

Teaching & Learning Policy

Incorporating policies on curriculum, assessment, marking, homework and quality standards

Aims

- To emphasise that learning is the most important activity taking place in college
- To highlight aspects of the organisation which encourage good learning

Objectives

- To provide teachers and learners with specific details to assist in providing good and outstanding learning opportunities

Implementation

- In order to achieve our aims it is vital that all members of our College Community are aware of our expectations for teaching and learning, and so documents are provided on specific teaching and learning issues, displayed in classrooms, on website and our Herald newsletter. This policy document is used by the College in its sections to make it more accessible for users. The policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

Curriculum

We provide a curriculum which:

- meets all statutory requirements;
- is both challenging and relevant;
- meets the needs of all students and helps them develop to their full potential;
- is delivered in a safe, positive learning environment; and
- prepares students to be responsible, active workers and citizens.

At Key Stage 3 (KS3)

- There are 50 x 1 hour lessons per fortnight with time allocations per subject in line with National Curriculum (NC) recommendations
- All students study French in Years 7, 8 and 9 There is the opportunity for more able linguists to study German and Spanish in Years 8 and 9

At Key Stage 4 (KS4)

All students study a Core curriculum of English, Maths, Science, PE, Citizenship, RE and Personal Development

In addition to the core subjects students are also able to choose from and follow GCSE courses in:

- *Technology (Food, Catering, Graphics, Resistant Materials, Textiles, Applied Engineering(Dual Award)***
 - *History*
 - *Applied History*
 - *Geography*
 - *Media Studies*
 - *Art, Drama, Music, PE*
 - *French, German, Spanish*
 - *Additional, Applied or Triple Science*
 - *Child Development*
 - *Health and Social Care*
 - *Information & Communication Technology (ICT) (Business and Communication Systems)*
 - *Applied Leisure and Tourism (Dual Award)***
 - *Applied Business (Dual Award)***
- ** Dual Awards count as 2 GCSEs*
- The following courses are run in partnership with Braintree College but are only available to selected students:*
- *Beauty Therapy (Level 1)*
 - *Construction (Level1)*
 - *Motor Vehicle Certificate – (Level 1)*
 - *Horticulture (Level 1)*

Quality standards

- Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject they are teaching.
- Setting: classes should be set based on Fisher Family Trust (FFT) (Column D at KS2 or KS3 whichever is the highest) targets or Achievement Co-ordinator targets. (Note: Column D is the standard for targets set in schools who achieve in the top 25th percent of all schools)
- Set changes must be authorised by Achievement Co-ordinator and Head of Curriculum Area (HOCA).
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) students should in principle always be placed in top sets and reviewed termly.
- Teachers are actively engaged with students throughout lessons.
- Teachers use a range of skills including:
 - providing engaging starters;
 - explaining logically and clearly;
 - proceeding in small steps but at a fast pace;
 - demonstrating or using interesting examples;
 - using a wide variety of types of questions;
 - providing opportunities for practising different learning styles;
 - giving feedback which encourages and corrects – Assessment For Learning (AFL);
 - setting objectives which challenge and motivate all students including Most Able in every lesson (not just register);
 - summing up delivering effective plenaries.
- Schemes of work meet statutory requirements and are consistently applied.

- Planning happens in relationship to knowledge about students' abilities, prior attainment and learning styles. The following data must be in teacher planners and used to raise standards and expectations:
 - Lesson plans: Current and previous lesson to show continuity and progress;
 - Class lists include:
 - Photo lists
 - Details of students on Essex Stages of Assessment (ESA), with reasons;
 - Able, Gifted and Talented students identified
 - MIDYIS/CATS (this is a form of intelligence test taken in yr 7)
 - Student Learning Styles;
 - Details of students' KS2/3 results for KS3 classes and end of year targets;
 - Details of students' target minimum grades/levels;
 - Calendar;
 - Timetable including the safe room timetable;
 - Relevant Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for each student
 - Details of assessment by teacher including:
 - GCSE grades;
 - NC levels;
 - interim report data;
 - full report data.
 - Details of homework set by teacher including: Title of work set, date of homework, sanction for any students who fail to complete and grades for work done
 - Homework set and marked according to college marking policy.

All teachers plan to support the development of students' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

Learning objectives are differentiated for every lesson linked to NC levels/GCSE descriptors and are shared with students.

Learning activities enable students to secure the planned learning objectives.

Learning objectives should be reviewed and summarised at the end of the lesson.

A range of AFL strategies, linked to learning objectives, should be used to inform next steps in learning.

Engagement, not control, should underpin the design of activities.

Teachers use a variety of teaching methods – individual and group work is evident – which meet the learning objectives, and different learning styles.

Activities should be time related and students be given regular time checks.

Appropriate and timely feedback is given to students, which enables them to understand what they must do to improve.

Lesson observations

One of the main methods of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) used at Alec Hunter Humanities College is to develop further the quality of teaching of all staff at the College. Middle leaders drop in and watch a section of a lesson each half term, by full observation with extensive feedback are undertaken by them each year and reports are discussed with the Headteacher and Line Manager each half term. Middle leaders know that if they observe a lesson that is unsatisfactory or is a concern for any reason, they will revisit the lesson for a full observation within two weeks.

The College has a continuous programme of paired observation where all staff take turns in observing each other, normally with a member of the Leadership group 'moderating' the experience.

The College also operates a series of subject area reviews, where all subjects are reviewed. During this process all teachers are observed.

The College has worked with training students to critically observe the learning that takes place in lessons and feedback to a group. This work has been undertaken with the support of the Leading Edge Programme.

Marking

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all students have their work marked in such a way that it is likely to improve their learning, develop their self-confidence, raise self-esteem and provide opportunities for self-reflection on progress.

Principles

Marking of students' work can have different roles and purposes at different times and can involve both written and verbal feedback. When marked work is returned to students, teachers should provide some kind of verbal feedback either individually or as a class, to support written comments. In addition, teachers should look for opportunities to provide public praise to students concerning work, to recognise either high attainment, excellent effort or an improvement in standard. This positive feedback should focus on modeling the specific features of high quality work.

Marking procedures and marking standards should be consistently applied across the college. Two types of marking are used at Alec Hunter Humanities College:

Acknowledgment marking

Acknowledgment marking is by a tick of all complete work, to recognise that it has been completed in accordance with the teacher's expectations. This type of marking should take place at least once every 6 lessons and must be dated to show when the teacher checked the classwork or homework for that period of time.

Formative marking

Formative marking should start with a positive, specific comment regarding the strengths of the work produced and then focus on improvements which could be made to move learning forward. The work may be given a current level or grade, but other forms of notation using numbers or letters should be avoided, as these can be very confusing to students if they are applied in different ways in different subject areas. Teachers may decide that it is not appropriate to give a grade to a particular piece of work, in which case a comment will suffice, provided that it clearly directs the student towards the next steps required for improvement.

This style of marking must be completed at least once per half term. Within these key pieces of work, grammar and spelling should be tackled as part of the college's cross-curricular approach to literacy, but corrections should focus particularly on subject-related vocabulary or key words.

Students should receive summative feedback on their current level or grade at least once per half term, so that they can monitor their own progress. This may be through their marked work, or through alternative forms of assessment.

Homework

Government* guidelines state the purposes of homework is:

- encouraging pupils to develop the skills, confidence and motivation needed to study; effectively on their own. This is vital given the importance for pupils in the future of lifelong learning and adaptability;
- consolidating and reinforcing skills and understanding developed at school;
- extending school learning, for example through additional reading;
- sustaining the involvement of parents and carers in the management of pupils learning and keeping them informed about the work pupils are doing;
- managing particular demands, such as GCSE course work.

Excellence in Schools DFEE *

In order to enable students to develop their independent learning and time management skills, homework is set by each teacher as appropriate. Teachers provide students with the ability to develop these skills, homework across all subjects will be set using our online learning environment (Efolio). The college will provide paper copies of all homework tasks and our ICT facilities are available daily from 8am to 5pm.

Homework is be focused on independent learning tasks which provide students with an opportunity to reinforce and extend classroom activities. Students will be given at least a week to complete each task (with the exception of those tasks which are required to enable learning to progress in the next lesson). Most tasks for the term will be available at the start of each new term. Teachers will on occasions set alternative tasks to those on Efolio to best support students' learning. Long-term projects will have check points during each term to ensure students are managing their time efficiently.

All students should spend time each week, in addition to homework, reviewing class notes using Samlearning and other suitable websites.

Key Stage 3

Students in year 7, 8 and 9 should expect to spend 7½ hours on homework in a week (1 hour on English, Maths and Science and ½ an hour of all other subjects per week).

Key Stage 4

Students in year 10 and 11 should expect to spend 10½ hours on homework in a week (2 hours on English, Maths and Science, 1 hour for each option subject and ½ an hour for RE/Citizenship per week).

Government guidelines for homework for secondary school children are:

Years 7 and 8	45 to 90 minutes per day
Year 9	1 to 2 hours per day
Years 10 and 11	1 ½ to 2 ½ hours per day

Resources

Each teacher, via their subject area, has a responsibility for their teaching and learning resources. High quality teaching and learning is supported by the best resources. Resources at Alec Hunter Humanities College include a wide selection of paper, audio, visual or web based learning support.

Teachers have a responsibility to develop the highest quality resources to support learning and are expected to evaluate lessons in light of improving resources being developed by teams in College, individually and commercially.

The care, maintenance and sharing of resources is a fundamental aspect of College work for all staff.

Quality Control

A member of the Leadership group is identified to maintain a level of expertise in ofsted lesson observation and, where possible, to maintain Ofsted Inspection Skills training and support members of the Leadership group and College on recent developments of the inspection framework.