles:

- **Timely and responsive:** Feedback is given as close to the point of learning as possible, with a focus on immediate verbal responses where appropriate.
- **Clear and accessible:** Feedback is communicated in a way that is easy for the learner to understand, avoiding unnecessary complexity or overload.
- **Strengths-based:** Achievements and progress are highlighted first, so that students recognise what they have done well before receiving guidance on how to improve.
- **Action-focused:** Pupils are provided with clear, manageable next steps that encourage them to reflect on their learning and take ownership of their progress.

- **Varied approaches:** Feedback may be verbal, written, or practical, depending on the context and the learner's needs. A balance is maintained to ensure feedback is meaningful rather than tokenistic.
- **Supportive of SEMH needs:** Feedback is delivered sensitively, with consideration of each learner's emotional regulation, self-esteem, and capacity to process information at that time.

Through effective marking and feedback, we aim to reinforce high expectations, celebrate success, and guide students towards continuous improvement in both their learning and their personal development.

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. The grade is decided upon by the teacher and subject lead

through the use of formative and summative assessments over the half-term period. From this, a target grade is set using the Trust's flight path for either English or Maths (whichever is most appropriate) for the end of key stage 4.

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. Staff are also asked in some subjects to award a grade which should be based upon the pupils' work for the whole term and not on a single assessment. This should be moderated by the subject lead.

Types of assessment measures (Secondary Only)

BIT Levels - BIT levels are a grading system created by the Trust to enable all subjects to talk in the same language. It is based upon GCSE grades and ranges from Pre-GCSE 5 to grade 9. It has been cross-matched against existing grades or levels for Functional skills, Pearson Steps and BTEC units to ensure that all subjects can convert their grades to a BIT level. (*Appendix 2*)

Knowledge Blocks – Knowledge Blocks are blocks of specific knowledge which build in complexity from Foundation knowledge block to Knowledge block 4. Typically these are used for assessment in non-GCSE subjects. Staff are asked to judge the knowledge block a pupil is on using a 'best fit' approach with the key knowledge objectives that a pupil has the most 'secure' score for.

Age Related Levels – Age-related levels are used in our SEMH school for subjects like PHSE and Careers where we have set out the knowledge and skills that we expect pupils to have for their chronological age. ARE levels are from below year 7 to year 11 and are broken into 3 sub-levels in order to show how securely a pupils sits in each level. E.g. If a pupil in year 7 demonstrates most of the knowledge and skills from their chronological age criteria then they would be 7=. A pupil in year 7 who demonstrates all of the knowledge and skills in their age group would be 7+ and a pupil in year 7 who only demonstrates a few of the knowledge and skills in their age group would be 7-. Pupils can also be awarded Age-related levels which are above or below their chronological age. If a pupil in year 8

demonstrates all of the knowledge and skills in their age group and most of the knowledge and skills in year 9, then they would be given an 9=.

BTEC Levels – BTEC subjects use the levels 'Pass', 'Merit' and 'Distinction' to grade pupils for each unit of work completed. The grade descriptors for each level are set out for each subject by the examination board.

Teacher Judgement – Teacher Judgements are used for subjects such as Music or Humanities where teachers record any formative or summative assessments against the key knowledge objectives on the Insight system and form a judgement at the end of either a unit or term as to whether a pupil is on track in their subject. They use the scale below-

- Working below
- Working just below
- On track
- Working at greater depth

This scale is also used for every subject to report termly whether a pupil is on track against their expected target grade which has been set from their baseline grade.

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