



Teaching and Learning Policy

Reviewed annually.

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Signed by Chair of Governors:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "M. a. b.", is written below the text "Signed by Chair of Governors:".

Saltley Academy Teaching & Learning Policy

At Saltley, Teaching & Learning are at the heart of the Academy and must be at the forefront of all our minds each day. Our aim is to create outstanding learners who during their time here will develop a real thirst for learning, which they will carry into their lives after they leave us. As *A Rights Respecting School*, the right to learning is central to our vision and purpose. In order to achieve this we subscribe to the following beliefs.

Teachers at Saltley are actively reflective practitioners, who strive to improve their practice through working collaboratively to share good practice and experiment with new ideas and technologies. Every teacher has a growth mindset and is of the belief that every student can truly succeed and achieve their potential. Teachers have high expectations of both themselves and students, understanding that a consistent diet of good and outstanding teaching leads to high levels of progress and attainment.

This policy, based primarily on that written by staff for the staff in 2015, outlines in more detail what our vision of outstanding learning looks like, how the staff and the Academy will achieve this for all students and how we will monitor and evaluate so that we know we are continually achieving this. It should be read in conjunction with the Academy's literacy and numeracy strategies (which are reviewed annually) and the Homework Policy.

What does outstanding teaching look like at Saltley?

Our aim is to make our lessons outstanding through outstanding teaching and through our collective responsibility to develop the outstanding learner qualities.

Teachers at Saltley consistently:

1. Set clear objectives and outcomes (using assessment criteria and grades/levels) so that every student makes exceptional progress;
2. Make the purpose and the learning journey clear;
3. Link learning to relevant, real life contexts;
4. Plan active lessons explicitly linked to outstanding learner qualities through engaging activities and, where possible, establish cross curricular links to enable our students to develop a thirst for learning and to encourage learning beyond the classroom;
5. Use their knowledge of our students to plan lessons, seating students using data (as recorded via 'Mint' software) to meet individual needs;
6. Use assessment for learning to show progress, to highlight strengths and weaknesses and to enable students to take ownership of the learning process, as outlined in the Marking and Assessment Policy;
7. Have high expectations and standards, including of the presentation of written work.
8. Plan targeted questioning; for example to deepen thinking and understanding;
9. Build strong relationships; a strong presence of appropriate praise and encouragement
10. Differentiate – allowing all to make excellent progress;
11. Develop and extend both the knowledge students require and the skills to employ that knowledge effectively;
12. Take every opportunity to develop reading, writing, speaking and listening skills, numeracy skills and learning skills, as described in the relevant strategies;
13. Establish effective classroom routines to maximise learning.

Learning: Creating outstanding learners is central to the ethos and vision of our Academy. Staff and students have collaborated to agree the following outstanding learner qualities:

1. Application of Knowledge
2. Collaboration
3. Enquiry
4. Independence
5. Innovation
6. Resilience
7. Respect
8. Leadership
9. Reflection
10. Communication

All lessons will seek to develop these skills in the way that learning is planned, with explicit reference being made to one or more of the qualities in each lesson. In Years 7 and 8, students have one lesson per fortnight which, in the autumn term, focusses exclusively on the students' understanding of these skills and how to develop them in their learning. This will be reinforced through the students use of online 'Learning Logs' which allow students to reflect on and maximise their learning experiences throughout each week, while enabling the House teams to play their role in supporting students with their learning and achievement as well as their academic resilience.

How do we achieve outstanding teaching and learning?

Our ethos of an openness to reflect and discuss teaching & learning (both within the Academy and the Multi Academy Trust [MAT]) will provide a platform from which every teacher can improve their teaching. We aim to work collaboratively, learning with and from each other, learning from feedback at different levels and will use the following tools to develop teaching and learning and improve outcomes for every student:

- 1) Ensure there is a whole Academy understanding of what excellence looks like in the classroom using section 1 of this policy. All teaching staff are involved in being observed and observing teaching. All lesson observations for monitoring and evaluative purposes are carried out by colleagues in pairs to ensure consistency and a sharing of expectations and experience in observation.
- 2) From the lesson observation data from each review (see below), a strength map will be created as well as a collation of best practice. Staff who have been observed delivering an exemplary aspect of teaching (as identified on the lesson feedback) will contribute to staff development of that aspect as directed by the AHT for Teaching and Learning, who will have the strategic overview of CDP. These strengths will also be shared in a number of ways (outlined below) across both the Academy and the Multi Academy Trust, which can, but certainly does **not** necessitate, colleagues having the opportunity to lead CPD.
- 3) Areas for development identified by the Heads of Department will be addressed half termly within departmental meetings where there will be an opportunity to share good practice amongst the team.

4) The Academy VLE acts as a growing platform for colleagues to access the best practice which has been identified.

5) All teaching colleagues take part in 'Lesson Study'. Groups made up of three staff, selected by senior leadership at the start of the academic year, work on co-planning and co-observing each other throughout the year, with the focus on the progress of identified students. The team of lead practitioners ensure completion of this task so that through the year each colleague is observed at least once in this way. This process could involve reflecting on learning through looking at student work in books/online. The purpose of lesson study is purely developmental and not used for monitoring and evaluation of the Academy or individuals within it. Senior leadership monitor its impact through staff feedback and case studies.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

Teaching and learning at Saltley is monitored and evaluated through a calendar of departmental reviews and work scrutinies.

Each department will be reviewed twice per year (unless other support is in place due, for example, to examination results), in a process led by the subject leader and their senior line manager. Each review will include:

- 2 lesson observations in the autumn term review and 1 in the spring term;
- Work scrutiny;
- Analysis of data;
- Student interviews.

The Academy seeks to involve teachers at all levels in different aspects of monitoring and evaluation and to reflect regularly with all classroom-based staff on what we are all aiming for so that there is a consistent understanding by all. The purpose of the monitoring and evaluation will be:

- a) To ensure that success and good practice is celebrated and shared, raising morale and improving quality;
- b) To highlight areas that need development, which should be addressed individually, departmentally or on a whole Academy level.
- c) To ensure that middle and senior leadership and governors have an accurate picture of teaching and learning at Saltley.
- d) To ensure consistency and that the best is the norm.

Each lesson observation is carried out during reviews as a paired observation. In most circumstances, it will be preferable for a subject specialist to be one of the observers. Please note: NQTs observation guidelines are different; also, colleagues receiving support for the quality of their provision will be observed as part of agreed support plans.

During a subject's review week, colleagues will be told at least one week in advance on which day one of their lessons will be visited. In the first review, colleagues will select a lesson to be observed and must make their subject leader aware at least two weeks before the review to enable them to plan. The colleague will be observed teaching both key stages (where this reflects their timetable). The lesson selected by the observed colleague should be chosen to demonstrate developmental practice linked to their own and the Academy's priorities. It must be observed on the supportive basis that a teacher is planning in a new and explorative way. Colleagues can ask for other, additional lessons to be observed if they wish. It is incumbent upon the colleagues organising the review to ensure fairness for colleagues and to see this as a vital part when establishing the logistics of the exercise. Therefore, equality must be sought in the number of lessons in which colleagues could be visited. Adjustments will be made for particular circumstances, for example, when a colleague's timetable is skewed towards one key stage or another: in each case, the fairest approach will be taken.

Lesson observations will not last the whole lesson, but will take place for a duration of approximately 15-20 minutes. As there are a minimum of two observations, where possible, one will be the first half of a lesson and the other will be the second half of the lesson. Teachers are strongly recommended to produce the following for an observation:

- A brief summary of the lesson journey and context (e.g. a 'five minute lesson plan' or a print-out of a powerpoint);
- Data/seating plan sheet;
- RAP.

These two latter documents are maintained by colleagues using ICT-based systems.

Once observed, colleagues will receive spoken feedback, preferably on the same day, and within 48 hours have access to feedback via the 'Smoodle' VLE system. This will outline strengths and areas for development. Lessons are not graded. Colleagues can use this feedback as part of their performance management evidence, along with other forms of evidence.

During lesson observations teaching and learning will be judged against the national teaching standards. Evidence of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, literacy and numeracy will also be noted as will the development of Outstanding Learning Qualities.

Guidelines on giving feedback

It is recognised that the professional discussion with teachers around their work in the classroom is one to be valued and therefore we commit to careful preparation of this conversation recognising that the outcome of the conversation will be an awareness and commitment to improve an aspect of teaching and/or share some excellent practice. The Academy's ethos of mutual respect must be exercised in this context. It is inadvisable to give immediate feedback after the lesson: all need time to reflect. The conversation should take place the same day if possible, or the very next day. It must be done in 48 hours, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and carried out in an appropriate environment. It is advisable to encourage the observee to reflect and articulate both strengths and development points themselves in what must be a constructive process. Colleagues will receive printed or electronic copies of the feedback recorded on the 'Smoodle' VLE for their own reflection, development and performance management evidence.

Lesson observation outcomes

Sometimes, lessons do not go as well as hoped. In this instance, colleagues can request or be offered another observation.

The focus of observation at Saltley is to develop better practice. The principles of teaching and learning outlined in this policy encourage colleagues to design lessons with a view to being innovative and engaging. Observers will highlight areas of practice which are particular areas of strength and areas of development to help the individual in their own reflection and in their setting and reviewing of performance management objectives. It will also form part of the data set in which whole Academy strengths, examples of better practice and areas of development are identified for strategic planning.

Therefore, when lessons which are observed do not go as planned, it is fully understood that this can happen in any lesson. The aim of this monitoring system is to focus on the day-to-day teaching and learning in the Academy and not to have a culture of 'high stakes' observations.

In an Academy striving to be outstanding, the vast majority of lesson observations will provide colleagues, through the 'Smoodle' feedback, with evidence to support their performance management. A single lesson observation going awry will not be a cause for an performance management objective 'failure' where other evidence – such as student work and progress over time - shows good performance overall.

If, however, as is rare, student outcomes and/or monitoring of teaching and/or student work are a cause for concern, colleagues will be offered informal support, which will include:

- A session with a coach or experienced teacher to discuss the areas for improvement;
- The option to observe another teacher to see evidence of good practice in this area (video or in person);
- The option to co-plan parts of lessons and evaluate them after teaching;
- Informal observation carried out with the coach with an agreed focus with the observee.

A further observation by the Head of Department and member of SLT and/or a lead practitioner will take place within 6 weeks after the informal support began. If the lesson and/or other indicators (e.g. books/evidence of student progress) show that sufficient progress has been made, there will be no further action, unless requested by the teacher or there are other factors for which support is required. In the rare cases where the lesson/other indicators show no or insufficient improvement, the Head of Academy may decide that continued informal support is appropriate or decide that the support outlined in the MAT Capability Procedure (available via the Academy website) should be initiated. Again, this is a rare occurrence which the supportive ethos of the Academy usually makes unnecessary.

Work scrutiny

These take place during departmental reviews and again at approximately the mid-way point between reviews. Books from all teachers will be viewed: the sample of work to be scrutinised is agreed by the subject leader and their SLT line manager and the scrutiny will be carried out as a team activity within subject meetings.

Data analysis

Data captures are calendared and happen throughout the year. Link meetings between Heads of Department and SLT take place to discuss the data analysis produced by Heads of

Department. These discussions (as well as those on the work scrutiny) may give rise to a focus for the next departmental review or work scrutiny. These discussions are recorded on the VLE and scrutinised by the Deputy Headteacher for Assessment and Curriculum.

Student focus groups

The conversations are about the overall learning experience of students within a subject area, including homework. Questions must not be geared towards finding out information about individual teachers. If students wish to comment on individuals, then they should be asked to communicate this in private and not in a whole group situation. If a student communicates a complaint or safeguarding concern, they should be dealt with in accordance with those policies. There are also whole school student focus groups, which will cover a range of topics including those related to teaching and learning.

Sharing best practice

The sharing of best practice within the Academy and the MAT is a crucial part of our ethos. Monitoring is geared towards the celebration of success and where there is good practice, it should be shared. There are numerous ways colleagues can contribute to this: staff briefings and meetings/training sessions; leading small group sessions; sharing their work with a colleague in need of support in an area of their strength; contributing their ideas which are then shared/presented by another; meeting colleagues in small groups within the Academy or the MAT.

Drop-ins

These are done on an ad-hoc basis by Heads of Department or the Senior team and may or may not have a particular focus. They are an informal look at what is going on in the classroom, which would not last longer than a few minutes. Heads of Department (or other relevant colleague) will feedback to every member of staff seen during a drop-in using a WWW/EBI card and keep a copy. While these drop-ins are not part of the monitoring of individual performance, colleagues may wish to use these cards as evidence. The main focus of drop-ins is to review the impact of Academy developments and consistency: therefore, the copy of the card is kept by the visiting colleague purely to create a whole departmental or whole school picture.