



The Woodlands

Teaching and Learning Policy

Ratified by S Green

Date: Sept 2022

on behalf of the Management Committee

Signed  Date: Sept 2022

on behalf of The Woodlands

To be reviewed: Sept 2023

This policy gives guidance to staff on Teaching and Learning and should be read alongside the Assessment, Reporting and Recording Policy; Learning Environment and Display Policy; SMSC Policy; Marking and Feedback Policy and Staff Handbook.

Introduction:

The Woodlands, helps young people aged 4 – 16 overcome their difficulties and achieve their potential by building their confidence and self-esteem. The schools provide an exciting and relevant individualised curriculum with a strong emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy skills, as well as helping young people understand their emotions, build confidence and self – esteem and improve their behaviour. Staff are highly skilled, dedicated and determined to help the young people who attend the school.

Staff aim to promote a culture that effectively breaks down the barriers to learning by creating a safe and stimulating learning environment based on individual need. All staff believe that the enhancement of self - esteem and confidence for all learners, with a strong focus on literacy and numeracy skills, are the key to success. All staff will promote the re-engagement of learners and help them to achieve their learning potential. This is underpinned by staff working in partnership with parents/ carers and other stakeholders to achieve the very best for learners.

Our approach to promoting high quality teaching and effective learning at The Woodlands is an integral part of our whole school curriculum and is underpinned by the aims of the school. It is based on clear values, high expectations and up to date research of effective teaching and learning strategies. We also recognise that it is the responsibility of the school to provide high quality teaching and learning opportunities which will significantly influence the behaviour of our learners. We accept and recognise that classroom management, teacher behaviour and organisation can have a positive impact on teaching and learning. We will always seek to encourage and support the achievements of our learners through highly effective teaching and a positive learning climate.

Rationale:

The Woodlands is committed to delivering high quality teaching & learning, for all learners, on all sites. All learners have the right to access a broad, balanced curriculum that also recognises their need for a more individualised and personalised curriculum. To ensure all learners have access to this personalised curriculum, they should all experience a variety of teaching & learning that engages, encourages and enables them to achieve good or outstanding outcomes during their time at the school. The Woodlands intends to allow all learners to fulfil these outcomes through successful and effective teaching and learning. The staff at the Woodlands have a collective and individual responsibility to strive to deliver lessons and learning experiences of the highest quality within the confines of a broad, and balanced curriculum. To continue to maintain our very high standards, The Woodlands identifies the need for continued professional development, professional mentoring and strong systems of support and analysis to empower staff to achieve these ambitions.

Ethos of The Woodlands:

The ethos and atmosphere underpin the agreed aims of the school. Teachers provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which will develop the skills, concepts and knowledge necessary for future learning. All staff, including support staff, work to remove barriers to learning and support the pastoral needs of learners. In the course of their work, staff will contribute to the development of this ethos through:

- Providing a calm, quiet and effective working environment, in which each learner can achieve his or her maximum potential;
- Providing a welcoming environment, in which courtesy, kindness and respect are fostered;
- Providing positive role models;
- Providing a fair and disciplined environment, in line with the Whole School Behaviour Policy;
- Maintaining purposeful and informative planning, record-keeping and assessment documents;
- Staff effectively managing professional time;
- Developing links with the wider community
- Valuing and celebrating learners' and staffs' success and achievements
- Reviewing personal and professional development.
- Providing appropriate CPD and training and support from colleagues in order to ensure a high level of professional expertise
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Aims and objectives:

The Woodlands works with young people, parents/carers, mainstream schools and other partners to deliver the following aims:

We undertake to:

- Develop learners' educational and personal potential in a safe, stimulating and supportive learning environment;
- Make good progress in learners' learning;
- Prepare learners for successful reintegration into school, further education or employment;
- Develop learners' personal integrity, and self esteem
- Identify and change aspects of behaviour that are contributory to difficulties experienced in school;
- Ensure equal opportunities in relation to gender, race, class, special needs and beliefs;
- Provide a safe and happy work place.

Within this school context, the aims of teaching and learning are:

- to ensure high quality teaching and learning experiences for students of all abilities and aptitudes;
- to provide a framework for teaching and learning within which there is flexibility and scope for creativity;
- to provide coherence of approach and consistency of expectation;
- to make explicit the entitlement of all learners;
- to raise attainment by increasing levels of student engagement, motivation, participation and independence;
- to promote reflection on, and sharing of, good and outstanding practice;
- to promote an understanding of how learning takes place;

- to make explicit a baseline for monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning that takes place;
- to provide practical guidance and clear procedures;
- to provide a focus for development;
- to inform teachers, learners, parents/carers, Management Committee and the wider community about the aims and processes of teaching and learning;
- to identify specific areas of responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy.

Definition of teaching:

Effective teaching is defined as that which leads to improved student progress and high achievement in valued outcomes. We define effective teaching as that which leads to improved learner achievement using outcomes that matter to their future success. Defining effective teaching is not easy. Research keeps coming back to this critical point: **student progress is the yardstick by which teacher quality should be assessed**. Ultimately, for a judgement about whether teaching is effective, to be seen as trustworthy, it must be checked against the progress being made by students (Coe et al, 2014).

The six components of great teaching:

Below are the six common components suggested by research (Coe et al,2014) that teachers should consider when assessing teaching quality. Good quality teaching will likely involve a combination of these attributes manifested at different times; the very best teachers are those that demonstrate all of these features.

1. (Pedagogical) content knowledge (Strong evidence of impact on student outcomes) The most effective teachers have deep knowledge of the subjects they teach, and when teachers' knowledge falls below a certain level it is a significant impediment to students' learning. As well as a strong understanding of the material being taught, teachers must also understand the ways students think about the content, be able to evaluate the thinking behind students' own methods, and identify students' common misconceptions.
2. Quality of instruction (Strong evidence of impact on student outcomes) Includes elements such as effective questioning and use of assessment by teachers. Specific practices, like reviewing previous learning, providing model responses for students, giving adequate time for practice to embed skills securely and progressively introducing new learning (scaffolding) are also elements of high quality instruction.
3. Classroom climate (Moderate evidence of impact on student outcomes) Covers quality of interactions between teachers and students, and teacher expectations: the need to create a classroom that is constantly demanding more, but still recognising students' self-worth. It also involves attributing student success to effort rather than ability and valuing resilience to failure (grit).
4. Classroom management (Moderate evidence of impact on student outcomes) A teacher's abilities to make efficient use of lesson time, to coordinate classroom resources and space, and to manage students' behaviour with clear rules that are consistently enforced, are all relevant to maximising the learning that can take place. These environmental factors are necessary for good learning rather than its direct components.
5. Teacher beliefs (Some evidence of impact on student outcomes) Why teachers adopt particular practices, the purposes they aim to achieve, their theories about what learning is and how it happens and their conceptual models of the nature and role of teaching in the learning process all seem to be important.

6. Professional behaviours (Some evidence of impact on student outcomes)
Behaviours exhibited by teachers such as reflecting on and developing professional practice, participation in professional development, supporting colleagues, and liaising and communicating with parents.

Effective teaching:

Highly effective teaching is seen when all six of the above components are evident and:

- A clear plan/outline for the lesson with its objectives is communicated to learners at the start of the lesson. It puts the learner at the centre of the process and allows for personalisation. It takes account of the needs of all sub-groups. Necessary and stimulating resources are ready for the class. Lesson objectives are clear and specific and, when appropriate, linked to the National Curriculum. Students' learning is reviewed with them at the end of the lesson;
- Expectations of learners are high. Learners are encouraged to have high standards of effort, accuracy and presentation. Lessons are tailored appropriately to challenge all learners. Strategies are varied to motivate different students. Learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning;
- Lessons are well planned building on and extending pupils' prior achievements and with sufficient teacher subject knowledge;
- Activities relate to and extend pupils' experiences and knowledge and understanding of the world;
- Expectations of lesson outcomes are ambitious with structured activities which enables high achievement;
- Learners are given opportunities to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding, (including literacy, numeracy and IT basic skills), in a variety of relevant contexts;
- The learning needs of all pupils are met, including those identified in Statements of Special Needs, and plans are adapted to respond fully to needs as they arise and reengage any disaffected students;
- Opportunities are provided to practice and improve skills whilst applying knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts, including reinforcement by homework activities if appropriate;
- Resources, including the use of ICT, are appropriate for the age and level of learners, well prepared and support learning outcomes;
- Learners are encouraged to contribute, are listened to and receive appropriate responses;
- There are opportunities to work individually and collaboratively with "risk taking" encouraged;
- Effective questioning is used to encourage discussion, challenge ideas and develop independent thinking;
- A broad range of Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies are used effectively throughout the lesson;
- Expectations for effort, behaviour and presentation are clear with praise for success and prompt action to address shortcomings;
- Support staff are an integral part of the teaching team providing support for learning,(including 1-1 mentoring), building good relationships and reinforcing good learning behaviours;
- There is an appropriate pace and the learning focus is maintained throughout

the session;

- Learners' successes are celebrated at every opportunity. Strategies include verbal and written praise by all involved in The Woodlands, work displays, performance and sharing events, reward systems and sharing good news throughout the school.
- Parental/carer involvement in celebrating success is fostered through telephone calls, meeting and sometimes letters/postcards home.

Classroom Management and Organisation:

Management

The learning environment will be managed in such a way as to facilitate different styles of learning, with particular regard to Special Educational Needs:

- Whole class teaching
- Group work, organised according to appropriate criteria (i.e. ability, mixed ability, interest etc.)
- One to one teaching
- Collaborative learning in pairs or groups
- Independent learning

All areas of the learning environment will be planned for, including, where appropriate, the outside areas, the vocational curriculum and work experience in order to ensure opportunities for a range of activities.

Behaviour Management

As outlined in the Whole School Behaviour Policy. In addition, each class will:

- Follow the Whole School Behaviour Policy;
- Use the rewards scheme in order to reinforce positive behaviour;
- Follow through the consequences for poor behaviour.

Staff will:

- Model appropriate behaviour;
- Use data to support behavioural improvement (Class Charts, PHPs)

Organisation

As outlined in the Learning Environment and Display Policy. The classroom will be organised to facilitate learning and the development of independence. This may require flexibility in the organisation of furniture. Key points are:

- Writing resources will be available for use at all times and will be centrally accessible;
- Classroom displays will be used to celebrate achievement;
- Classrooms will be neat and tidy.

Definition of learning:

Learning is the process by which an individual makes sense of new experience. Learning takes place when the individual constructs their own knowledge and understanding of a subject, skill or values. Learning often takes place through personal interaction; therefore we believe that it is important to promote activities that allow the learner to work with others to solve problems, to explore concepts and to develop language as a means of learning and a tool for thinking. When discussing learning within The Woodlands we must take into account the further challenges created by our learners' disrupted educational history, medical issues, EBSD needs, home and social circumstances and set appropriate learning targets to meet their needs.

Effective learning:

Highly effective learning is seen when:

- Relationships are good;
- Learning environments and resources are stimulating;
- Pupils learn in relevant contexts;
- Learners have some choice in their learning;
- There is consistent and high quality feedback;
- Learners understand how they can improve;
- Learners have time to complete and reflect on their work;
- Learners have appropriate levels of challenge and support;
- Learners good work is recognised and celebrated;
- Learners are encouraged to work both independently and co-operatively
- The environment is secure, stable and stimulating;
- The classroom and school environment has high quality displays that showcase learners work and provide prompts and guidance to support them in their learning;
- Learners' self-esteem is high;
- Learners understand the purpose of the learning and see relevance to their own experience;
- Learners understand the ways in which learning takes place;
- The learning builds on prior knowledge and understanding;
- Success criteria are explicit and models are provided;
- The learning is active and collaborative;
- Learner questioning, reflection, and discussion are encouraged;
- Independent learning and thinking is facilitated and encouraged;
- There are opportunities for creativity and utilising different learning styles;
- Learners can self-assess, know what they need to do to improve and are able to set appropriate targets;
- Learners have opportunities to transfer skills, knowledge and understanding to other contexts;
- Learners understand the wider context that learning takes place in e.g Post 16 experience etc.

Inclusion:

The Woodlands recognises its responsibility to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all its learners and in so doing acknowledges that teachers will need to modify, as necessary, the National Curriculum to provide learners with relevant and appropriately challenging work at each key stage.

Setting suitable learning challenges:

At The Woodlands we believe in setting suitable learning challenges. Many of the learners have gaps in their education due to long periods out of school. As a consequence programmes of study will need to fill these gaps but, at the same time remain suitably challenging for pupils who are often still very capable.

For less able learners, who may have additional needs, work will invariably need to be drawn from earlier key stages so that learners can show what they can achieve. In some cases this may mean learners not being able to receive all their age related programmes of study.

Of particular concern, for learners who have moved schools regularly or who have been excluded, is continuity and progression. There is a danger that learners in these circumstances find themselves repeating previous learning which, although offers some immediate success and is 'safe', provides little challenge with no evidence of progression. It is important, therefore, that programmes of study, for these learners, are monitored and reviewed regularly to provide both opportunities for success as well as suitable challenges and progression routes.

Responding to learners' diverse needs:

Learners from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups are often over represented in The Woodlands. These include children looked after by the Local Authority, on Child Protection plans, with Mental Health difficulties (for example those supported by CAMHS), as well as those with other Special Educational Needs including autism and language difficulties. Based on this understanding, school staff continually adapt and modify their teaching to ensure all learners can take part in lessons fully and effectively.

Additionally, significant numbers of learners become the responsibility of the school following their disengagement with 'mainstream' learning, often citing its lack of relevance. Through the world of work and other vocationally based experiences and also through the Outdoor Education curriculum and intervention programme, The Woodlands seeks to redress this issue for our learners.

The Woodlands believes that to effectively respond to diverse needs and backgrounds of its learners it needs to personalise, as much as possible, the target setting and assessment process. To this end, each learner has the opportunity to participate in their own planning and assessment process at regular intervals throughout the year, which includes self-assessment and the opportunity to ask questions about what they have learnt, are about to learn and its relevance to them.

Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individual and groups of learners:

For learners whose needs are not adequately supported through the teaching strategies outlined above and in our Teaching and Learning guidance, more intensive approaches may be necessary to overcome potential barriers. Some pupils, with severe and often extreme behavioural difficulties, may receive extra support from classroom assistants or even individual sessions from specialist staff in 2:1 situations or even in alternative providers.

In addition, The Woodlands understands that there are a significant number of learners where support may also be required from other agencies such as Educational Psychology, Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Speech and Language Therapy and Learning Support. In all cases specialist support from within the school or from external agencies, needs to liaise closely with the classroom teacher to take account of the impact on the pupil's learning and on the preparation of programmes of study.

Interventions

KS1 and KS2

- Read Write Inc Ks1/2 Withdrawal as required
- Therapeutic Story Writing Ks1/2 Withdrawal as required
- Story Links Ks1/2 Withdrawal as required
- Sand Tray Ks1/2 Withdrawal as required
- Lego Therapy Ks1/2 Withdrawal as required
- Forest Schools Ks1/2 Withdrawal as required
- T'ai Chi Ks1/2 Withdrawal as required
- Connecting Ks1/2 Withdrawal as required
- WIKI Ks1/2 Withdrawal as required
- Parent Group Ks1/2 Withdrawal as required
- Cool Ks1/2 Withdrawal as required
- Counselling Withdrawal as required

KS3 and KS4

- Ross Programme Ks3/4 Withdrawal as required
- Nurture Group Ks3/Ks4 8 x 40 min sessions
- Toe by Toe Ks4 Withdrawal as required
- Counselling Withdrawal as required
- Out of the box as required

Curriculum:

The Woodlands provide an exciting and relevant personalised curriculum with a strong emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy skills as well as helping young people understand their emotions, build confidence and resilience and improve their behaviour.

It is divided into three distinct categories which re-engages, motivates and supports young people

Learners follow much of the National Curriculum and there is a strong emphasis on the development of English and Maths, as well as cross-curricular themed topics which help them gain skills, knowledge and understanding about the world around them. Learners are encouraged to be active, self-reflective and to develop their thoughts and opinions on a range of topics which are relevant to them. The practice and ethos within the classrooms encourages independence, questioning and a sound understanding of the curriculum.

Learners can take full advantage of our exciting and varied outdoor education programme. Everyone has the opportunity to take part in activities which encourage the development of physically active, curious, confident learners who take pride in their achievements. These include camp cook, forest schools, football, music, art, food technology, water sports, swimming and many more.

Learners are given opportunities to develop their personal and social knowledge, skills and understanding. The curriculum at The Woodlands aims to prepare learners for life in modern Britain, equipping them to be responsible, respectful, active citizens, developing their understanding of British values and diversity. The school is enriched through the work it does developing the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all. Learners take part in various projects and activities for example, charity events such as Comic relief, Macmillan

Coffee Morning and taking part in Remembrance Commemorations. The promotion of British Values is at the heart of the schools' work.

The Woodlands provide an exciting and relevant individualised curriculum with a strong emphasis on important academic qualifications, functional skills, life skills, vocational skills and employability. The curriculum is designed to ensure that learners are equipped for the next stage in their lives.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Admission:

Admission to each school is through a number of routes. The majority of learners are admitted due to receiving a permanent exclusion or through behaviour panels that meet on a regular basis. Schools/academies provide comprehensive information regarding a learner.

Pupil Induction:

At the admission meeting additional information is gathered via discussion with Learner, Parent/Carer and from other associated parties, (Social worker, YOS, Family Coach, Inclusion support TA or Teacher, CLA representative, Educational Psychologist)

This information, together with the pupil passport is fed back to teaching staff and forms the starting point for assessing work with the learner.

Baseline Assessment:

Following induction and admission to the Woodlands, steps are taken to collate the range of baseline information received to achieve a full profile of the learners needs.

Induction sessions:

Each school offers a series of initial induction sessions designed to settle the pupil into the Woodlands, develop positive relationships and to complete a range of baseline assessments. The information is then used to formulate appropriate targets for development. For learners at The Woodlands these targets are likely to focus on behavioural, social and academic improvement, as well as academic.

Setting and Recording Learning Outcomes:

All learners attending The Woodlands have their academic progress recorded and monitored on a half termly basis.

At regular intervals, of usually between 6 and 8 weeks, learning outcomes are assessed both by the teacher and the learner.

A range of assessment tools are used alongside teacher moderation meetings to ensure assessment data is accurate.

Teacher Planning and Recording:

Teachers and HLTA's at The Woodlands are expected to develop plans for individual lessons. Heads of Department and Subject Co-ordinators may be available in the core subjects to provide assistance in formulating these schemes although the responsibility for having appropriately planned lessons still lies with the class teacher. Detailed schemes of learning represent the intended delivery to individual or groups of pupils for a given period. Similarly learning outcomes represent the intended levels of achievement for pupils who take part in the planned lessons. However, as in all educational settings and particularly in The Woodlands, what is planned for pupils and what they actually take part in is not always the same. For this reason it is important that teachers record accurately what actually takes place so as to provide the explanation and evidence for inconsistent progress and possible changes to provision.

By maintaining and delivering up to date schemes of learning and setting relevant learning outcomes for all learners, it is believed that effective levels of teaching and learning can be maintained.

Reporting:

The Woodlands is required to report on learners at a variety of levels according to the provision a learner is receiving and who the report is for. This is done through a number of methods:

- Report writing
- Termly Review Day
- Review Meetings
- Phone calls home

Other reports as required by the local authority and schools/academies and are produced on a regular basis upon request.

Monitoring of Teaching and Learning:

In order to continuously improve and develop, regular monitoring of teaching and learning will take place as per the school calendar.

- Lesson observations take place three times a year as part of the performance management cycle, and informal, supportive peer observations will take place throughout the year, as and when required.
- Learning walks will take place every half term and the focus will be linked to the School Development Plan and school priorities.
- Work and marking scrutinies will be completed regularly in order to check on pupil progress and teaching over time (ideally two per half term).
- Planning scrutinies will take place at the start of every half term. Deep dive scrutinies are planned as part of the QA process.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Responsibility for promoting the highest quality of teaching and learning lies with the whole school community. It requires professionalism (based on LSA, HLTA and Teachers Standards and Performance Management) from all staff in the school and in return expects learners to understand the part they play in the process so that they can take responsibility for their own learning.

Key roles and responsibilities include:

- The Management Committee in defining and agreeing the principles underlying the school policy and in monitoring and reviewing its application;
- The Headteacher in framing the school policy and, with other members of the Senior Leadership Team, organising support for the implementation of the policy and the monitoring of teaching and learning;
- Teachers, HLTA's and LSA's in observing the relevant standards and ensuring they are fulfilling their professional roles and responsibilities;
- All staff in ensuring consistent application of the policy;
- Parents and carers, who will be encouraged to take an interest in their child's learning, working in partnership with the school to maintain high levels of progress;
- Learners need to be aware of what is expected of them in order that their learning, and that of those around them, is as effective as possible. It is important that they understand the value of the learning process.

Professional development:

Staff will receive regular training linked to the Teachers Standards; up to date research and current Ofsted guidance and this policy and how to use it effectively to ensure consistently high standards and progress are maintained.

As a school we are committed to developing all of our staff in strategies that encourage and support the improvement of teaching and learning. We will continually seek to offer opportunities to all staff to engage in appropriate whole school, departmental and individual continuing professional development that focuses on the practice of the teaching and learning process.

All staff and learners should be striving to evaluate and improve their practice. This means understanding both the teaching and learning process and building on learners' skills, knowledge and understanding. All staff are managers of the learning environment facilitating all learners to reach their full potential. In order to facilitate the learning process for teaching staff we aim to provide appropriate opportunities for high quality professional development by:

- Sharing good practice
- Developing partnerships
- Commitment to networks
- Following our schools SEF calendar

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Senior Leadership Team will regularly review Teaching and Learning throughout the school, via the school calendar, by monitoring and analysing planning; completing scrutinies of work and marking; observing lessons/classrooms; completing learning walks; analysing school data; speaking to learners and analysing pupil and parent feedback. After any of these take place, an analysis will be made and feedback will be given to staff.

A review of work scrutiny, lesson observations and learning walks should inform the following:

- Improvement in learners' achievement and attainment
- Improvement in the Teaching and Learning across the provision

The desired outcomes for this policy are improvements in students learning and greater clarity amongst learners, teachers and parents concerning pupils learning, achievement and progress.

The performance indicators will be:

- An improvement in learners' attitudes and attainment
- Improvement in the quality of Teaching and Learning across the school.

References

Robert Coe, Cesare Aloisi, Steve Higgins and Lee Elliot Major (October 2014) [What makes great teaching? Review of the underpinning research.](#)