



March 2023

*Next review date: September 2024*

## Teaching and Learning Policy

(This policy applies to all academies managed by Wootton Academy Trust [WAT])

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**Person responsible:** Mr Andrew Wright (Deputy Head – Learning and Assessment)

**Reviewed by:** Executive Principal

### Associated documentation

Equal Opportunities  
Assessment, Recording & Reporting Policy  
SEND Policy  
Homework Policy  
Curriculum Statement  
Options booklets/videos  
Literacy Strategy [under review: July 2023]  
Curriculum Complaints Procedure  
Performance Management Policy  
Capability Procedures

### Key individuals/groups

Governance Committee  
Governance Committee Chair  
Deputy Head Teaching, Learning & Assessment  
Executive Principal  
Head of School  
Head of College  
SENCo

WAT Curriculum & Standards  
Peter Haddon  
Andrew Wright [author]  
Michael Gleeson [reviewer]  
Carrie McMorn  
Tim Detheridge  
Katy Black

# 1. Key Principles of this policy

Wootton Academy Trust (WAT) is committed to the principle that every child has individual needs, has an entitlement to access the full curriculum offer and be fully included in all aspects of the life of WAT, irrespective of ability, race, gender or need and should be respected and valued as individuals. WAT will address the needs of different groups of learners and deliver high quality learning and teaching practices which will allow every learner to achieve their potential. Where required, WAT will adapt the environment and equipment, as much as is practicably possible, as well as seeking specialist advice from outside the organisation to enhance its ability to support all learners. WAT will seek to remove all barriers to learning and achievement.

## Mission Statement

To support and challenge every learner at all times to achieve their personal best leading to improved life and career opportunities.

## Trust Values

- Excellence outstanding student progress and achievement
- Enrichment education of the whole student
- Independence nurturing initiative in students' attitudes to learning
- Opportunity success regardless of background
- Equality a safe place to value and celebrate diversity
- Community students, staff, parents, governors, directors and other Local people working together
- Partnerships collaborative relationships with other organisations
- Continuity celebrating our traditions whilst embracing the new
- Celebration recognising student achievement
- Integrity in all that we do

These values are supported by the Wootton Upper School Values of:

- Aspiration
- Opportunity for all
- Belief in ourselves

## Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy and associated procedures are to ensure that:

- an inclusive approach to education is promoted at WAT
- high quality learning and teaching is promoted for all learners at WAT
- learners with special needs and/or disabilities join in the activities WAT
- WAT meets its legal obligation to provide access to the curriculum for all learners whilst recognising their individual needs

# 2. Introduction

This policy explains WAT's approach to all aspects of teaching and learning and aims to enhance the quality and consistency of the learning experience for all students. It applies to all staff and to all

children and young people, from Year 9 to Year 13. It links closely with recommended good practice and provides both structure and opportunities for innovation.

## Rationale

WAT is committed to the principle that every child and young person has individual needs, has an entitlement to access the full curriculum offer and be fully included in all aspects of the life of WAT, irrespective of ability, race, gender or need and should be respected and valued as individuals.

WAT will address the needs of different groups of learners and deliver high quality teaching and learning which will allow every learner to achieve their potential. WAT will seek to remove all barriers to learning and achievement.

## 3.Key Principles

Wootton Academy Trust is an outward looking Trust and uses evidence to inform our practice. We have a focus on the areas below, as these are identified as key areas within Teaching and Learning best practice that has significant impact on the progress of students.

- Active Learning and Thinking
- Adaptive Teaching
- Higher order questioning
- Challenge

### Active Learning and Thinking

The Trust promotes active learning and thinking; pupil/student-led tasks are prominent and “hands on” activities are encouraged to increase engagement. Children and young people are actively engaged in activities that make them think about and comment upon information presented, rather than simply listening to the teacher talking. Pupils/students will analyse, synthesise and evaluate information through working regularly with other children and young people.

### Adaptive Teaching

Teachers use prior assessment information and an understanding of each pupil’s/student’s strengths and areas for development to adapt learning activities, often through the use of an appropriate range of resources, scaffolding and strategies.

The Trust expects teachers to use seating plans and inclusion grids to identify specific strategies to support all children and young people, including SEND. Teaching assistants and other adults are expected to be involved in planning and the adaptation of learning during lessons.

### Higher order questioning

The Trust believes that a focus on higher order questions will increase children and young people’s progress in their learning by offering challenge and by presenting increasing cognitive demands.

Questioning should be used regularly during a lesson to promote higher order thinking skills. While many questions are planned, both individually and in sequences, some may be intuitive in response to a particular aspect of the lesson, or in order to address a misconception.

During a lesson “Bloom’s Taxonomy” is used to promote understanding at all levels, ranging from closed, factual questions to more divergent, stretching questions. We promote a ‘cold calling’ strategy, that ensures all children and young people are thinking hard in lessons and participate fully.

Rather than hands up, children and young people are to expect to be asked a question at any point in a lesson. Pupil/student exemptions will be identified on inclusion grids where applicable.

Children and young people are encouraged to develop their own oracy and questioning skills and to regularly ask questions of both their teachers and peer group.

## Challenge

WAT has high expectations for all children and young people and understands that appropriate challenge will support pupils/students to make good progress in their learning.

Increased challenge in a lesson involves adjusting the difficulty of a learning experience, for example, higher order thinking opportunities such as applying knowledge, analysing, creating or evaluating. Challenge in a lesson must be underpinned by support, so that children and young people are pushed outside of their comfort zones, but in a measured way. Therefore, we expect teachers to accurately assess pupils/students as they are learning so that they can adapt lessons to an appropriate level of challenge, pace and support for all children and young people.

## 4. Stepping Stones to Learning

Lessons are framed around *Stepping Stones to Learning*, shown below. There is no expectation that all phases are used in every lesson, simply that these reflect best practice in well-structured lessons.

Teachers are expected to make it clear to pupils/students which phase of the lesson they are in.



## Prior Learning

Children and young people make the most progress when teachers build upon a clear starting point of their knowledge and skills.

Robust assessment information will be used consistently to inform learning and progress judgments.

Assessment data will also be shared regularly with children and young people and used to identify areas of strength and weakness. Data will be used precisely to target the required next steps in learning. Where possible, assessment information should be shared on a one-to-one basis with children and young people.

As a result of reflective assessment practices, planning should be adjusted and tasks evaluated to ensure maximum impact.

## Guided Learning

Where it is made clear what outstanding knowledge or skills look like, learning is accelerated.

We promote the use of *WAGOLLS* (What A Good One Looks Like) and *WABOLLS* (What A Bad One Looks Like) to provide a framework for children and young people to develop their knowledge or skills.

Therefore, we also intend for pupils/students to be actively engaged in activities that make them think about and comment upon information presented, rather than simply listening to the teacher talking.

Whole-class teacher explanations should be concise and used to model key concepts, skills and processes.

Teachers are expected to use explanations that engage and support pupils/students in active learning and higher order thinking.

Teacher talk should establish interactive dialogue in which the teacher and pupils/students articulate ideas that develop knowledge and understanding, creating an appropriate level of support and challenge that enables all children and young people to make good progress.

## Independent Learning

We firmly believe that pupils/students should develop resilience and independence as these are vital life skills.

Therefore, teachers should offer opportunities for children and young people to work cooperatively and individually as part of their learning.

Cooperative learning is a form of active learning where pupils/students work together to perform specific tasks in pairs or small groups (e.g. "think / pair / share" and reciprocal teaching activities); we expect this style of learning to feature in our classrooms.

We intend that group work is fully inclusive and groupings of pupils/students should be flexible and usually defined by the teachers to suit specific tasks. Group work is encouraged across all levels of ability, supported by teacher intervention as appropriate to maintain good progress for all.

Children and young people are encouraged to actively listen to the viewpoints of others and to offer their own opinions. They are expected to challenge each other constructively and to share, evaluate and develop individual and collective ideas.

## Checking Learning

Pupils/students should be actively encouraged to reflect upon their work and to identify their personal strengths and weaknesses as this is well proven to maximise learning.

We encourage self, peer and group assessment as this presents significant learning opportunities through a learning dialogue.

Teachers should give all children and young people clear areas for improvement, the steps in order to go about this and time to reflect on these areas.

## Connecting Learning

Our curriculum is far more than simply subject-related knowledge and skills.

Where children and young people learn to link knowledge and skills across different subjects they are more effective in applying knowledge and skills to unusual and new situations. This makes them better employees in the future and supports them to make better progress in their learning.

During the Connecting Learning phase in a lesson, cross-curricular themes should be highlighted and literacy and numeracy skills should be explicitly identified, practised and developed. This phase is also typically where opportunities for careers education are explored.

## 5. Responsibilities

### The MAT Board's Curriculum and Standards Committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring that this policy is in place, monitored continually and reviewed bi-annually
- Ensuring that any complaint arising from the operation of this policy is dealt with in accordance with the Wootton Academy Trust Complaints Policy.
- Encouraging, supporting and acclaiming good practice.

### Local Governing Boards are responsible for:

- Receiving reports on the quality of teaching and learning;
- Overseeing operation of quality assurance strategies operated by senior leaders
- Receiving reports from the Head of School/Head of College, other senior leaders and middle leaders on the implementation of this policy.

### The Head of School and Head of College are responsible for:

- Responsible for ensuring the Trust's Teaching and Learning Policy is implemented in their setting, ensuring that there all children and young people have equal access to teaching and learning opportunities and all pupils/students make good progress
- Ensuring that the literacy strategy is implemented to the benefit of all learners.
- Reporting to Local Governing Boards on a termly basis on the quality of teaching and learning
- Ensuring that support and challenge is available to all teachers as necessary

### The Deputy Head with responsibility for Teaching and Learning is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy on a daily basis.
- Monitoring the work of the Assistant Headteachers with responsibility for evaluating the quality and consistency of teaching and learning throughout the school/college via Quality Assurance (QA), SLT Link meetings with middle leaders, learning walks, work sampling, lesson observations, data analysis, Year Leaders, CPD, SEND, student leadership, Pupil Premium and disadvantaged students.
- Oversee the development and review of a Trust wide literacy strategy
- Ensuring staff, children and young people and parents/carers are aware of their responsibilities within this policy.
- Monitoring the implementation of the Teaching and Learning Policy and reporting to the MAT Board's Curriculum and Standards Committee, regularly on it.

- Encouraging, supporting and acclaiming good practice;
- Celebrate learning.

## The Assistant Heads (Teaching & Learning) are responsible for:

- Ensuring staff, children and young people and parents/carers are aware of their responsibilities within this policy;
- Providing opportunities for staff, children and young people and parents/carers to comment on the policy on an ongoing basis and during formal reviews of the policy;
- Providing coaching, whole-staff training and bespoke CPD for all WAT staff
- Ensuring that staff are aware of initiatives and recommended good practice in terms of teaching and learning.
- Providing opportunities for colleagues to share and celebrate good practice.
- Communicating with new staff and Early Career Teachers to highlight teaching and learning policy and practice.
- Reviewing learning walks, work samples, lesson observations, appraisals, QA, and data to inform the school improvement plan, including relevant CPD, homework, pupil profiles.

## Lead Professionals are responsible for:

- Working with Subject leaders to raise standards of teaching and learning planning high quality lessons and leading the delivery of consistently good and outstanding teaching and learning opportunities
- leading, inspiring and motivating colleagues in Science and in the Trust developing their teaching and learning
- identifying and addressing areas for improvement in teaching and learning

## Subject Middle Leaders are responsible for:

- Modelling excellence in *Stepping Stones to Learning* at a subject level
- Monitoring and supporting the implementation of this policy by teachers working in the department and informing their line manager accordingly.
- Regularly discussing items relating to teaching and learning at departmental meetings.
- Highlighting and disseminating effective teaching and learning practice both within and across departments.
- Conducting Learning walks, work samples and lesson visits and appraisal reviews in line with the Appraisal Policy.
- Maintaining an up to date Head of Subject file.
- Implementing the Trust Improvement Plan at a subject/local area level.
- Evaluating the quality and appropriateness of homework set in their department and making changes accordingly.
- Evaluating the progress of cohorts of children and young people taking the subject, and sub groups, implementing refinements to improve further learning and teaching.
- Ensuring that at subject level expectations are clear to all children, young people, parents/carers and to departmental staff as to what constitutes good or better learning, including presentation.

## Year Leaders are responsible for:

- Evaluating the progress of cohorts of children and young people in the year group across all subjects reviewing progress of all sub groups and supporting individuals to overcome barriers to learning where identified.
- Sharing barriers to learning with form tutors, middle leaders and subject teachers to enable strategies to be put in place.
- Arranging meetings with parents/carers of children and young people where barriers to learning are identified so agree strategies to address them.
- The academic care of students, that is, knowing that students (both individually and across the cohort) are meeting or exceeding progress data.
- Monitoring data to check the progress of individuals and the year cohort as a whole.
- Monitoring the quality of curricular targets through individual meetings, and in annual reports home to parents.
- Students to have the opportunity to celebrate learning. Students should leave our classrooms with a feeling of achievement and progress.
- Monitoring the work of tutors with regard to PSHCE, CEIAG, SMSC, British Values, Equality and Diversity.

## Subject teachers are responsible for:

- Ensuring lessons are planned and structured effectively - framed around *Stepping Stones to Learning* - in order to accommodate the needs of all pupils/students.
- Developing pupil/student potential by applying *Assessment for Learning* principles and setting realistic and challenging targets to move children and young people on to the next level of learning.
- Ensuring that feedback is provided to children and young people that enables them to make good progress in line with the Assessment Policy.
- Participating in regular CPD activities organized by middle and senior leaders to enable them to keep updated regarding latest developments in terms of effective pedagogy and practice.
- Implementing the Trust Improvement Plan in their lessons and with their Tutees.
- Ensuring children and young people have the opportunity in lessons to celebrate their learning.