

Teaching and Learning Policy

June 2021

Students enjoy their learning and leave their lessons feeling a strong sense of achievement having learnt and applied the essential knowledge and skills.

At Ark Alexandria, we are fully committed to all teaching being excellent - informed by up to date and expert subject knowledge. Teachers' pedagogy is developed by high quality training and coaching. Lessons are carefully planned to meet the needs of all the students and delivered with passion. Routines are unobtrusive allowing the focus to be on learning and students take responsibility for their own behaviour and are motivated to learn. Students are encouraged to ask questions and to be curious. Teachers have faith in all of their students and will stretch them to achieve their potential; learning will be challenging but highly rewarding. In turn, students have faith in themselves and are willing to take risks and learn from mistakes. We recognize the importance of student talk; lessons will be oracy rich. High quality feedback will underpin and drive student progress and staff development.

Principles for Teaching and Learning

Teaching:

- enables and delivers strong academic progress and outcomes
- makes students think hard
- ensures students learn the essential knowledge and skills
- is informed by assessing the student knowledge and knowledge gaps
- enables curious learners who ask questions and continue learning beyond the classroom
- inspires, empowers and prepares students to learn beyond school
- develops resilient learners who take risks in their learning and learn from mistakes
- exemplifies the academy values of excellence, kindness and faith

Heads of Department:

- secure high standards of teaching and learning in every classroom
- ensure that there is a strong culture and ethos embedded in every classroom
- ensure that all teachers have up-to-date and expert subject knowledge
- ensure all teachers have detailed understanding of the curriculum map and progression in their subject
- ensure model answers are produced that exemplify excellent standards and are maximised to secure excellence.
- embed homework as an integral part of learning in their subject areas which secures students development as independent learners

- model what excellent teaching and learning looks like in the classroom
- ensure exercise books in their department demonstrate excellence in presentation and content and exemplify curriculum impact
- provide precise, positive and challenging feedback to students and staff
- coach and train teachers to be excellent

Teachers:

- ensure students know: what they are learning; why they are learning it; how they will learn it and what it will look like when they have learnt it
- explicitly model outcomes and processes to ensure students know what excellence looks like
- instil in students a strong desire to learn
- actively develop and promote students to be curious and ask questions
- plan lessons backwards from the wider goals of the subject
- show the students how the learning in the lesson relates to previous and future learning and the place of work
- ensure challenge is planned into all parts of the learning
- use student knowledge gaps and student data to inform planning
- identify and plan for misconceptions
- make essential content explicit through carefully paced and timed explanation
- prioritise independent practice as a route to learning essential knowledge and skills
- create structured opportunities for high quality talk in every lesson
- use student responses in the lesson and to adapt the lesson accordingly to secure excellent learning
- give students immediate and continual feedback which develops students' confidence and enables them to improve their learning

Students:

- are doing the cognitive work in the lessons; thinking, writing, reading or talking for most of the time in lessons
- support each other in their learning; listening and prompting each other with questions
- demonstrate excellence in the presentation and organisation of their books
- respond to feedback from the teacher by acting on the action steps set to produce improved work
- work independently with confidence
- demonstrate faith in themselves by taking risks in their learning and be resilient in the face of challenge
- actively contribute to their learning environment and demonstrate excellent behaviour

Lesson structure and teaching strategies

Lessons are planned and delivered in a structured and purposeful way informed and adapted in the moment by student responses and student data. There are many strategies that teachers deploy to enable excellent learning in their classrooms. The top ten features include:

Teaching Top 10

1. Do Now: no more than 5 minutes

A do now task engages students in their learning the moment they enter the classroom and tests or builds upon prior learning.

2. Lesson objective/s or learning question is communicated with students and re-visited

The teacher shares with the class clearly and precisely at the beginning of the lesson what the students will be learning and why.

3. Questioning: Cold call; targeted; open ended; No opt out; and a,b,c questions

The teacher uses questioning expertly in the lesson to check for understanding and challenge students thinking. Questions are planned and targeted to specific students. Cold call is used as a strategy to ensure all students are involved in the learning. Students can make mistakes and when they either don't know the answer or make an error – they are returned to by the teacher once the correct answer has been explained (no opt out). Open ended questions and a, (accepts a student's answer and explains why), b (a student can build upon a previous answer) or c (a student can challenge an answer) are strategies used to develop student thinking. Questioning is used to identify gaps in students' knowledge and skills and misconception to inform reteach

4. Paired discussion: think pair share/turn and talk

Every lesson provides structured, focussed opportunities for talk, which is purposeful and directly related to the learning objective. It is framed through well-crafted questioning. 'Talk' ensures students can apply understanding and deepen knowledge. It also allows the teacher to hear students' thinking aloud such that they can decide whether to re-teach, extend, and challenge a misconception or to move on.

5. Student independent work at least 10 minutes

Every lesson has planned in to it at least 10 minutes when the student practices/applies their learning independently from the teacher.

6. Circulate and live mark

Teacher continually circulates during the lesson to read, respond and mark student work against a pre-written model of excellence.

7. Positive and academic narration

Teachers use praise to celebrate student success (positive narration) and commentary recognising student success to exemplify the excellent standards expected (academic narration)

8. All lessons are planned using the I, we, you structure

Lessons are planned using I-We-You cycle interspersed with careful questioning to check for understanding.

‘I’ – the teacher exposition - The teacher, plans, scripts and practises exposition so that it supports clarity, reinforcement and engagement. They consciously choose the structure to share given information and explain it, linking it explicitly to prior learning if appropriate. Expected misconceptions are exposed through demonstration; this alongside high quality modelling and exemplification allows for student metacognition.

‘We’ – collaborative learning

The teacher plans and structures the ‘We’ section to transfer the cognitive load to the students; checking for understanding and ensuring that the students are prepared well to apply and practise their learning in independent practice. The ‘We’ provides structured, focussed opportunities for talk, which is purposeful and directly related to the learning objective. ‘Talk’ enables students to test out their understanding of key learning and allows the teacher to hear students’ thinking aloud so that they can decide whether to re-teach, extend or to move on.

‘You’ – independent practice

This is the stage of the lesson, where each student applies his or her assimilated knowledge and understanding to a planned task working independently from the teacher. The teacher circulates, gives positive reinforcement and feedback and live marks student work.

9. Prioritise PP students for questions and live marking

Students from disadvantage backgrounds currently don’t perform to same standard as their peers; checking their understanding so they are set up well for independent practice ensures these students are consistently successful in every lesson.

10. Reflective questioning on their learning

All lessons end with a reflective question based on the students’ learning, which enables the students to leave lessons still thinking

Feedback

Feedback at Ark Alexandra has a high impact on student learning. It is regular, challenging and specific. Feedback develops the students' faith in themselves and guides them to achieve excellence. In lessons, students will receive verbal and written feedback. Highest leverage learning is identified in schemes of learning and teachers will deliver a 'deep' mark to these pieces of work.

Principles of Feedback:

- closes the gap between the students' current performance and the desired standards by clarifying to students the steps to achieving excellence.
- delivers high quality information to the students about their learning, which allows students to replicate their success
- develops students to be reflective about their learning and empowers them to improve their own work
- provides teachers with high quality information to address important misconceptions and stretch the learning
- are given in the moment, in the lesson, verbally and by live marking
- praises effort and celebrates mistakes as an opportunity to learn
- focuses on the positive first and motivates students
- builds students' self-esteem and resilience

Teachers - Written feedback (Deep Mark):

- live mark against a model of excellence during independent practice
- mark highest leverage work that has been pre-identified in schemes of learning using Praise, Question, Response
- mark summative assessments using set criteria and take part in moderation
- write praise which is precise and specific and focused on processes and effort. For example "John, well done for thinking so hard to solve the calculation, this is clear from your working out.
- write questions, which enable students to close knowledge and skills gaps. They then plan into the lessons time for re-teach and students to respond to close knowledge and skill gaps.
- Identify spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors with the expectation that students correct in green pen (Symbols can be found in appendix 3). Incorrect spellings are written out 3 times by the student in green pen.

The Learning environment: Classrooms and corridors

The learning environment at Ark Alexandra reflects the schools' vision and values; display demonstrates what excellence, kindness and faith look like. Our classrooms and corridors are welcoming and intellectually inspiring places, where our Christian ethos is celebrated and reinforced. Students' success is visibly celebrated and their curiosity awakened with thought provoking images and questions. The learning environment for each department represents their vision of learning and how learning in their subject applies to the world of work.

Principles of an excellent learning environment:

- the learning environment is a positive and clean space
- students and staff take responsibility for keeping the learning environment in excellent condition
- corridors are welcoming and celebrate excellence
- corridors are clear of litter.

Classrooms:

- are well organised and tidy - with boxes or allocated places for exercise books and textbooks
- have clear desks and a clean whiteboard
- are well-resourced including visible remote control, glue, board pens etc.
- adhere to all health and safety guidelines

Display:

- actively promotes excellent learning
- exemplifies a Department's vision of learning
- demonstrates how the learning in each subject applies to the world of work
- is regularly up-dated to support learning in current schemes of learning
- celebrates and reinforces our Christian ethos
- includes Models of Excellence
- celebrates student success
- encourages student curiosity
- is interactive and inspiring
- demonstrates high standards of literacy and accuracy
- exemplifies the command words for that subject
- exemplifies the highest leverage vocabulary

All classrooms will display the following:

- Classroom rules
- Mouth, body brain poster
- Power of positive narration poster
- Expectations of presentation in exercise books
- (Models of excellence for current scheme of work-optional)



Exercise books

Exercise books contain the highest leverage knowledge, which is identified clearly for the students to refer back to. They are an essential resource for students and prepare them to demonstrate the knowledge they have learned. They are vital for independent study, evidence student progress and reflect the learning identified in the short and medium term plans. They demonstrate the implementation and impact of the curriculum. The organisation and presentation is excellent.

Principles of excellent exercise books:

- evidence the students' learning and progress
- reflect the learning identified in the short and medium term plans
- contain the highest leverage knowledge, which is identified clearly for the students to reference
- prepare students to demonstrate the knowledge they have learnt
- provide the essential resource for independent study

Presentation:

- use a plastic cover on exercise books
- no doodling or graffiti
- worksheets must be glued into exercise books
- all titles underlined with a ruler
- mistakes are struck through with a single line
- use black pen
- use a pencil for diagrams, charts and graphs
- work is ruled off with a straight line and the next piece of work is started underneath.

- teachers comment in red pen
- students respond in green pen
- student's peer assess in green pen and initial

Organisation:

- all work is dated
- the purpose of the work is labelled in the margin: notes; practice; revision; homework
- highest leverage knowledge is highlighted by being outlined with a box drawn with a ruler
- Key words are underlined or highlighted with a highlighter
- Important quotations are highlighted or underlined
- GCSE, A Level and BTEC course expectations in books/folders

Teaching Essentials document

The Teaching Essentials document models for teachers what excellent impact looks like and is to be used as a planning document. It draws upon the language of the Great Teacher Rubric. See appendix 2.

Professional development

At Ark Alexandra, we are all learners and aspire to be excellent practitioners to enable our vision of excellent outcomes for our students. We are highly committed to supporting every member of staff at whatever stage in their career to improve and develop as a professional. We have faith in ourselves as a learning community that we can achieve our vision.

Coaching

Coaching is highly valued and embedded in our practice in Ark Alexandra. We believe that coaching is the most significant way we can improve our practice in the classroom and invest in it accordingly in terms of people and time; working with a coach is a privilege. All teachers are open to being coached and receiving feedback.

We use the See it Name it Do it model of coaching and the scope and sequence document is used as reference point to assist in the setting of high leverage targets. All middle and senior leaders in the school are trained coaches.

We have an open door policy and welcome colleagues into our classrooms. Every member of staff is open to Real Time Coaching (RTC). RTC is an important way that we can all improve on our practice in the moment.

Co-planning

Each week departments have an opportunity to meet together to co-plan lessons. Planning is data informed (exercise books, progress data, question level analysis) and led by the Head of Department. An important aspect of this planning is the writing of models of excellence; these enable teachers to live mark during independent practice and to model excellence to the students.

The purpose of co-planning:

- respond to the gaps in the students' knowledge and skills and adapt lessons to close the gaps
- adapt lessons to improve the impact of teaching
- strengthen teacher's subject knowledge
- identify misconceptions and adapt lessons to plan to address them.

See the model of co-planning in appendix 1

Professional development sessions and top tips

Every Monday teachers share a top tip 5 minutes inset to develop staff on our teaching and learning priority

Every 3rd Monday a series of developmental meetings take place which staff can choose which of those on offer to attend:

- Leadership
- NQT
- Teaching and Learning
- Reading

Inset days

Inset days provide an opportunity for staff to rehearse routines and develop their pedagogy and leadership skills.



Lesson observations

Lesson observations are only conducted for developmental reasons. Lesson observations are an important method to inform individual and collective professional development.

In an academic year, each teacher is observed twice, for an hour each time. The lesson being observed is agreed beforehand and each observation, where possible is conducted by a different observer, so that each teacher receives input from a different perspective. The GTR is used to inform the feedback and foci for development.

Before the observation. The teacher meets with the person who is going to observe the lessons to discuss their planning and the class context.

After the observation. The teacher meets with the observer for a full feedback meeting, in which the teacher is set a highest leverage target (HLT) to develop their classroom practice. In the feedback session teacher and observer discuss and decide where the teacher sits on each strand of the GTR.

All observers are trained in the GTR and See It Name It Do It coaching model.

The GTR data is sent anonymised to Ark to inform Trust wide training.

Developmental cycles

Purpose:

- Develop staff in the academy and departmental teaching and learning priorities
- Monitor consistency across their department
- To identify knowledge and skill gaps to inform co-planning and departmental training
- Measure the implementation and impact of the curriculum

How:

Heads of department on a 3-weekly cycle, visit classrooms to look at: teacher practice, student books and speak to students. Each cycle focuses on a teaching and learning foci. The foci change every 3 weeks. The purpose of these cycles is to develop staff on our teaching and learning priorities.

Heads of Department feedback common themes to SLT via line management meetings to inform academy CPD.

Book scrutiny. Student exercise books are vital evidence to inform the dialogue between teachers/leadership about the impact of teaching, which in turn informs the professional development required to improve our practices in the classroom and development of our curriculum.

Who	Purpose	How often
Head of Department	Evidence a developmental conversation with the teacher about the learning in their classrooms.	As part of their developmental cycles
Senior leader book scrutiny	Monitor the consistency across the school in the application of the Teaching and Learning policy Identify knowledge and skill gaps to inform whole school training	5 / academic year

Learning walks

As a learning community, we are committed to supporting each other and working collaboratively to strengthen our culture and improving our practices in the classroom. Learning walks are an essential part of this collaborative approach. We have an open door policy and invite colleagues into our classrooms. SLT and ML also support teachers in their classrooms through live coaching and feedback.

Head of Department	Purpose	How often
Head of Department	To support a positive learning culture across the department RTC teachers on the HLT target and culture and ethos To monitor consistency across their department Identify knowledge and skill gaps to inform co-planning and departmental training	Weekly/fortnightly as part of their developmental cycles
Senior Leadership	RTC teachers on culture and ethos and teachers' HLT To support a positive learning culture across the department Monitor the consistency across the school in the application of the Teaching and Learning policy Identify knowledge and skill gaps to inform co-planning and departmental training	Every week

Appendix 1	Co-planning Model 2019-2020
Before the co-planning session the HoD communicates to department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The medium term to be adapted • The aspect to adapt e.g. the modelling, models of excellence, questioning, scaffolding • All staff member bring electronic device, seating plans and SoL already opened in advance
At the start of co-planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every co-planning starts with Head of Department testing teachers on the intent of the curriculum – moving the discussion to the schemes of learning currently being taught – what is the SOL intent? How does the SOL fit into the 7 year plan? What knowledge/skills are build upon? • How is learning assessed in the SOL?
During co-planning Modelling of Lesson Adaption (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In large departments there is the potential to split into KS3 and KS4 for targeted modelling of key learning • Activity or task is modelled by the HOD and /or TLR holder to show how the task/planning can be completed effectively • SOL is used to identify where this fits into the key learning for the unit
Paired Planning (40 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pairs are tasked to make adaptations to the identified lesson, taking into consideration the modelling that has taken place • HoD circulating the room to monitor completion of adaptations or working with a small group or pair • TLR holders working with staff identified as having the most need • Trainee staff are paired with more experienced members of staff
Follow Up (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HoD checks appropriate amendments have been added to shared area by staff • SoL are adapted in the moment to reflect conscious thought and development by members of staff
Follow Up After Session (within 24 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions are emailed to teachers with clear dates for completion of tasks • Calendar reminders of important departmental dates are shared e.g. book look dates
Follow Up After session (2 -5 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning walk conducted by the Head of Department/Head of Lower School / TLR holder to look at the influence of classroom practice and to feed into planning of next co-planning session

Aspect	Excellent impact	Effective impact	Some impact	No impact
School routines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entry and exit, countdown, 3 part instruction 	School routines are used consistently and quickly. Students start learning on entry to classroom All planners, books and the correct equipment are out; pupil responds to non-verbal signals quickly; transitions are quick and clear; uniform is excellent	School routines are used. The teacher has to reset the class more than once to achieve focused work. All planners are out and students' uniform is good.	School routines are used – 100% is not established when instructions are given Uniform not consistently good; students don't all have the correct equipment	School routines are not used or impact is minimal. Students do not have the correct equipment out.
Classroom expectations – the learning environment Tidy – resources are on shelves and/ in cupboards. Furniture is orderly. Desk is clear. No paper on the floor Display include student work – opportunities to celebrate success, key words, model answers exemplify success Exercise books – well presented and organised; highest leverage work is highlighted.	Classroom is well organised. Display celebrates students' successes, is used in an interactive way to enhance student learning and exemplifies excellent work. The learning environment is safe and secure and the students are comfortable to take risks. Students books demonstrate their value as a resource to support future learning	Classroom is an effective learning space. Atmosphere is controlled by teacher. Students feel safe. Display reflects subject themes and students work is celebrated and model work is displayed.	Classroom doesn't meet expectations; it is poorly organised and untidy. Displays don't reflect current learning. Little student work on display and/or model work There is inconsistency in the quality of the work and presentation in exercise books.	Classroom is untidy and not welcoming and does not support learning. Display is minimal and outdated Students take little care with their presentation in their books and work is unfinished
Climate for learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 step instructions Positive narration Reward, repair and consequence Non-verbal 	Disruption to learning is highly unusual. Teacher using non-verbal cues with skill so learning never loses momentum. Teacher's daily practice is a model for other teachers. Teacher uses positive narration and the rewards policy to create a positive climate or learning.	Teacher has high expectations and applies the school policy, so students feel safe and secure. Consistently applies a range of techniques to tackle low level disruption. Teacher rewards and sanctions students consistently.	Teacher reacts to and manages challenging behaviour in-line with school policy, though it might be inconsistently applied. Teacher can struggle in the moment when faced with challenging behaviour.	Teacher attempts to deploy strategies to manage behaviour. Students are sanctioned and rewarded inconsistently.
Ratio – How hard are pupils thinking? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent work in books Activities that make student thinking visible 	Students are thinking hard about challenging work; students are writing, reading, speaking, and active, problem solving for most of the time; students are engaged in reading a range of scholarly and complex texts.	Lessons consistently put significant cognitive load on to students and make them think and work hard; students are writing, reading, speaking and problem solving for at least 50% of the time; students are engaged in reading a range of subject appropriate texts	Lessons engage students in appropriate cognitive work aligned to an objective; students are not thinking sufficiently hard; students are writing, reading for less than 50% of the time; subject literacy is valued and students are supported to read texts.	Lessons do not effectively engage students in challenging cognitive work; students are not thinking hard enough. Students learning is inconsistent.

Ark Alexandra Teaching Essentials 2020-21

Aspect	Excellent impact	Effective impact	Some impact	No impact
<p>Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green pen re-do • Live marking • Presentation is neat and orderly <p>Highest leverage knowledge in books is highlighted</p>	<p>Teacher feedback has a significant impact on student progress and allows them to take ownership of their own work. Teacher live marks in the classroom against an exemplar. Assessments are marked accurately and students are given action steps/questions that enable the student to improve the specific piece of work and similar kind of work in the future</p>	<p>Teacher effectively implements the marking and feedback policy and evidence of this is clear in student books. It is clear pupils are acting on feedback. Teacher live marks. Assessments are marked mostly accurate and actions steps enable them to improve the specific piece of work.</p>	<p>Teacher implements the marking and feedback policy inconsistently. Students act on feedback but their answers lack depth. Assessments are marked accurately with support.</p>	<p>The teacher is not effectively implementing the marking & feedback policy. There is little feedback from teachers and evidence of students improving their work, action steps are inconsistent or they focus too heavily on the specifics of task to be useful.</p>
<p>I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposition • Instructions are specific, checked with the students • Modelling <p>We</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check for understanding: targeted questions • mini whiteboards • Cold call • No opt out • Turn and Talk • Think pair share <p>You</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Models of excellence <input type="checkbox"/> Check for understanding <input type="checkbox"/> live marking <input type="checkbox"/> Academic narration <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptation in the moment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Deliberate practice 	<p>Teacher talk is precise, purposeful to maximise learning time; models and demonstrations of critical processes and concepts focus on thinking and understanding; exposition reflects expert subject knowledge.</p> <p>Questioning makes students think hard and engage in challenging dialogue; planned and targeted questioning is a highly effective check for understanding; Student talk is purposeful and students communicate as subject experts.</p> <p>Independent work is set up well for success. Teacher's circulation is planned from the assessment task, adapted for different tasks and stages of the lesson and enables confident checking for understanding through live marking against an exemplar – allowing for in the moment adaptation to the lesson.</p>	<p>Teacher talk is structured and appropriate for the class. Models and demonstrations are accurate and enable students to be more successful when working independently; expositions are based on good subject knowledge.</p> <p>Teacher's use of scripted & targeted questioning effectively checks for understanding and stretches students' thinking; student talk is structured to enable students to actively engage in their learning. Teacher's circulation is effective and ensures participation ratio in independent practice is high. Effective checks for understanding through monitoring enables the teacher to give personal support to some students and to address misconceptions.</p>	<p>Teacher talk is not consistently effective – sometimes too long or not structured. Models are attempted but focus on procedures more than thinking; expositions are accurate but lack the subject knowledge to push students thinking.</p> <p>Teacher's questions are insufficiently well planned to check the right key learning and to be targeted to the right students. Students are given a few opportunities to turn and talk.</p> <p>Teacher's circulation is limited to pupils with poor behaviour or is driven by pupil's who ask for help and clarification. As a result, not all pupils work hard.</p>	<p>Teacher talk has no impact as a result of poor planning and delivery; models are not used.</p> <p>Teacher doesn't question using cold call, or questions are too low leverage or poorly planned/phrased/timed to enable pupil progress. Opportunities for structured student talk are rare.</p> <p>Teacher does not circulate the room or circulates without responding to the students work.</p>

Appendix 3

Symbols for making for Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

P and circling the error = Punctuation error

SP in the margin = Spelling mistake

// in the text = New Paragraph

Inverted V in the text = missing word

Appendix 4 – Covid 19 amendments

Considerations for learning in a socially distanced classroom:

In a socially distanced classroom or one where the teacher remains at the front of the class, in fact in any classroom, one of the most powerful ways in which we can encourage thinking, assess learning and shape feedback for improvement is to question our students and listen to their responses. This requires us to equip our students with the skills of:

- talking with fluency and accuracy
- constructing logical arguments
- participating in discursive conversation
- listening with attention
- asking relevant and probing questions

We do this through:

- Well planned and well-structured questioning.
- Appropriate think time
- Modelling fluent and accurate spoken answers
- Providing and defining key vocabulary and sentence stems
- Framing discussions (establishing ground rules, giving roles, orchestrating contributions and responses)
- Selecting relevant and interesting material to engage students
- Responding to student thinking in our questioning, allowing their contributions to shape the direction of the discussion and admitting tangents

Links to other policies:

Remote Learning Policy

Reading Policy

