Saint Aidan's Church of England High School

Teaching and Learning Policy

Author:	Kate Bray
Reviewed by:	David Eccles
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Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure that the students at our school are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead them to consistently high levels of achievement and progress;
- identify and meet the various learning needs of each and every student whilst ensuring that we continue to oversee their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within a Christian framework;
- provide a common understanding of what makes highly effective teaching within our setting;
- support staff with evidence based approaches to teaching and learning alongside ideas for the implementation of such approaches;
- act as a user friendly advisory tool to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the whole school;
- provide a reference to staff, students and parents;

Saint Aidan's Teaching and Learning Standards

Our school Teaching and Learning Standards (Appendix 1) have been developed to focus on key areas that we believe support the needs of all students in order to make progress and which align with our school vision and context. The key foci are:

1. A knowledge-rich curriculum
2. Collaborative learning
3. High expectations
4. Marking, Feedback and DIRT
5. Metacognition (and self-regulation)
6. Modelling
7. Promoting literacy across the curriculum
8. Questioning
9. Retrieval and Mastery
10. SEND/Knowing Student's Needs (Adaptive Teaching)

We believe that learning and learning environments which focus on these key strands will support us in creating students who are:
- engaged in their learning
- inquisitive
- motivated
- enthusiastic
- organised
- effective communicators
- active learners
- respectful

- independent
- flexible in their approach to tasks
- collaborative
- positive
- reflective

The Teaching and Learning Standards, and our development of teaching and learning across the school, is based on; evidence informed practice and research, and reflection based pedagogy. Many of our principals stem from the Education Endowment Foundation's research such as:

- [Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning](#)

- [Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools](#)

- [Metacognition and Self-Regulated Learning](#)

- [Special Educational Needs in Mainstream School](#)

Examples of good practice, and expectations, for each of our 10 Saint Aidan's Teaching and Learning Standards, are outlined below.

1. **A Knowledge-Rich Curriculum**
   - Lessons should be carefully planned to ensure knowledge, skills and principles fit into the 'bigger picture'.
   - Common misconceptions should be planned for in advance.
   - CPD should be undertaken to ensure developments in teaching pedagogy and in curriculum are understood and employed.
   - Within subjects, the curriculum should be well sequenced to ensure key concepts, learning, skills and knowledge are built on successfully.
   - The curriculum should be designed to be memorable and activities should be planned to ensure key strategies that support memory (retrieval practice, low stakes quizzing, repeated practice, modelling) are used so that students develop automaticity and fluency in their ability to use the knowledge gathered.

Links to further reading:
   - [EEF – What do we mean by 'knowledge rich anyway?'](#)
   - [What is a knowledge-rich curriculum? Principle and Practice - Tom Sherrington](#)

2. **Collaborative Learning**
   - Pair and group activities can increase a student's success in lesson and should be planned in advance where possible.

- Clear routines for collaborative learning should be established. These might include:
    - students taking on specific roles (such as leading the discussion or writing the notes)
    - turn taking in a specified way
    - clear decisions regarding feeding back
    - scaffolded questions/prompts for discussion
- Focus collaborative learning activities on problem solving and critical thinking skills

Links to further reading:
- EEF – Collaborative Learning
- teachthought.com – collaborative learning tips and strategies

3. **High Expectations**
- Activities should be planned in order to be challenging and should encourage students to think deeply.
- Learning activities should focus on specific subject knowledge that supports and develops critical thinking.
- Activities should be chosen to create curiosity in students.

Links to further reading:
- Teacher Toolkit - expectations

4. **Marking, Feedback and DIRT**
- Teachers should employ a range of methods that ensure feedback is given throughout the lesson. These may include:
    - identifying misconceptions and sharing them verbally
    - pausing the task or learning in order to share feedback
    - using the classroom visualiser to show examples of effective work
- DIRT (Directed Improvement and Reflection Time) should be completed as often as possible following work in class. DIRT work may happen following written or verbal feedback given either individually or as a whole class. It is good practice to have DIRT work clearly reflected in student books (such as via a purple pen or a clear heading).
- Activities in the next planned lesson/section of the lesson may be altered in light of information gathered via the assessment of student work. Planning should always be altered if necessary and tasks and questions should be adapted based on marking, feedback and DIRT.
- **Class books should be regularly marked. This should be at least once a half term for subjects that only have 1 hour per week and more regularly for subjects that occur more frequently.**

Links to further reading:
- [Saint Aidan's Marking and Feedback Resources](#)
- [EEF – Teacher Feedback to Improve Learning](#)

5. **Metacognition (and Self-Regulation)**
- Students should be provided with opportunities to reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement.
- Students should be encouraged to regularly set themselves targets for improvement.
- Teachers should model their own thinking to show the thought process or method in approaching a given task.

Links to further reading:
- [Saint Aidan's Metacognition Resources](#)
- [EEF – Metacognition and Self-Regulation](#)

6. **Modelling**
- Teachers should use guides, scaffold and worked examples as a method to support students' understanding – these may be slowly removed as learning develops.
- Live modelling is an effective strategies and all classrooms have a visualiser to support the use of this method.
- Modelled work should explore potential misconceptions.
- The 'I-We-You' model is an effective strategy for support and consolidation.

Links to further reading:
- [Saint Aidan's Modelling Resources](#)

7. **Promoting Literacy Across The Curriculum**
- Teachers should model reading comprehension strategies by asking questions.
- Students should be encouraged to make predictions and summarise key aspects of a text.
- Students should be exposed to high frequency tier 2 vocabulary when appropriate.
- Teachers may make use of dictionaries and thesauri to support the learning of vocabulary.
- Students should be encouraged to use subject specific terminology when answering questions both verbally and in writing. This should also be modelled by the teacher.

Links to further reading:
- [Saint Aidan's Literacy Resources](#)
- [EEF – Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools](#)

8. **Questioning**
   - Teachers should use a range of questioning techniques in class discussions, including both closed and open questions, to extend and challenge students' knowledge.
   - Teachers should allow some 'wait time' between question and response.
   - With certain tasks or students, pre-planning questions – and sometimes their recipient too – can be useful.

Links to further reading:
   - [Saint Aidan's Questioning Resources](#)
   - [Teacher Toolkit – questioning strategies](#)

9. **Retrieval and Mastery**
   - 'Do now' activities should be planned to support the activation of prior knowledge. These may be on the board as students enter the classroom, quick quizzes supplied by the teacher, tablet based or otherwise but should focus on remembering key content.
   - Activities that require students to retrieve information from memory should be planned regularly. These may be 'low stake' tasks that allow students to monitor their own memory and learning too.
   - The level of challenge in retrieval activities should be increased as knowledge becomes more secure.

Links to further reading:
   - [Saint Aidan's Retrieval and Mastery Resources](#)
   - https://teacherhead.com/2019/03/03/10-techniques-for-retrieval-practice/

10. **SEND/Knowing Student's Needs**
    - Teachers should use Synergy to support their understanding of students' individual needs.
    - Teachers should adapt lesson activities in order to meet individual needs. This may be done through:
      - shorter/chunked activities
      - greater focus on misconceptions
      - the sharing of resources where required (for example printed worksheets/printed slides)
      - differentiated modelled examples
    - Teachers should have high expectations of all students.

Links to further reading:
    - [Saint Aidan's Adaptive and Responsive Teaching Resources](#)
    - [SEND Top Tips](#)