



## **HARMONIZE ACADEMY**

# **TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY**

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## **Teaching and Learning Policy**

### **Purpose**

We are a learning community. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students are supported through their learning.

### **Standards**

At Harmonize Academy we agree to:

- Create a welcoming classroom, greeting students by name and using the BASICS model to a build positive ethos.
- Ensure that every student is fully engaged in lessons.
- Ensure that there is a sense of purpose and pace in every lesson.
- Match learning styles to the needs of the individual learner through differentiation.
- Ensure that schemes of learning are accessible to all levels of ability and that they must reflect the school's Improvement Plan.
- Differentiate learning objectives using must, should and could; building in challenge for all students and making a clear link with assessment criteria.
- Enable students to become self-governing, independent learners.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

Monitoring of this policy document will be conducted annually by the senior leadership team and governors to ensure compliance with new initiatives. Monitoring of practice against this policy will be done through senior leadership team members observing lessons and sampling work and periodic reviews.

### **The Four-Stage Accelerated Learning Planning Cycle**

Excellent teaching depends on effective planning by subject teachers using prior knowledge of students' attainment (informed by assessment for learning), and of the ability of teachers to ensure that low-attaining students are supported through their learning, as well as appropriate levels of challenge for gifted and talented students.

In lesson planning, teachers should make use of prior knowledge and the following information, which is recorded in their planners:

- previous year's National Curriculum levels/ GCSE grades
- National Curriculum challenge levels and GCSE challenge grades
- CAT scores
- KS2 National Curriculum levels
- Code of Practice levels and IEP information
- Spelling and Reading ages

This information will be available for staff in the form of class lists in September.

### **The Four-Stage Accelerated Learning Planning Cycle**

All staff are committed to the four-part lesson to ensure that all students receive high quality teaching and learning which allows all students to achieve their full potential and beyond. All staff are expected to plan lessons thoroughly, using the lesson plan outline provided (see appendix 1).

All teachers are expected to outline in their lesson planning the provision that is being made for low-attaining students, as well as the gifted and talented, through differentiated materials (see section on 'Differentiation').

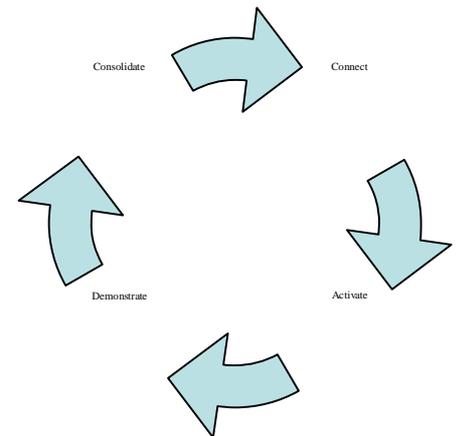
The principles behind the four-part accelerated lesson are as follows:

- create a welcoming classroom, greeting students by name and using the BASICS model to a build positive ethos;
- every student is fully engaged in the lesson;
- every student is engaged in thinking;
- thinking skills are developed;
- 'opting out' of the learning is minimised;
- lessons are challenging and are supported by a climate of high expectations;
- there is a sense of purpose and pace in every lesson.

Students can expect the following structure in all of their lessons:

**The Connection Phase should:**

- connect with learners' prior learning;
- engage curiosity;
- draw out what is already known;
- agree the 'Big Picture';
- get learners to make links;
- share challenging learning objectives;
- include everyone.



The connection phase must start promptly, not overrun and engage all students.

**The Activate phase should:**

- engage learners with new information through multi-sensory experiences;
- encourage learners to find things out and work things out for themselves.

**The Demonstration Phase should:**

- provide opportunities for learners to demonstrate understanding.
- allow learners to make, write, act, draw or demonstrate to 'show they know'.
- provide educative feedback.

**The Consolidation Phase should**

- structure reflection around how we learn and what has been learned;
- ask how the learning and methods can be applied elsewhere;
- preview learning to come.

It should be noted that this is a framework in which effective teaching and learning can take place. It is designed to give all students at Harmonize Academy the highest quality learning experience. Lesson evaluations continue to play a key role in the professional development of all teachers and therefore teachers are encouraged to constantly evaluate their performance in the classroom through the performance management process, as well as through the coaching programme and training provided through staff development time.

**Assessment for Learning**

Assessment For Learning (AFL) plays an integral part in the four-part accelerated learning planning cycle and is defined as 'improving learning through assessment'

### **Differentiation**

Differentiation is about taking different approaches to teaching a core topic. For effective teaching and learning to take place, the teaching method/strategy needs to vary according to the task that students are requested to undertake and each student's ability. At Harmonize Academy we believe that AFL is of fundamental importance because:

- it is based on good understanding of how children learn;
- it helps learners do better and therefore attainment rises;
- it allows teachers to work 'smarter' not harder;
- it allows students to develop skills to take charge of their own learning.

In planning lessons, staff are expected to plan explicitly for the use of AFL in their lessons.

There are four key ingredients:

### **Learning objectives:**

- Engage learners with learning objectives.
- Show what 'good' work looks like.
- Use objectives as a basis for questioning.
- Refer back to objectives during the plenary.

### **Questioning:**

- Questions must be planned and worth asking.
- Questions should include extended 'think' time in order to enhance the quality of student responses.
- The 'No hands-up' rule will encourage all students to participate in teacher-student dialogues.

### **Peer and self Assessment:**

- Students should identify their own successes.
- Students must identify their own areas for improvement.
- Students should be able to self-assess against success criteria.
- Students should be able to peer-assess using clear frameworks.

### **Good Feedback:**

- Should focus on success criteria (but not in the form of comparison).
- Aim to close the gap between students' current ability and target grades.
- Be specific to the students' needs.
- Incorporate time for students to use feedback effectively.

High quality teaching must show evidence of planning, the setting of clearly-achievable learning outcomes and the use of a range of learning styles to match the needs of each individual learner. If teaching is properly differentiated and caters for a range of learning styles, then the quality of teaching will improve and barriers to learning will be removed. The wider the range of abilities in

our classes, the more we need an approach to teaching and learning that allows all students to access all areas of the curriculum. There are numerous ways of approaching differentiation, such as content, pace, response, sequencing and grouping. Curriculum Leaders are always available to offer advice and support with differentiation.

### **Schemes of Learning**

Subject-specific schemes of learning are the responsibility of Deputy Principal. However, all staff may be asked from time to time to contribute to their subject's schemes of work as part of their on going professional development.

The Deputy Principal will set the parameters for schemes of learning. All academic staff will follow a standard framework, within which are certain principles. These must be incorporated into schemes of learning because they relate to the school's Improvement Plan.

The following principles must be included and identified in schemes of work:

- the scheme must be accessible to all levels of ability; hence, differentiation must be built in for both the low-attaining and the gifted and talented;
- the scheme should take into account students with learning difficulties and should take account of IEPs;
- schemes of learning should reflect the Academy's Improvement Plan targets, which are intended to:
  - a) raise the achievements of all;
  - b) encourage students to be involved in learning;
  - c) support the creative approach to learning in order to support the specialism;
  - d) commit to the targets relating to literacy, numeracy and ICT;
  - e) embed the four-part lesson structure in all lesson planning;
  - f) develop the use of ICT across the curriculum.
  
- Schemes should clearly identify when and where thinking skills are being developed;
- Schemes should identify where opportunities exist for Assessment for Learning;
- Schemes should clearly identify independent learning opportunities and follow the whole school policy;
- Schemes should reflect best use of resources within the department and around the school;
- Schemes should reflect cross-curricular links, including citizenship and personal, social and health education.
- Schemes should have respect for different cultural and ethnic groups.

Staff will plan work throughout the year and will set time constraints upon their colleagues to complete sections of their scheme of learning. It is the responsibility of individual teachers to follow that scheme and develop his / her own four-part lesson plans in line with specific schemes of learning.