



Teaching and Learning Policy

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Changes to this edition

- Updated links to other documents
- Added in reference to Trust School Improvement Framework

1. Rationale

We firmly believe that all children, regardless of their background, circumstance or starting point are entitled to the very best quality of education, in every classroom and on every day. The very best of teaching and learning, backed in research and delivered by skilled, specialist staff, will inspire our students and will enable them to thrive.

Teaching and learning are the core purpose of what we, as professionals, do. Great teaching at Minerva Learning Trust is defined as that which allows students to make significant steps forward in their learning and progress. Students are engaged, curious and inquisitive about their learning and this is fostered by strong relationships in the classroom. Teaching is personalised to individual needs and is effectively checked against the learning and progress made by students, from all key groups and in all circumstances.

All of our schools offer a broad, innovative and knowledge rich curriculum, which is well planned and sequenced to give them the skills, knowledge and experience they need to be successful in school life and beyond. This curriculum is brought to life in the classroom where our students are provided with the highest quality learning experiences, leading to a consistently high level of progress and attitude towards learning.

We believe that checks of curriculum intent, via a 'Deep Dive' and other such approaches, must sit hand in hand with checks of curriculum implementation and the effective implementation of our Minerva Teaching and Learning principles. We believe that as well as a strong curriculum (what we teach), the effective implementation of our research informed Minerva Teaching and Learning principles (how we teach it), will support all learners' progress in our classrooms. Please refer to the Trust Quality Assurance Policy to see how the Trust will quality assure the quality of educational provision.

2. Our Aims

- To create and maintain an environment and code of behaviour which promotes and secures outstanding teaching, effective learning, high standards of achievement and positive behaviour and discipline.
- To enable all students to thrive in the classroom, helping them to become inquisitive and creative thinkers to and fostering a passion for lifelong learning.
- To ensure our everyday teaching and learning is underpinned by a set of research-backed principles.
- To ensure a robust quality assurance process underpins and helps support effective teaching and learning.
- To ensure we build a culture of strong continuous professional development, which fosters an environment of collaboration and which challenges all staff to be the best they can.

- To ensure remote learning is high quality, complements the curriculum offer and is quality assured by leaders in schools.

3. Links to other documents

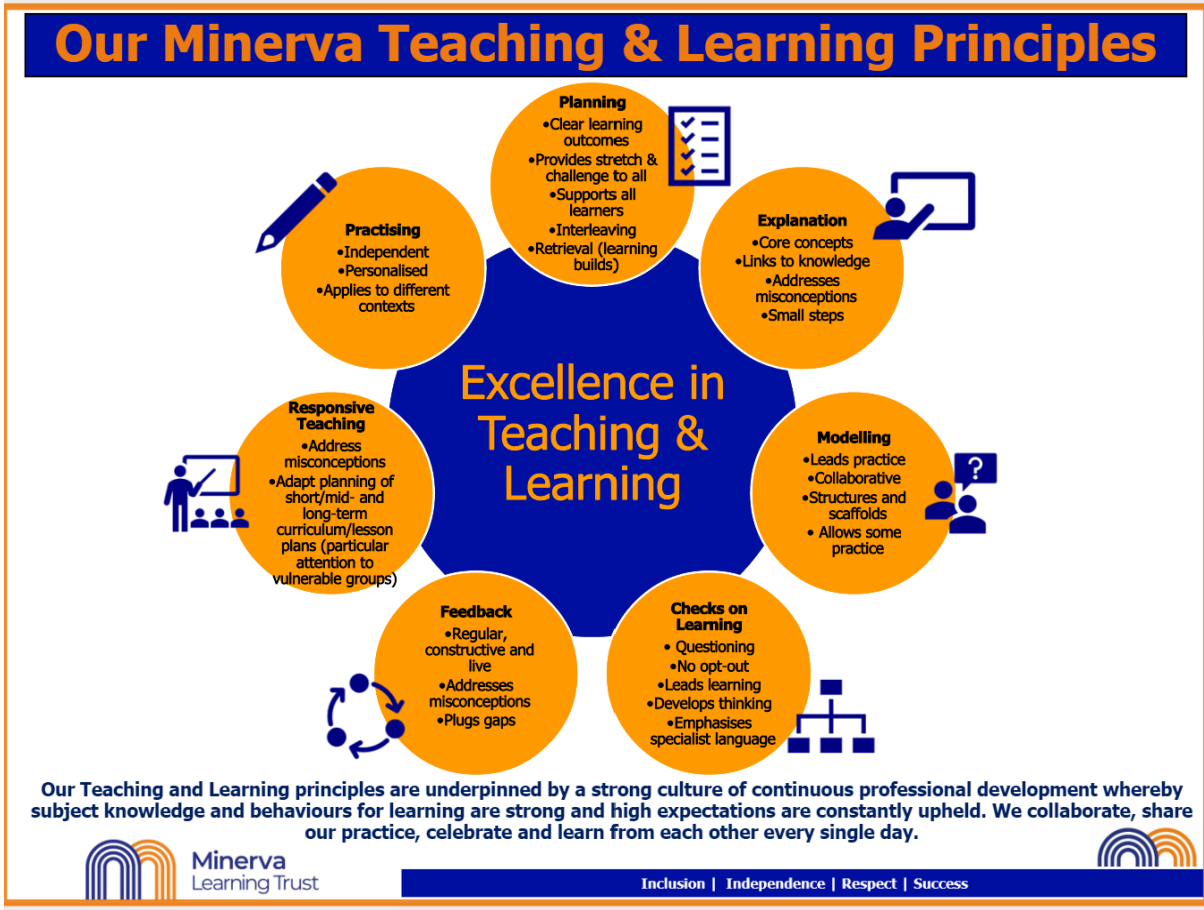
This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Trust policies/documentation:

- Quality Assurance Policy
- Early Career Teacher Policy
- Performance Development Policy
- Capability Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Curriculum Quality Assurance Policy
- Trust School Improvement Framework

4. Teaching and Learning Principles

Each of our schools works to the below common set of teaching and learning principles from which they develop their plans.

- The **planning** of engaging and challenging lessons. Lessons demonstrate clear learning outcomes, opportunities for interleaving and retrieval and are designed to support the individual needs of students and to stretch and challenge all.
- The **explanation** of core concepts. These link to knowledge, address misconceptions and are delivered in small steps.
- There are frequent **checks on learning**. Questioning is targeted and there is no opt-out. Checks on learning develop students' thinking and promote a culture of strong literacy.
- The **modelling** leads the practice and is scaffolded and well structured. Working collaboratively, students have the opportunity to practise independently.
- **Feedback** is regular, constructive and live. Feedback addresses misconceptions and plugs gaps.
- **Teaching is responsive**. This allows for misconceptions to be addressed in a timely manner and for short, mid and long term planning to be adapted to suit the needs of all learners.
- Opportunities for students to **practise** are built into lessons. This practice fosters independence and is personalised to all learners.
- All staff commit to a culture **of strong continuous professional development** and are willing to collaborate and share expertise with others. We believe in improving and not proving. Our specialist staff have a deep knowledge of their subject which evolves and becomes updated over time.



All students are entitled to the strongest Teaching and Learning in every classroom and on every day which:

- Secures success through outstanding teaching, celebration of achievement and develops self-confidence and independence.
- Is personalised to all learners. Students make significant gains in learning, regardless of their background, circumstances, individual needs or prior attainment and make rapid and sustained progress over time.
- Ensures there is a particular and enhanced focus on students who are currently making less than expected progress, whether they are disadvantaged students, high attaining students (HAs), middle ability boys, vulnerable and/or newly vulnerable or those with special education needs.
- Sets the highest standards and expectations, both in lessons and in students' books.
- Find opportunities for students to develop both literacy and numeracy skills within lessons.
- Find opportunities to develop students' SMSC education and actively promote our Minerva values and ethos to students both in and out of the classroom.
- Provide a variety of appropriate learning approaches that engage learners actively in different ways.

To uphold this, we will:

- Put the needs of individual students above any external accountability pressures.
- Be forward thinking, innovative and cutting-edge with driving teaching and learning forward.
- Develop a positive culture of self and peer-observation as well as coaching support for teaching and learning, within and between our schools.
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and progress of all students, including those with additional needs. Ensure we support middle leaders with implementing quality assurance processes.
- Ensure that a robust quality assurance process is in place for all teaching staff over the academic year.
- Ensure that all teachers whose lessons are not deemed secure are given clear targets to help them improve and a programme of support to help them to meet these targets. Any teacher noted as a cause for concern based on other evidence (such as departmental/SLT learning walks or work scrutiny exercises) is considered for action under the Trust's Capability Procedures Policy.
- Develop links with the community, including business and industry in order to extend the curriculum, deliver highly innovative enterprise initiatives to enhance learning and teaching.
- Create and maintain an effective partnership with parents and carers to support and improve student's progress, personal development and well-being

5. Quality Assurance Systems

Strong teaching and learning should be underpinned by a rigorous quality assurance system which will systematically review our provision to maintain and improve quality, equity and efficiency. Poor teaching must not be a barrier to students' learning and therefore should be rigorously monitored, evaluated and resourced.

Whilst design of quality assurance mechanisms might vary across our schools, our one common objective is to drive developments and improvements in all aspects of teaching and learning – with the ultimate goal of supporting the best outcomes for learners within the Minerva family. Please refer to the Trust Quality Assurance Policy for further information around expectations for both Trust-wide and School-led Quality Assurance.

Our Quality Assurance Principles

Our Trust quality assurance systems will be conducted in line with the principles as outlined below. We believe in:

- Respectful, supportive, and trusting relationships
- A shared, understanding, and honest dialogue
- Supporting professional development for all
- A support of innovation - risk is inherent to the process of innovation
- A strong culture of support and challenge
- A culture of 'improving' and not 'proving' and of typicality, not performance.
- An evidence and impact-based approach
- A use of different data to gain a balanced view
- Absolute confidentiality

By applying the principles above to all of our quality assurance, we will craft a positive, supportive and developmental culture around lesson monitoring, which in turn will lead to strong outcomes for all.

6. Processes and Methods

The following practices specify how the quality assurance of teaching and learning will take place across our schools.

Please read this in conjunction with the Trust Quality Assurance Policy.

School-Led Processes	Trust-wide Processes
Quality Assurance Policy	Trust School Improvement Framework
Everyday lesson monitoring and drop ins (where appropriate), learning walks and/or lesson observations	Performance Development Policy
Work scrutiny	Trust Teaching and Learning Policy and principles
School Teaching and Learning Policy	Trust Quality Assurance Protocol document
Feedback Policy (if not included in Teaching and Learning Policy)	Trust Remote Learning Policy
	Trust Capability Policy
Quality assurance of Remote Learning	Trust Curriculum Policy
Line Management meetings	CEO/EDE quality assurance visits
Parent/Carer and student voice exercises	Trust Improvement Partner
	Peer Review process
	Central School Improvement Team support

School-Led Processes

Everyday Lesson monitoring and drop ins (where appropriate), learning walks and/or lesson observations

Where schools implement systems for day to day lesson drop ins these can be a useful way of gauging the typicality of Teaching and Learning and for helping to support with embedding non-negotiables.

It helps support colleagues and picks up issues in a swift and timely manner. These are conducted by the Senior Leadership teams and/or Middle Leaders. The frequency and way in which these are conducted may vary per school. Further learning walks and lesson observations may also form a school's quality assurance as outlined in the Trust Quality Assurance Policy.

Work Scrutiny

As an addition to the Trust-agreed QA principles, some schools may wish to conduct extra formal work scrutiny activities. This could be in a particular subject area or for a selected cohort of students. Where this happens, this should take place a maximum of three times a year.

Teaching and Learning Policy

Although there is an agreed set of Trust Quality Assurance principles and policy in place, it is expected that each school will also set out full guidance, expectations, support and next steps for QA in its own Teaching and Learning Policy. This will include further details as to frequency of school-led QA exercises and any further scrutiny, such as further work sample exercises, Teaching and Learning Group peer observations.

Feedback Policy (if not included in Teaching and Learning Policy)

With regards to the quality assurance of feedback and expectations, each school will set out full guidance, expectations and support in its Teaching and Learning Policy or in its own Feedback Policy where appropriate.

Quality Assurance of Remote Learning

As and when appropriate, the quality of remote teaching and learning will be quality assured and both Senior and Middle Leaders will oversee this. The purpose of this is to ensure that the quality and quantity of work being set is appropriate and to ensure it is meeting students' needs. A quality assurance process is also necessary to ensure colleagues working from home are delivering and setting work in line with school expectations. Each school will develop its own expectations for this; however, a Trust-wide Remote Learning Policy underpins and supports minimum expectations.

When looking at the overall quality of remote education, a three-way approach may be taken by reviewers.

This might include visiting an online lesson to look at curriculum intent and implementation, conducting a work scrutiny exercise with a minimum of three students and conducting a student voice exercise with the same group of students.

Line Management Meetings

All Middle and Senior leaders meet staff who they line manage on a regular basis to support and challenge them in their duties and responsibilities.

The frequency of these meetings will vary per school and per subject, depending on circumstance. Teaching and Learning is a standard agenda item at all line management meetings in our schools.

Subject leaders may also have calendared RAP meetings with SLT links – the focus of which are often on a specific cohort of students, but which will also likely allow for any teaching and learning concerns which arise to be discussed. Meeting notes are recorded and shared.

Parent/Carer and Student Voice exercises

A wide range of formal and informal methods are used to evaluate parental and student views concerning teaching and learning.

Trust-wide Processes

Performance Development Policy

All teaching and support staff undergo a process of Performance Development annually and in line with the Trust Performance Development Policy. Ambitions may feed into, or be inspired by, school and/or Trust development plans but ultimately should allow staff to focus on specific areas of practice they identify as wanting to improve. In order to have a successful performance review, staff are expected to engage positively and proactively with the process.

Trust Quality Assurance and Teaching and Learning Policy and Principles

The quality assurance of teaching and learning will be set out as in the Trust Quality Assurance Policy as well as the Trust Teaching and Learning Policy (this document). The policy will set out expectations regarding our principles and approach as well as the different quality assurance processes to be expected in each of our schools.

Trust Remote Learning Policy

As above, each school will set out its minimum expectations with regards to remote teaching and learning but this will also be supported by a Trust-wide policy. The purpose of this is to ensure all of our schools meet the statutory obligations and expectations as set out in the Department for Education's Remote Education Expectations (2020).

Trust Curriculum Policy

A Trust Curriculum Policy sets out how curriculum is quality assured. Subject Leaders within schools are responsible for ensuring curriculum plans are having impact and further guidance and policy on the quality assurance of curriculum can be found in this documentation.

Trust Capability Policy

Where there is a concern regarding the quality of teaching and learning, a Trust Capability Policy is in place to support schools with next steps. This policy details support available and gives a framework as to how these next steps should be led.

Trust Quality Assurance visits

Each school will have three annual visits from the Trust CEO or Executive Director of Education. The purpose of the visits is to provide challenge and support to the Headteacher and the school. The visit will involve a discussion with the Headteacher and/or members of the Senior Leadership Teams and a learning walk around the school building.

Trust Improvement Partner

Each school will have three annual visits from our Trust Improvement Partner (TIP) who is external to the Trust. The purpose of the visit is to provide support and challenge to the school. The CEO and Headteachers may wish to ask the TIP to focus on a particular line of enquiry, for example where outcomes and/or teaching and learning need improving or where leaders are needing validation.

Peer Review Process

The Trust-led Peer Reviews take place once a year and are led by the SIT, Heads, Senior Leaders and Leaders from across all schools. The purpose of the visit is to provide support and challenge to the school. The EDE/DISIQofE and Headteachers focus on lines of enquiry, for example where outcomes and/or teaching and learning need improving and the process will focus around this area. The process will be supportive and collaborative.

Central School Improvement Team support

The Central School Improvement Team are primarily based to challenge and support schools and their thinking. They will provide targeted and bespoke support to schools and will help develop and lead the development of strategic policies and practice across the Trust. As well as this, they will identify best practice and facilitate school to school support where necessary and provide coaching and mentoring in their areas of expertise, as per the needs of the school and/or Trust wide priorities.

The frequency of visits will be dependent on need.

7. Professional Development

Teaching and Learning is at the heart of everything we do, every day and in every classroom across our schools. Our ethos is for all teachers to 'improve' and not 'prove' and for all practitioners to have a relentless drive to continuously improve their practice.

A strong culture of continuous professional development and collaboration, both within individual schools and across all schools, helps to drive this mission.

As our team of Minerva Leaders in Education grows, we anticipate more and more colleagues opting to work with a MLE and that this programme will support the ever-growing positive culture around teaching and learning.

Where concerns regarding the quality of teaching and learning remain, a supportive and developmental approach will be taken and this may include mentoring and accessing the wealth of CPD on offer, both within schools and across schools. If concerns continue, the Trust Capability Policy will support next steps.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Trust Board will monitor the outcomes and impact of the Teaching and Learning Policy process on a regular basis through reports from senior leaders and consider evidence collated about the completion of the process, development accessed, equality impact and evaluation of impact on the delivery of services.

9. Equality Impact Assessment

The Trust will carry out Equality Impact Assessments in order to ensure that policies, procedures and practices cater for individuals who share protected characteristics in relation to the Equality Act 2010. The purpose of these assessments is to ensure that all policies, procedures and practices within the organisation are fair to all. If unfairness is highlighted, the assessment will also seek to show how this can be changed and, where it can't be changed, how it can be improved.