VTC Teaching and Learning Policy

Approved by:	Paul Thompson & The Advisory Board	Date: September 2023
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MISSION STATEMENT

VTC School expects that all learners should aspire to be:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Responsible citizens
- Effective contributors

PHILOSOPHY

This policy reflects the school values and philosophy in relation to teaching and learning. It sets out a framework within which all staff can operate and gives guidance on practice within school. Its purpose is to impact positively on classroom practice and to ensure that it promotes high expectations of staff and learners about learner achievement, teaching standards, and the learning environment.

INTRODUCTION

At VTC School we believe that carefully planned, purposeful and well directed teaching and learning is essential to achieve raising of standards in our learners. Learners who come to the school will usually arrive with a history of exclusions, part-time education, several changes of school and periods of very little formal education. Many will have had little support in their learning beyond school and have no incentive to increase their knowledge or skills and to achieve their potential. An increasing number have emotional damage that is so embedded that they are not able to absorb new concepts, skills, or information despite them having the cognitive potential to do so. As a result, learners will have weak basic skills, including their literacy and numeracy, and fear taking risks when faced with any new challenge. This complex combination of need significantly impacts on their ability to learn and requires constant reinforcement, encouragement, flexibility, reassessment and refocus collectively from all staff in all potential learning situations. Learners will therefore have formidable barriers to traditional learning practices and as a result strategies and interventions will be needed to reduce the blocks before learners are comfortable accessing and engaging in lessons.

AIMS (INTENT)

The aims of this policy are to ensure that, through high quality teaching in a positive and supportive learning environment, we enable all our learners to:

• Engage in the learning process and hence improve self-confidence and esteem.

• Achieve their potential through quality SEND teaching.

• To gain functional literacy and numeracy competency accreditation.

• Grow and develop in a positive learning environment.

• Be supported with their social, emotional and wellbeing.

• Be safe and make informed decisions for life.

• Have access to a wide range of academic, vocational and life skill experiences.

• Possess a strong sense of moral values with a tolerance, appreciation and understanding of other cultures, faiths, and backgrounds within our communities.

OUR PRINCIPLES

The following principles underpin all teaching and learning at VTC School.

•Thorough planning of Long-term plans, Schemes of Work and lesson plans give a detailed overview of the focus of all planned learning intentions and activities for each year group in every taught subject.

•To focus on broad coverage, functional content, strategic focus on learning needs and well sequenced progression to ensure all learners access are relevant curriculum offer.

• Phases within lessons should support the learning objective of the lesson by introducing, developing, and reviewing this focus while maintaining a sharp beginning, cohesive routine and structure and clear start and end points.

• Learners should know what they are learning, and why, as well as the extent of the progress they are making by effective use of success criteria.

• While the teacher orchestrates the structure of learning, learners should have opportunities to enquire, question and explore so that they can apply their learning and practitioners can consolidate and build on learnerss' knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes.

• Opportunities to reinforce literacy, numeracy, ICT, creativity are integral to all planning and Teaching.

•Lesson structure, routine and content should fit the purposes of the intended focus for Learning.

• While it is necessary to plan across terms and weeks, to build in progression and to cover content, such planning should be adapted to meet the needs of learners' learning in response to assessment and on-going review, especially feedback.

• All planning makes full use of any support staff resource available to encourage effective learning, independence, focus and classroom organisation.

• Assessment and evaluation are ongoing both formally and informally and includes planned opportunities for self and peer monitoring.

•Assessment for learning and behaviour for learning underpin the formative processes to ensure learners access, engage and progress with their learning.

HOW LEARNING TAKES PLACE (IMPLENTATION)

We know that young people learn in a variety of different ways. Understanding the different

strategies they use for learning is important in planning and delivering successful lessons. The following principles all play a part in ensuring our learners can learn effectively:

• Learners experiencing success are more likely to succeed at the next task therefore all activities set should give them the opportunity to succeed.

• Learners are more likely to respond positively to a challenge that extends their knowledge, skills and understanding which is enjoyable, stimulating, and interesting.

• Learning needs to be revisited with many concepts and skills returned to and presented differently and / or extended. Frequent practice through repetition and reinforcement has an important part to play in the mastery of key skills.

• Learning is mastered more effectively if it supported with practical experiential and experimental pedagogies and makes use of as multi-sensory approaches such as kinaesthetic.

• Learners are better motivated when they are learning in a structured and stimulating Environment.

• Some learning is enhanced by the opportunity to share and discuss ideas with others. Collaboration and cooperation have an important role in developing learners' social skills.

• Some learning activities are better tackled alone and in a quiet environment in which children can concentrate and reflect.

• Learners often learn effectively through discovering things for themselves and is most effective when presented in a well-structured and safe environment.

• Learners learn through question, answers and reflection which involves the whole class in collaborated and shared ways.

• Learners' learning is enhanced by having a flexible curriculum that responds to personal experiences and immediate events such as and enrichment projects.

• Young people learn more effectively if they feel good about themselves. They need to experience praise and feel valued by both teachers and support staff.

SUPPORTING TEACHING AND LEARNING

At VTC School we maintain high expectations in terms of attitudes to work, behaviour and attendance and do not excuse the special needs of our young people as a barrier to their continued learning and developing. To that end every lesson in carefully planned to ensure that learners:

1. Can access and engage in learning opportunities

2. Acquire new knowledge, skills, and attitudes

3. Develop a concept or process

4. Use, consolidate or refine skills and deepen understanding

Staff will include the following teaching approaches as appropriate:

• Employ a variety of teaching styles /pedagogy, adapted to the needs of individual learners or the demands of the curriculum. Individual, group, and whole class teaching.

• To develop metacognitive understanding of how we learn to learn, and the purpose of learning activities.

• Use provision mapping, differentiation, and personalisation to ensure high quality provision for all.

• Ensure that, wherever possible, teaching is interactive and supported by practical resources and auditory or visual prompts.

• Use open-ended questions to engage curiosity and challenge understanding

• Identify key vocabulary and reinforce it visually.

• Display key information on the classroom wall.

• Create a positive and supportive learning environment in which the learners are encouraged to be responsible, resourceful, and resilient with regard to their own learning.

• Publicly and privately (as appropriate) recognise and praise learners' efforts and achievements.

• Ensure learners are ready to learn by having their basic needs maintained, for example reference to Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

• Set individual targets that are shared with the learners and regularly reviewed in relation to their EHCPs.

• Encourage learners to verbalise what they are doing, why they are doing it, what they have learned and what they need to do next.

• Practice for exam/test situations.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

We aim to offer a rich and varied range of opportunities for learning. Many of our learners will have had very limited experiences in their lives and are fearful of anything new. We aim to provide as many opportunities for new experiences as possible to reduce their reluctance to engage in these and to increase their confidence in themselves in a variety of situations. This is also important in motivating the learners and encouraging them to become independent learners and includes:

• Well-structured lessons

• Literacy and numeracy within the context of subject content

• Interactive displays, including the learners' own work

• Outdoor learning opportunities

• Visits to places of interest within the local environment and communities.

• Specialist teachers and visiting professionals e.g., RSE input, Sports specialists, musicians, etc

• Work experience in relation to vocational offer

• Curriculum theme weeks and Focus Days and other opportunities for cross curricular

working

• Enrichment Curriculum

• Practical activities and opportunities for teamwork

• Virtual learning

• Homework where beneficial

THE CLASSROOM CONDUCIVE TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

Excellent classroom management is essential to effective teaching and learning. Our learners need to feel completely secure in each learning environment if they are to be in a stress-free state in which to learn. Staff at VTC School will ensure that they provide this environment by utilising the

following classroom management strategies.

• Using the principles of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)

• Using a holistic SEMH curriculum as the main vehicle for VTC provision

• Routines are set so that the learners know what is expected of them at different times of the day and in different situations

• Learners are set work that is appropriate to their ability and stage of learning

• Staff ensure that the learners clearly understand the learning task, what they are expected to do and the reason for doing it. Learning objectives and success criteria are clearly explained to the learners. Learners can access the Learning Objective throughout the lesson.

• Assessment for Learning techniques is used to enhance learning

• Learners are taught to be organised and to take responsibility for their learning and generally around the school

• High standards of presentation of work are expected.

• Learners know their personal targets at any time

• Teaching resources are appropriate to needs.

• Displays and resources support all learners by using a variety of methods and reinforcing key vocabulary.

ASSESSMENT (IMPACT)

VTC School believes that regular assessment is essential for ensuring successful teaching and learning. Learner development should be at the heart of our assessment policy. Assessment enables learners to understand where they are in their learning and to understand what they need to do next.

Assessment provides learners with a means to explore their own progress and development.

Assessments should involve consistent use of plenaries, soliciting feedback from lesrners and evaluating every lesson to ascertain the occurrence of learning. Assessment should take into account the individual needs educational need of the learners and to use the best means of challenging and motivating them to learn.

VTC School uses a arrange of assessments to ascertain need and progress and will largely be dependent on the learner, the content of the course and most appropriate form of assessment for the subject.

Various assessment techniques are designed to ensure all aspects of learner development and progress is measured in all areas, including educational, social, and emotional and health, particularly mental health, and wellbeing.

The role of teacher in assessment ensures they should:

• Accurately assess learners on entry to the school to ascertain a baseline level (diagnostics)

• Set clear expectations for learning (behaviour for learning)

• Recognise that all learners can improve; and that the plans (sequenced and differentiated) ensure all learners can progress and achieve (access to learning)

• Appreciate that good assessment is an essential part of the teaching and learning (assessment for learning)

• Be positive in feedback and ensure the learner understands the next steps to achieve (feedback for learning)

• Understand learner motivation by emphasising progress and achievement

• Be clear about a learner's strengths and challenges and plan accordingly

• Encourage independent learning by enabling learners to take charge of their learning though developing their skills of reflection, self- assessment, and their capacity to identify next steps (assessment as learning)

• Praise progress and reward achievement through comments and other motivators (social learning)

• Recognise that assessment for learning should be used in all areas of educational `activity and not just the academic but the personal development as well. (social and emotional learning)

• Make it fit for purpose, varied and use it to inform future planning and teaching.

FEEDBACK

To make feedback to learners' effective teachers should ensure that:

• Learners are clear about what is expected of them and what they can expect from the teacher. Learners should expect the feedback they receive to explain what they have done well with reasons and where and how they can improve and for it to be as soon after the completed work as possible.

• The learning objectives and learning outcomes are used as the benchmark for the teacher's oral and written feedback. They should be shared and made clear to the learners in advance of attempting the task.

Recording and reporting assessments should be consistent and effective teachers must:

• Keep summative assessments to track progress for all subjects based on starting points and agreed targets for the year.

• Keep assessments in relation to award-based qualifications in line with awarding body schedules

• Keep assessments in relation to a range of pastoral and learner development areas such as behaviour, attendance, emotional regulation, Boxall profiles, and other non- academic routines. Which support personal development plans.

• Use their subject knowledge and skills of the individual and the area/ subject being assesses to make quality judgements which support further learning and development.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION (MODERATING IMPACT)

VTC School expectations are:

• Maintaining the quality of teaching is central to ensuring outstanding learner progress. The school expects 100% of lesson observations to be good or outstanding.

• Teachers will be formally observed in the classroom by a member of the Senior Leadership Team regularly, as well as informally through learning walks. Whole school deep dives will further monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning in specific subjects/ areas.

Learning walks and drop in observations:

• Teachers will receive feedback in a positive and developmental way.

• To ensure that quality is maintained relative to other similar establishments, external professionals, such as Improvement Partners, agreement trialling with similar schools.

Partner special schools, will be used to provide an external measure of quality assurance:

• CPD and other professional development will be supported where necessary.

• The teaching standards will be used as a yardstick for quality teaching across the school.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

SEMH policy

Curriculum matrix

SMSC policy

Subject policies and Intent, Implement, Intent statements.