



CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND TEACHING POLICY

Applicable to:	All students and Staff at The Dean Academy
Responsible for the policy & procedures:	Mrs H Rowlands (Headteacher) & MRs T Adams (Assistant Headteacher)
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'Preparing you today for a successful tomorrow'

Introduction

This policy combines the features of effective curriculum design with teaching and assessment methodologies which have clear and substantial evidence from respected research that they are effective in helping students know more, remember more and understand better. The methodologies employed have been evidenced as being particularly helpful for disadvantaged students and students with SEND, whilst at the same time preventing an excessive workload for staff. It reflects the importance placed by the school on learning, teaching and achievement.

Curriculum Design and Rationale

Our philosophy is to create and deliver a challenging curriculum which ensures all students acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in qualifications and to become responsible and respectful individuals, leading to happy and successful lives. Our curriculum will uphold caring, collaborative and excellent vision and principles outlined in the Trust Curriculum Statement.

We design the TDA curriculum so that:

- All students thrive, regardless of their starting point or background through an academically rigorous, broad and balanced curriculum.
- Identify key knowledge and most important concepts for each subject.
- Learning is sequenced to enable new knowledge to be linked to previous learning and that topics are taught in an order that helps students to know more, remember more and understand better.
- End points for each module are clear, precise and encapsulate what students will know and will be able to do at the end of each module
- Small components of learning to achieve the end points are detailed and thorough
- The key vocabulary students need to know and use within each module is identified.
- Students are building upon and connecting to previous knowledge to maximise understanding and long-term memory of knowledge
- The TDA curriculum is academically rigorous, broad and balanced so it enables all learners to thrive.

- Fosters an inclusive and supportive ethos where every student feels valued. TDA lesson structure presentations to be used in lessons, including application and problem-solving tasks to be used in lessons and homework that reviews current or previous learning
- Design assessments to measure how well students have learnt, remembered and understood the key knowledge and identify gaps in learning still to be addressed

We prepare students for life in modern Britain through developing 'British Values', high quality Personal Development, Citizenship, RSHE, Religious Education and numerous cultural experiences and good quality Careers Education. There is wide range of enrichment activities in the arts and many other areas in which all students are encouraged to participate. Leadership opportunities including sports, arts, reading ambassadors and school council representatives provide the chance for our students to develop character and interpersonal skills.

The firm foundation built at Key Stage Three enables students to work with confidence and fluency in Year 10 and Year 11 building more detailed knowledge, and by Year 11 the ability to solve more complex problems. Our curriculum model is reviewed on an annual basis in line with ICFP modelling. We continuously review and improve the curriculum following SLT or School Improvement Lead reviews, results of development drop ins and our subject reviews.

We use collaborative planning for all stages of curriculum design where teachers use INSET days, Faculty Development Time and weekly planning time.

Teaching - Rationale

To achieve our Curriculum Intent, we are committed to the implementation of all schemes of learning being structured around the evidence-informed TDA lesson template; this ensures that content is appropriately planned and sequenced, so all lessons are consistently of the highest quality and based upon educational pedagogical research.

TDA teaching has the following key elements:

- A. Simple, effective and research driven teaching;
- B. Continually striving to close the gap by supporting disadvantaged students and those with SEND to learn more, remember more and understand better;
- C. The importance of regular review of knowledge and deliberate practice increasing fluency and skills with the application of knowledge;
- D. A strong emphasis on helping all students become confident and competent readers who develop a love of reading; and
- E. Developing expert teachers who have strong subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge and apply this skilfully in the classroom.

Note: Our research on teaching methodology is based upon reliable and respected sources including:

1. Rosenshine's 'Principles of Instruction'
2. Education Endowment Foundation research
3. John Hattie's 'Evidence Based Teaching'

All teachers follow a streamlined, research driven teaching model consisting of:

1. **Review:** All lessons start with knowledge retrieval activities. This strengthens long term memory and leads to fluent recall. Skilful planning and sequencing of the curriculum ensures key knowledge is constantly reviewed and built upon.
2. **Instruct:** Direct instructions are carefully planned with the core message, audience and misconceptions in mind. Teachers use their expert knowledge to link to previous learning and give clear, precise and concise explanations. After the teacher explanation students record a summary of the key knowledge

in their exercise books to help with recall and revision. Teacher's 'chunk' explanations to ensure students are learning a manageable amount of new information at any one time.

3. **Model:** Modelling is completed using 'I do, we do, you do'. Numerous models and worked examples and non-examples are provided for students helping them to learn methods, solve problems and identify and focus on the specific steps in learning.
4. **Questioning:** Teachers ask questions to
 - Make students think hard about the knowledge they are learning, the methods they are learning to use and how knowledge links to previous learning
 - Check students understanding and identify any misconceptions they have which can be addressed by the teacher
 - Help students split up a complex problem into a series of simpler stages
 - Help students think about how and why things work thus strengthening connections between knowledge stored in long term memory

Question sessions are short, sharp and concise to help all students with focussing and learning. Teachers will not accept students 'opting out'

5. **Independent Practice:** Teachers understand that we must devote most time to independent practice carefully planned to optimise learning the knowledge taught and then applying the knowledge in scenarios of gradually increasing complexity. Teachers will continually circulate checking students are applying the method accurately, asking questions to check understanding, particularly focussing on SEND and disadvantaged students. During this, the teacher will stop the class to highlight misconceptions and give further advice to ensure all students can accurately and confidently apply the method that has been modelled
6. **Checking knowledge and understanding:** Teachers continuously check the knowledge and understanding of students against the end point for a topic using their understanding of the small components of key knowledge that students need to acquire.
7. **Oracy and Reading:** We strongly believe that all students should be able to communicate effectively, through reading, writing and oracy, and this is an essential part of all lessons at TDA. A strong emphasis is placed on a whole school rigorous approach to reading that develops learners' confidence whilst reducing the gap between SEND and disadvantaged students and their peers, inspiring them to become life-long readers.
 - A. We develop skilled readers by building vocabulary knowledge; teaching a rich reading curriculum; supporting students to read and celebrating reading. Vocabulary knowledge is a core part of all curriculum areas and explicitly taught, applied and remembered. Our tutor reading programme 'Beyond Words' has novels selected from a diverse, engaging and challenging reading list.
 - B. Teachers ensure that students value writing and its processes. Writing is used to record key information after an explanation and as part of independent practice and attention is paid to being able to structure writing and using the academic language of a subject specialist. In addition, rules of grammar and punctuation are made explicit and are an integral part of the language of each subject area. As a school focus, we have 'Big Writes' where all subjects link together for a writing task linked to specific topic.
 - C. Oracy is used to discuss and debate ideas, to clarify thinking, give peer support, to extend vocabulary and refine point of view. Oracy is explicitly taught using sentence starters, vocabulary and clear expectation. In addition, students will feedback 'like experts' using academic and appropriate vocabulary for each subject. The SHARPEN acronym is used to support staff and students use oracy in lessons effectively.
8. **Feedback:** Teachers give students live feedback rather than marking work and giving it back to students. Teachers continually circulate the class whilst students are working. This feedback focusses on knowledge students are learning and the methods students are applying. The teachers focus their

feedback on a single improvement, students can make rather than flagging up multiple problems. Where many difficulties are occurring, the teacher will reteach the content to an individual student, a group of students or the whole class

Lessons share the following common traits:

1. A calm purposeful environment for learning
2. Focussed starts to lesson with students reviewing previous learning
3. Consistent routines for Learning
4. Sharp focussed assessment designed to test how students have understood the key learning points and calm orderly ends to lessons
5. Reading is an integral aspect of most lessons.
6. Students complete a large quantity of high-quality written work.
7. We teach students how to use ICT effectively and use it in lessons when it is the most effective learning strategy
8. Teaching knowledge is a primary focus in most lessons.

The importance of 'closing the gap'

It is our ambition that disadvantaged students and students with SEND achieve as well as their more advantaged peers. We have listed below our two key strategies to help disadvantaged students and SEND students close the gap:

- 1. Teachers and support staff aim to get to know disadvantaged students and SEND students especially well to understand their barriers to learning, how to motivate them and their strengths**
 - Learning profiles have been prepared for students with SEND and other vulnerable students. These detail reasonable adjustments to be made to help these students succeed.
 - Teachers use a seating plan so that disadvantaged students can easily access support from the teacher and engage in partner work with others who will help them succeed.
 - Teachers put suitable scaffolding and support in place to ensure disadvantaged students can be successful in their lessons.
 - Teachers prioritise feedback for disadvantaged students.
- 2. Figuring out what the students do not know and teaching them this knowledge**
 - Teachers are skilled in adaptive and responsive teaching and use this information to adapt lesson plans to address gaps in the prior knowledge of students. During lessons, teachers also adjust teaching in response to students' needs, whilst maintaining high expectations for all.
 - We believe that providing immediate verbal feedback whilst students are working is more effective than marking; although teachers may add comments written in purple pen whilst students are working in class.
 - Teachers give whole class feedback on common errors and mistakes as well as re-teaching the information that students struggled with.
 - Teachers provide 1:1 verbal feedback to students to ensure they fully understand what they need to do to 'close the gaps' and use their strong pedagogical and subject knowledge to address misconceptions and inaccurate knowledge for these individuals. Teachers maximise the support they give to the students who are most disadvantaged.

Providing stretch and challenge

High Prior Attaining Students will be identified based on their Key Stage 2 data as being above expectations. We will also examine this in conjunction with NGRT and CATs data to identify pupils who will be classified as 'High Prior Attaining'. In key stage 3 these students are grouped in to a single class – the "accelerated group" – with the aim of facilitating pupil progress to the highest level. At key stage 4, where option

subjects may be more mixed in ability (setting still exists in Science and Maths), staff are aware of who their HPA students are and prioritise them for First Five in checking their work and providing additional challenge. In the classroom, the curriculum and its delivery are supported by a range of principles aimed at supporting progress of HPA students such as:

- Using models and exemplars to demonstrate what high level answers look like, including the use of technology such as visualisers to support this
- Ensuring that work is appropriately challenging and offers opportunities to extend beyond the NC/exam board specification
- Asking directed questions that are pitched at an appropriate level to challenge students and encourage them to think in a more complex manner
- Explicit delivery at key stage 4 of high impact revision techniques to help the development of effective study habits
- Having a specific focus on oracy and reading

Developing expert teachers

We use our line management system, honest and constructive feedback, ongoing professional development and coaching to support every one of our teachers to become an expert teacher. Expert teachers have the following qualities:

1. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They continually work to improve their subject knowledge. In the rare cases where teachers are required to teach a subject that is not their first specialism they are provided with high quality resources and bespoke support in helping them to improve their subject knowledge.
2. They work collaboratively to improve the quality of curriculum design, planning sequences of lessons and designing resources for learning in Faculty Development time and INSET.
3. Teachers know and understand the misconceptions students have and the type of errors they make and address these head on. They know the best way to explain difficult concepts and can provide scaffolded models which students can follow.
4. They understand how to use independent practice and know how to set students clear tasks that become incrementally more challenging, for a set amount of time, to develop fluency.
5. Teachers know how to teach literacy to students; they can identify the key vocabulary for their subject and understand how to teach it explicitly. They have high expectations for written work, support students with their grammar and spelling, and teach oracy so that students can have effective discussions and answer questions clearly.
6. Teachers explicitly teach students routines, taking a proactive approach to behaviour. They know how to skilfully use effective behaviour management techniques, when necessary.
7. They have an excellent knowledge of safeguarding and always ensure students work in a safe environment.
8. Teachers understand which factors can inhibit students' ability to learn and know which strategies to use to support students. Teachers work with the SENDCo and pastoral team to further develop this knowledge.
9. Teachers work as a team to share good practice and produce resources that other teachers can use and are supportive of their colleagues, school staff and students.
10. Teachers are aware of the prior attainment of learners and set work that challenges students appropriately.

Assessment Strategy

We believe that effective assessment helps us to improve our curriculum, to improve the quality of teaching, helps us to support every student in knowing more, remembering more and understanding better. There are no whole school guidelines as to how often "marking" of student work should appear in books, however, via

student voice and regular work scrutinies (by both DoF and SLT), we would expect students to know and understand how they can move their work forward and achieve their potential.

Effective Assessment:

- Promotes learning
- Informs teaching
- Is formative focussed
- Reduces teacher workload
- Identifies progress

Formative assessment which promotes learning and informs teaching

At the start of each lesson, students complete a review task which is often focussed on prerequisite knowledge for the lesson. By circulating during the task and then by requiring students to self-mark, the teacher can determine students' level of knowledge and understanding and then adjusts their teaching accordingly.

During each lesson teachers will use the following strategies for formative assessment:

- Live Feedback
- First Five – PP/SEND/UP/Vulnerable/HPA
- Checkpoint questions
- Peer and self-assessment

Summative Assessment promotes learning, informs teaching and identifies progress

1. These assessments are internally tracked using question level analysis. This enables the subject leaders to have an overview of areas of strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum. This tracking system is also used by teachers to adjust teaching plans for their class.
2. Assessment data is used in collaborative planning meetings to review and develop the curriculum and delivery strategy.
3. Cumulative tests and mock exams test a sample from a large domain of content. Student performance is ranked and compared to their starting point. This information provides a starting point for investigation of students who are underachieving, as well as indicating what is working effectively, and what needs further development.

Our assessment strategy is designed to be formative-focussed and to reduce teacher workload

1. Half termly assessments test knowledge learnt and do not assign an attainment level. A percentage mark is given
2. Assessments are mapped so that it is clear about what students should know, and that assessment covers a significant sample of the key knowledge identified by subject leaders.
3. Assessments are designed in a way to reduce the amount of marking time for the teachers. This can include using multiple choice questions, short answer questions, on-line question systems, and using self/peer marking.
4. Tests and exams clearly indicate what students do and don't know, and what they can and can't do in order to inform future planning and help students to progress.

Communication with parents and carers

We send home two reports a year to parents and carers – one data report and one full report. These include the following information:

1. Student attendance as a percentage, Achievement points and Behaviour points

2. KS3 students will have their Minimum expected grade visible (MEG), KS4 students will have both their Mock results and predicted grade for each subject.
3. A teacher judgement on effort and homework is given with one of six grades – Needs improvement, Good, Very Good, Excellent and Outstanding.
4. For academic progress, teachers will make a judgement with one of six grades - significantly above target', 'above target', 'as expected', 'below target', or 'significantly below target
5. The second report qualifies as the annual report. This contains target comments from each subject teacher.
6. Each year group has one progress evening per year (plus an optional one for Year 11), where teachers provide clear specific feedback on a student's learning to parents and carers, including how they can improve.
7. For Year 11 students sit mock examinations in November and February. Student exams are assessed using the grading criteria that matches the course that they are studying.