Teaching and Learning Policy

Approved by Governors: Autumn 2019
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Person Responsible: Headteacher
Introduction and Rationale
As a school, SCC is committed to ensuring high quality teaching and learning and the ongoing development of this to ensure that all of our students are able to achieve their full potential. Our approach is intended to ensure the following aims are realised:

- Students achieve their full academic potential as seen in the qualifications that they achieve during the course of their time at SCC.
- Students develop the skills that they need to be successful learners at SCC and then beyond, becoming genuine lifelong learners with the qualities that they need to achieve.
- Teachers are also supported to be lifelong learners in ensuring a continuing focus on their own professional development in terms of their practice as a teacher.

We ensure that teaching and learning is always central to the way in which we operate as a school and this is seen in a wide variety of ways including the clear focus on the development of teacher practice in the school’s own CPD programme and the profile of teaching and learning across the school.

Since 2010, we have pursued teaching and learning developments with a view to becoming an accredited ‘Thinking School’ through The University of Exeter’s Cognitive Education Faculty. In summer 2015, the success of the school’s approach was seen in the award of ‘Advanced Thinking School’ status. Our ‘Thinking School’ approach is consistent with the aims above and helps to ensure that our teachers are conscious and reflective classroom practitioners. Since this time, we have continued to develop our own practice, refining and developing what it means to be a genuine ‘thinking school’ as we have done so.

Basic Lesson Expectations
In order to ensure the highest possible standard of lessons, SCC have high standards in terms of the basic lesson expectations that are to be met at all times and these are:

Before the lesson:
- All lessons are planned to meet the specific needs of the class and individual students within it.
- A seating plan will be in place and this should be stored in the ‘Teacher Folder’ along with any relevant data sheets for the class that it has been necessary to print (where possible, printing student data should be avoided).
- All materials for the lesson will be prepared in advance and be available to use.
- The classroom will be a well-ordered environment that is conducive to learning.

During the lesson:
- The teacher will greet students as they arrive at the lesson whenever possible.
- There will be precise learning objectives for the lesson and these will be communicated clearly when appropriate.
- Learning will begin promptly with no dead time.
- Where appropriate, Learning Box tools and (in KS4) tablet devices will be used to ensure maximum student progress and the Learning Box ethos will be evident in all lessons.
- The topic studied will be made to be interesting, relevant and exciting for students.
- Work will be challenging for all students and maintain their engagement.
- An appropriate pace will be maintained that ensures time is well used throughout.
- High standards of effort, accuracy and presentation will be insisted upon throughout.
• Ongoing reviews of learning will be incorporated into lesson learning sequences at the appropriate stages.
• Students will be praised for their efforts and achievement in a wide variety of ways, including through the use of whole school systems. (Vision / BFL)
• Prompt action will be taken to address poor behaviour in a wide variety of ways, including through the use of whole school systems. (Vision / BFL)
• At the end of the lesson, students will be supervised as they are dismissed in an orderly manner.
• The teacher will ensure that the classroom is left as a well-ordered environment that will support student progress in the next lesson.

After the lesson:
• Any issues arising from the lesson will be dealt with promptly and appropriately before the next lesson, ensuring potential barriers to learning are addressed.
• Work that is to be marked and returned to students will be marked in a timely manner.

Lesson Planning
Our first ‘Basic Lesson Expectation’ is that, “All lessons are planned to meet the specific needs of the class and individual students within it.” Effective lesson planning can support us to ensure that all students achieve success and the key principles of our school approach to lesson planning are:
• A clear plan should be in place for lessons that will provide details of the following:
  o The learning objectives for the lesson – these should be communicated using the standard whole school learning objective slide and be informed by the structure of the Three Storey Intellect.
  o An indication of what ‘outstanding’ progress will ‘look like’ in the lesson.
  o A clear planned learning sequence that clearly supports students to make rapid progress.
  o Evidence of the teacher planning to meet the specific needs of students in each lesson.

Whilst there are instances where the whole school lesson plan format should be used (further details are below), teachers can provide the information above in any appropriate written format or through the quality of the lesson presentation that is in place for the delivery of the lesson.
• Teaching staff must use the school lesson planning format on the following occasions:
  o During the course of any school inspection process (only when the lesson plan will support the person observing to better judge the progress made by students in the lesson)
  o For any planned lesson observations.
  o For any known absences where work is being left for the students to complete – however, where the instructions can be communicated in a simpler format that is likely to be more effective for the person covering the lesson, an alternative can be used.
  o Where the Subject Leader has identified concerns about the quality of planning currently in place and therefore needs to monitor this.
  o For all NQTs when they join the school – the proportion of lessons that need to be planned in this way will be determined by the member of SLT with responsibility
for NQT induction in consultation with the Subject Leader and this arrangement is reviewed during the course of the NQT year as appropriate.

Marking of Student Work
Teachers need to ensure that students are provided with regular, high quality feedback that supports each individual to make rapid progress. This feedback can be provided in many ways and high quality teacher feedback is one of these. It must be stressed that high quality teacher feedback will at times involve written teacher comments, but that this will not always be the case. The key factor in determining the quality of teacher feedback is whether or not it has a positive impact on student progress.

All teaching staff must ensure that they follow the school’s Teacher Marking Policy (that is part of the Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy) to ensure that this high quality feedback is provided and also the Subject AFL Policy if there is any additional subject specific guidance in place.

Central tenets to the school’s approach to the written marking of student work are:
• Teacher feedback will be provided in a timely manner and with an appropriate degree of regularity, relating to the nature of the subject and the amount of curriculum time that is allocated.
• Teacher feedback will enable students to identify the areas of strength of their work and provide precise guidance about how the work can be improved.
• Teachers will insist on high standards both in terms of the quality of student written work and the way in which it is presented. Where students do not meet these standards, this will be addressed in line with the school’s Teacher Marking Policy.
• Teacher feedback will have a significant positive impact on student progress and teachers will therefore ensure that there is meaningful student engagement with all written feedback.

The Learning Box – Thinking School Ethos
Our teaching and learning policy is informed by the Learning Box ethos and in practice, the Learning Box means:
For teachers: Teachers being supported to think consciously and reflectively about their practice and understanding a range of thinking tools that can be used to support maximum student progress where appropriate.
For students: Students developing the ability to think for themselves, including the development of an understanding of a range of thinking tools that they can use to support their own progress.
The key learning tools that are employed as part of our Learning Box are:
• The Three Storey Intellect.
• Edward De Bono’s six Thinking Hats.
• David Hyerle’s eight Thinking Maps.
• The Question Matrix.
• Art Costa’s Habits of Mind.
• Ten key Learning Together (group-work) strategies.

It is an expectation that all teachers ensure their familiarity and expertise in using these approaches and are therefore able to do so whenever it is appropriate, ensuring maximum student progress is made. Extensive documentation relating to the Learning Box approach can be found within the school’s Learning Platform. As well as this, all new teaching staff undertake an extended teaching and learning induction programme after joining SCC and this ensures their expertise in employing each of the tools listed above.
In recent years, the school has introduced the concept of ‘Inevitable Progress’ as a structure to be used by SCC teachers to consider the way in which learning sequences over a whole series of lessons are constructed. This concept is consistent with our ethos as an Advanced Thinking School and our expectation is that Subject Leaders will lead their teams in utilising this approach. Once again, extensive further information is available via the Learning Platform.

**Lesson Observations and Work Scrutinies**
At SCC, lesson observations and work scrutinies have the primary purpose of supporting teaching staff with the ongoing development of their teaching practice and achieve this because:

- These processes help us to ensure that there is a clear understanding of standards of teaching and learning at a whole school, subject and individual teacher level.
- Effective practice can be identified and then shared / built upon across the school.
- Practice that requires further development can be identified and measures then be put into place to enable this to happen.

Lesson observations take place as follows:

- The majority of staff will receive three lesson observations each academic year and these will be carried out by an appropriate member of staff who has been trained in the school’s approach to conducting lesson observations. Lessons to be observed will be agreed in advance and should be representative of the observed teacher’s teaching commitment during the academic year. A school lesson plan should be completed and passed on to the observing teacher at the start of the observed lesson, alongside the SISRA data sheet for the class. Where staff have a track record of ‘outstanding’ lesson observation judgements over an extended period of time, two observations will be required across the academic year.
- Lesson observations will each last for a period of approximately 30 minutes and this period of time will be used by the observing teacher to gather evidence of the progress that the class have made with the observed teacher over time. Where necessary, further scrutiny of student work or conversations with students will take place after the lesson.
- A full debrief meeting will take place after the observed lesson between the teacher observed and the observing teacher and written feedback will be provided at this time. As well as a discussion of the lesson judgement made, feedback relating to the strengths of the teacher’s practice and ideas for development will also be considered.

*NQTs will receive 6 formal observations across the academic year (one each half-term) and these will last for a period of 60 minutes and their primary focus will be to assess the progress of the NQT in meeting the teaching standards and to support them in the further development of their practice.*

Work scrutinies take place as follows:

- Staff will receive three work scrutinies each academic year and these will be carried out by an appropriate member of staff who has been trained in the school’s approach to conducting work scrutinies. *Where staff demonstrate all school expectations relating to AFL practice are being met, further scrutinies in the academic year will be ‘light touch’ and their purpose will be to confirm the continuation of the already established practice.*
- A meeting will take place after the first work scrutiny of the academic year, between the teacher whose books / folders have been viewed and the teacher conducting the scrutiny and written feedback will be provided at this time. As well as a discussion of the work scrutiny judgement made, feedback relating to the strengths of the teacher’s practice and ideas for
development will also be considered. Where further scrutinies take place, this process will be repeated on each occasion.

**Ongoing Development of Teacher Practice**

All staff at SCC are supported to ensure high standards of teaching and learning through a variety of processes in school and these include:

- Whole school, subject and personal development CPD sessions that focus on the development of practice in relation to the identified teaching and learning priorities for the academic year.
- Teachers are supported to take ownership of their own development of teaching practice through systems in place that include the ‘Teaching Habits’ structure, Staff CPD records, weekly teaching tweaks, etc.
- All new staff undertake an extended Teaching and Learning induction programme.
- Our NQT development programme incorporates the Teaching and Learning induction programme and develops elements of this at greater depth across the year.
- After their NQT year, all staff follow an RQT Development Plan in their second year of teaching and this continues to focus on the development of their teaching and learning practice. Where appropriate, this RQT support will continue beyond the second year.
- Where school monitoring processes identify teaching staff who require additional support to reach our high teaching standards, a support programme that is tailored to their specific development needs is then put into place and monitored rigorously to ensure impact.