

Learning Opportunities Teaching and Learning Policy



If you have any questions about this policy or any other aspects of school life at Learning Opportunities please contact me at the school.

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Teaching and Learning Policy

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The teaching and Learning Policy has been written and approved by a team with a range of experience, and will be reviewed annually.

Date Created: September 1996

Previous Review: September 2019

Next Review Date: September 2021

INTRODUCTION

This policy operates within the context of Learning Opportunities aims, shared values and all other school policies. All staff share in the responsibility for ensuring that the statements made within the Learning and Teaching Policy influence, and are reflected in, the quality of all our work.

Students learn through their total experience. This policy guides what students do, what staff do, how time is managed, the organisation of the classrooms and what the school as an organisation does to create an effective and well-managed learning environment in which the individual needs of each student can be met.

At Learning Opportunities we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the notion that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun. Through our teaching we endeavour to equip students with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives.

We believe that students learn best when they:

- are happy;
- are interested and motivated;
- achieve success and gain approval;
- are given tasks which match their ability;
- clearly understand the task;
- are confident, feel secure and are aware of boundaries;
- are challenged and stimulated.

Learning Opportunities therefore aims to:

- Provide a safe and stimulating learning environment.
- Promote the school as one which is respected in the community as a welcoming, positive and successful establishment.
- Ensure the school is managed in a clear, confident and accessible way.
- Ensure that people who work at the school feel valued.
- Raise levels of attainment
- Foster self-esteem and personal responsibility, linked to respect for the needs and feelings of others.
- Facilitate considerate and positive relationships between all members of the school community.
- Ensure equal opportunities in relation to gender, race, class, special needs and belief.

ETHOS

The ethos of the school underpins the agreed aims. In the course of their daily work staff promote this ethos through:

- Providing an effective working environment at all times, in which each student can achieve their maximum potential.
- Encouraging enterprise.
- Providing a welcoming environment, in which courtesy, kindness and mutual respect are fostered.
- Providing positive role models.
- Providing a fair and consistent environment, in line with the school's 'Behaviour Management Policy'
- Maintaining purposeful and informative planning, record-keeping and assessment documents.
- Effective management of their professional time.
- Developing links with the wider community.
- Providing students with meaningful, purposeful tasks
- Valuing and celebrating students' successes and achievements.
- Reviewing personal and professional development by seeking appropriate INSET, training and support from colleagues in order to ensure a high level of professional expertise.

CURRICULUM STATEMENT

Learning Opportunities Statement of Curriculum Intent

We are committed to providing a curriculum with breadth that allows all of our students to be able to achieve the following:

Improve their literacy and numeracy skills and use these skills in real life situations.

Achieve success in examinations at an appropriately challenging level.

Enjoy learning.

Experience life outside the classroom, experiencing the real world and natural environment.

Have the necessary skills and knowledge to transfer to post-16 education.

Learning Opportunities Statement of Curriculum Implementation

We are committed to providing:

Experienced staff who have the necessary subject knowledge to inspire students.

A curriculum that works progressively towards realistic and aspirational outcomes.

A safe, well-resourced learning environment.

An assessment system that informs planning ensuring students are appropriately challenged.
A curriculum that covers the statutory components alongside a range of enrichment activities.
A curriculum that includes opportunities for emotional and behavioural learning.
A curriculum that focuses on individual strengths and needs.

Learning Opportunities Statement of Curriculum Impact

We will ensure:

All students leave the school with at least 1 certificate or qualification.

All students make progress towards appropriate outcomes.

All students have obtained a place at an appropriate post-16 provider.

Style of curriculum delivery

Throughout all areas of the curriculum, staff:

- Pay attention to the stage the student has reached, chronologically, cognitively and socially;
- Guide the students to the logical next step within his or her grasp;
- Use a small-step approach punctuated by frequent positive re-enforcement;
- Understand the student's learning style;
- Avoid humiliating public criticism of students in front of their peers;

Staff help to build students self-image and confidence through successful classroom achievement, thereby helping to ease their emotional difficulties and reducing the likelihood of challenging behaviour.

A range of teaching styles are used, providing greater opportunities for hands-on experiential and often a cross-curricular project approach.

In Teaching

Research evidence suggests that no particular teaching and learning style is more appropriate for the students with the range of needs identified at Learning Opportunities. It suggests a range of experiences is best practice.

- There is an appropriate balance between practical, recorded and appropriately communicated activities.
- Tasks are matched to the identified needs and abilities of the individual.
- A variety of teaching styles and strategies are used to enable students to learn.
- Teaching is based on the outcomes of baseline/initial and ongoing assessment and evaluation.
- Planning and preparation are undertaken effectively.
- Consistent approaches are used through the school.

- Time and resources are managed efficiently and effectively.
- ICT is used appropriately as a key teaching tool for all students
- There are opportunities for the development of student's interests and for the expression of creativity and use of imagination.
- Teaching is planned and delivered within meaningful and purposeful contexts.

In Learning

- Students are given the opportunity to learn through sensory explorations
- Students are encouraged to become active learners, thinking about the ways they learn and that learning builds on existing concepts, skills and knowledge.
- It is recognised that students have preferred learning styles and learn at different rates.
- Learning is through practical first-hand experiences, including play and self-help skills.
- There are close home/school partnerships.
- ICT supports curriculum access for learners at all levels.
- There are opportunities for purposeful practice, repetition and reinforcement of skills.
- Learning is revisited in systematic and planned ways.
- Students are encouraged to be involved in the planning of their work and reflecting on what they have done.
- Learning objectives are presented in small, structured steps to develop core skills and strategies.
- Mistakes are accepted and used to plan for future learning.
- All students are equally included in the full range of learning opportunities

In the Environment

- There is a stimulating, welcoming environment where there is care, tolerance, security, praise and a high level of expectation associated with clear learning objectives.
- There is a safe, friendly and supportive environment.
- There is co-operation and communication between students, staff, parents/carers and outside agencies.
- Achievement is celebrated and students and their work is valued.
- Students are enabled to experience success and build self-esteem.
- There are opportunities for learning to take place in a variety of situations and groupings both in and out of school.
- Resources and materials are of high quality and are accessible to the students.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

In accordance with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, all students at Learning Opportunities will be given access to the National Curriculum. Staff will endeavour to help all students make the expected progress based on their identified needs and irrespective of race, gender, age or ability.

STRUCTURES

The School Day

8.30am-8.45am	Staff briefing
9.00am-9.15am	Tutor Time
9.15am-9.45am	Period 1
9.45am-10.15am	Period 2
10.15am - 10.25am	Break
10.25am-10.55am	Period 3
10.55am-11.25am	Period 4
11.25am-11.45pm	Break
11.45am-12.30pm	Period 5
12.30pm-1.15pm	Period 6
1.15pm-1.45pm	Lunch
1.45pm - 2.45pm	Period 7
2.45pm - 3.00pm	Tutor Time
3.00pm	End of formal school day

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION

Most lessons include the following elements:

- Introduction - Lesson objective shared with all students.
- Link to previous learning
- Differentiation - through outcome / support
- Main activity
- Plenary- to review learning

Time Management

It is important that activities are well planned so that each student is working at their correct level, that they begin promptly and that the initial pace is maintained. All students should know what to do as soon as they enter the classroom and after they have completed an activity. Efficient planning and classroom organisation significantly reduces time-wasting activities.

Staff Cover

To ensure continuity, staff should leave written guidance and suggested activities for all planned absences from the classroom. In the event of an unplanned absence a telephone call should be made to the Head Teacher to discuss the student's work. The teacher's planning record is always available for reference.

Behaviour Management

Routines and rules in the classroom contribute to a positive learning environment. To be effective they should be:

- agreed by the students and clearly understood;
- fair and consistent;
- realistic and positive;
- kept to a minimum but enforced consistently;

All behaviour management strategies should result in the students knowing the boundaries of behaviour and should be set within the terms of The Behaviour Management Policy.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

This should be organised to ensure that students have the opportunity to:

- work individually, in groups and as a class;
- make decisions;
- work co-operatively;
- solve problems;
- be creative;
- discuss their ideas;
- develop social skills;
- develop independence;
- use initiative;
- receive support;
- achieve academically.

We believe that the most effective learning takes place in an environment which:

- is challenging and stimulating;
- is peaceful and calm;
- is happy and caring;
- is organised;
- is well resourced;
- makes learning accessible;
- is encouraging and appreciative;
- is welcoming;
- provides equal opportunities;
- provides a working atmosphere.

Students should be encouraged to develop organisational skills and independence through:

- appropriate tasks;
- confidence building;
- example;
- co-operation;
- provision of suitable opportunities;
- responsibilities.

The organisation of each classroom is designed to facilitate learning and the development of independence.

- The resources in each area are grouped according to curriculum subject and clearly labelled.
- Writing resources are available for use at all times, and are centrally accessible.
- Students are involved in the maintenance and care of all equipment and resources.
- Furniture is appropriate and sufficient to meet the range of class base activities.

DISPLAY

Display is used to create an attractive and stimulating environment. The work displayed should be of a high standard and changed regularly. It should include work on different aspects of the curriculum and reflect the individual student's efforts as well as ability. Ideally, displays should stimulate discussion and can, on occasion, be 'interactive'.

ACHIEVEMENT

Social, physical, creative and academic achievements are celebrated in many ways as an on going process in all aspects of school life, by:

- verbal or written praise by staff, peers, Headteacher and parents / carers;
- displays of work;
- opportunities to perform or share;
- encouraging self esteem;
- presentation of work during weekly 'Wonderwall' assemblies.
- sharing success with the community.

Staff need to arrange time to observe, assess, reflect and review achievements with each student on a regular basis. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

PLANNING

Planning takes place half-termly, providing cross reference to the National Curriculum, examination syllabi and Learning Objectives.

Individual staff are responsible for maintaining their own Planning and Learning Objective monitoring documents. These are provided to the headteacher at the start of each half term.

DIFFERENTIATION (Refer to Appendix A)

As each class is made up of individuals with different concepts, aptitudes, skills and knowledge, we believe that it is inappropriate for them to work on identical programmes of study. Staff will, at their discretion, adapt / vary the recommended guidance in order to deliver the learning intentions, particularly where students have significant gaps in their learning or specific learning difficulties. Activities may therefore be taken from a previous Year / Key Stage.

ICT is used as a tool for differentiation. Many students respond well to carefully structured programmes of well designed computerised learning resources, which maximise success and provide general enjoyment. IT allows students to make elementary mistakes in private. Many programmes offer assistance when they have difficulties.

Differentiated tasks are detailed within MTP / daily lesson plans. Learning objectives / outcomes are also specified for all differentiated teaching. Differentiation will enable the progress to be made by students of all abilities.

Differentiation is achieved by four general methods:

- **Task** - the teacher sets different tasks within a common area of study.
- **Outcome** - teacher sets common task, with students producing different outcomes
- **Resource** - the stimulus, or worksheets etc., are varied to meet student needs
- **Support** - teacher sets common task but gives differing support to students, strategic careful use of student grouping

RECORD KEEPING & ASSESSMENT

Teaching staff are responsible for maintaining long and medium term plans. These are informed by regular and effective use of Classroom Monitor, ensuring the curriculum offered is appropriately challenging.

Monitoring and evaluation:

- Students work is monitored and moderated termly by the class teacher
- SLT will regularly monitor student's books.

- SLT will observe each class teacher at least three times each year.
- Informal visits to lessons will also be a feature of the school

Information is used to set challenging but realistic targets. Teacher assessments are communicated to parents / carers through end of term reports and at education and care review meetings.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

In order to ensure equality of access, and effective matching of tasks to needs, teachers will employ a variety of strategies:

- Discussion and questioning (open and closed as appropriate)
- Previewing and reviewing work
- Didactic teaching
- Interactive teaching
- Listening
- Providing opportunities for reflection by students
- Demonstrating high expectations
- Providing opportunities for repetition / reinforcement
- Providing encouragement, positive reinforcement and praise
- Making judgements and responding to individual need
- Intervening, as appropriate, in the learning process in order to encourage development
- Providing all students with opportunities for success
- Using a range of communication strategies - verbal and non-verbal

Teachers will use a range of strategies in any one session.

RESOURCES

Materials in all areas should be well organised, be of good quality, be clean, tidy, attractive, accessible and well labelled. Stocks should be checked and replenished regularly.

Students should be taught and shown by example that resources are finite and that we all have a duty to care for equipment and not misuse, damage or waste it. Students are therefore taught how to use all resources correctly and safely, with care and respect; and with regard for Health and Safety.

Teaching and Learning resources represent a considerable investment of money. Learning Opportunities appreciate the value of utilising outside sources for the loan of books, artefacts and equipment.

The effective implementation of National Curriculum subjects calls for a wide range of equipment to be used. These do not necessarily have to be stored in the classroom. It is

important that equipment borrowed from outside sources and other classrooms is returned promptly and in good condition.

It is the responsibility of teaching and support staff to ensure each classroom has supplies of appropriate equipment. All missing, damaged or dangerous items should be reported to the Headteacher / Services Manager.

Resource Finance

Requests for all equipment and resources should be made to the Headteacher.

LEARNING PROCESSES

Students enter school at different stages of development. Students learn in different ways and at different rates of progress. In the course of learning students develop their skills through a variety of processes. These include:

- Investigation
- Experimentation
- Listening
- Observation
- Talking and discussion
- Asking questions
- Practical exploration and role play
- Retrieving information
- Imagining
- Repetition
- Problem-solving
- Making choices and decision-making
- Individual learning
- Collaborative learning in small groups, or pairs
- One to one learning with an adult, or more able student
- Whole class
- Independent learning

Planning acknowledges the variety of learning styles likely to be found in any one class. By depending upon one style it is almost certain that some students will be preventing from achieving their full potential.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE OF PROPRIETOR

The proprietor determines, supports, monitors and reviews the school's policies on teaching and learning. In particular they:

- Ensure that the school buildings and premises are effective in supporting successful teaching and learning;
- Monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations
- Monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising student attainment
- Ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching;
- Monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning policies through the school self-review processes.

The Head Teacher:

- Ensures effective implementation and monitors all aspects of the Teaching & Learning policy
- Works in partnership with parents / carers.
- Gives clear information on the aims and objectives of the curriculum and school procedures.
- Makes sure that each subject has appropriate schemes of work that address the needs of all students.
- Ensures that the corporate responsibility to develop literacy skills is consistently addressed throughout the school.
- Ensures that teachers plan their lessons and implement the school lesson structure.
- Promotes the use of data to guide teacher planning.
- Analyses data about the performance of students
- Co-ordinates meetings that allow discussion of student progress and implements action plans to address underachievement.
- Monitors assessments that take place within the team.
- Allocates resources to allow effective teaching and learning.

The Teacher's Role:

- Plan for the medium and short term taking individual student needs into account.
- Make good use of data about prior performance and use it to meet the needs of all students.
- Develop student literacy skills in lessons.
- Contribute positively to meetings about student progress and implement action plans to address underachievement.
- Use assessment information to inform future planning and target setting.
- Take account of individual needs and relevant targets when lesson planning
- Effectively resource lessons and activities, including organising appropriate offsite learning experiences
- Be pro-active in personal and school development

Parents' / Carers' Role:

We believe that parents / carers have a fundamental role to play in helping their children to learn.

Parents / carers are also encouraged to support their children's learning by:

- Ensuring that their child comes to school feeling confident and positive.
- Ensuring that their child arrives at school punctually and regularly.
- Sharing with the teacher any problems in school that their child is experiencing.
- Supporting their child by attending school activities, including educational meetings.
- Supporting their child and the teacher by becoming actively involved in the operation of the EHCP, and any Special Educational Needs processes.
- Ensuring that all contact addresses and telephone numbers are up to date and correct.
- Ensuring that their child arrives at school wearing the correct uniform and bringing the correct P.E. kit.
- Agreeing to the Home / School Agreement.
- Contributing relevant information to base-line assessment.
- Responding to letters sent home from school.
- Informing the school of reasons for their child's absence.
- Informing the school of any significant matters at home, which may affect their child's progress, happiness or behaviour.

The Students Role:

- To attend lessons.
- To arrive on time
- Work with staff to set targets for improvement.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

The following policies support Teaching & Learning:

- Equal Opportunities.
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Health and Safety.
- Marking and Feedback
- Nurture
- Disability Equality
- Curriculum Policy

We acknowledge that people learn in many different ways and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow all students to learn in ways that best suit them. The psychologist Howard Gardner identifies seven main areas of intelligence: linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal/group working, and intrapersonal/reflective. We take into account these different forms of intelligence when planning teaching and learning styles.

We encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way they learn and to reflect on how they learn - what helps them learn and what makes it difficult for them to learn. Self review and peer review strategies are used, as well as planned plenary at the end of lessons to review the key learning objectives and to assess the level of understanding.

When teaching we focus on motivating students and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. We use curriculum plans based on DfES and QCA schemes to guide our teaching. This sets out the aims, objective and details of what is to be taught to each year group.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the student's level of attainment. Our prime focus is to develop further their knowledge and skills. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each student's level of ability. We have high expectations of all our students, and believe that they should all be included in the full range of educational opportunities available.

All teachers try hard to establish positive working relationships with the students that they are teaching. We treat them fairly and give them equal opportunity to take part in class activities. All teachers follow the school policy with regard to behaviour management. We praise and reward students for good effort and, by so doing, help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general.

Support staff are deployed in a variety of ways. Sometimes they work with individual students and sometimes they work with small groups.

All teachers reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and plan their professional development needs accordingly. We do all we can to support teachers in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice.

As each class is made up of individuals with different concepts, aptitudes, skills and knowledge, we believe that it is inappropriate for them to work on identical programmes of study. Staff will, at their discretion, adapt / vary the recommended guidance in order to deliver the learning intentions, particularly where students have significant gaps in their learning. Activities may therefore be taken from a previous Year / Key Stage.

Why differentiate?

1. To cater for individual abilities and interests.
2. To aid planning procedures and target setting.
3. To ensure pupil achievement and success.
4. To enhance individual capabilities, strengths and interests.
5. To ensure more accurate record keeping.
6. To make assessment procedures more effective.
7. It makes teaching and learning more effective.
8. To better match tasks to students.
9. It will ensure that children can progress at their own pace.
10. Differentiated work can assist with early diagnosis of learning difficulties.
11. To identify specific needs and gaps in learning.
12. Differentiated tasks can lead to the more effective use of resources.
13. Children will be better motivated and fewer behavioural problems will arise.

What would you expect to see in a classroom where there is effective differentiation?

1. Pupils working independently and showing autonomy.
2. Pupils would be working in a variety of different ways.
3. The classroom would be organised in an appropriate way for the lesson.
4. Pupils may be working on a variety of tasks.
5. All the children would be involved and well motivated.
6. Pupils would be on task.
7. The teacher would be free to move around the classroom.
8. There would be a positive pupil-teacher interaction.
9. Pupils would be involved in negotiating their work.
10. The children would present their outcomes in a variety of ways.
11. A variety of assessment techniques would be in use.
12. The teacher would adopt a variety of roles.
13. Co-operative learning would be taking place.
14. Appropriate texts and guides would be in use.
15. A range of resources would be in evidence.
16. Teachers' planning and records would be on an individual basis.

What can be done to facilitate differentiation?

1. Smaller classes and working groups.
2. Increased classroom resources.
3. Assistance in the classroom.
4. Simple but effective planning and record keeping.
5. Effective arrangement of classroom furniture.
6. Each classroom to have adequate basic equipment.
7. Classroom materials and tools should be readily available..
8. There should be a variety of reading levels within text resources.
9. Classroom organised in appropriate way for the lesson.
10. A variety of types of resources should be available.
11. There should be clear communication between teacher and pupils.
12. A variety of tasks should be set.
13. Children should be grouped in appropriate ways.
14. Facilitating timetables.
15. Teachers need to be aware of pupils' prior learning and experiences.
16. Flexible deadlines need to be set for completion of work.
17. There should be availability for training of staff.

What results would we expect from effective differentiation?

1. Interested, well-motivated children responding to challenges.
2. Children working productively on task.
3. Pupils showing greater independence and co-operation when required.
4. Children would be aware of their own progression and develop the ability to self evaluate.
5. Effective teaching and learning would take place.
6. A high degree of both teacher and pupil satisfaction.

Differentiation is achieved by four general methods:

1. **Task** - the teacher sets different tasks within a common area of study.
2. **Outcome** - teacher sets common task, with students producing different outcomes
3. **Resource** - the stimulus, or worksheets etc., are varied to meet student needs
4. **Support** - teacher sets common task but gives differing support to students, strategic careful use of student grouping

How the computer can be used as a tool for differentiation:

ICT is also used as a tool for differentiation. Students respond well to carefully structured programmes of well-designed computerised learning packages, which maximise success and provide general enjoyment. IT allows students to make elementary mistakes in private. Many programmes offer assistance when they have difficulties.

For example:

- A computer is infinitely patient and enables students to try things out, to take risks and build up confidence, e.g. to replay parts of a CD-ROM or undo mistakes.
- Difficult concepts can be made visible and explored, e.g. data logging changes seen on a graph, a floor or screen turtle responding to commands, using a spreadsheet to ask 'what if..?' questions which are automatically calculated. This can support higher order thinking skills.
- Ideas can be developed and refined easily, for example working with words and graphics. Ideas can be discussed, reflected upon and put into action without having to start all over again.
- IT improves and enhances how work is presented and can develop student confidence and achievement.
- IT can provide access to students with disabilities and enable them to communicate and contribute when previously they could not, e.g. support written work.

Differentiated tasks are detailed within plans. Learning objectives / outcomes are also specified for all teaching.