The E-ACT BURNHAM PARK ACADEMY

Best Practice, Best Progress, Best Performance - Always

Teaching and Learning Policy

Responsible officer: R. Cottyn

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Best Practice; Best Progress; Best Performance

At The E-ACT Burnham Park Academy we believe in our mantra. We want all stakeholders in The E-ACT Burnham Park Academy to be constantly striving towards their personal best. However we do not see the 'best' as a fixed, determined endpoint, rather, like intelligence itself, as a movable, infinitely expandable commodity. We seek to provide the kind of challenging environment where teachers and students alike are able to take risks, to aspire and to surprise themselves with what they can achieve.

Teaching and Learning Charter

The teaching and learning charter is aimed at embedding our ethos and mantra.

Best Practice	**Best Performance**	**Best Progress**
Teaching for Learning Power	Independence Courage	Building Learning Power
Explaining	Questioning	Resilience
Commentating	Teamwork Active Listening	Resourcefulness
Orchestrating	Creative Thinking	Reflectiveness
Modelling	Fluent communication	Reciprocity
Challenge	Adaptability	
Pace	Open Mindedness	
	Confidence	
	Awareness of self and others	
	Motivation Perseverance	
	Attainment	

The next three sections will focus on elaborating on the ethos embedded in the charter and offer guidance to the attributes of a lesson that are needed to demonstrate "Best Practice, Best Progress and Best Performance";

Best Practice

We work on the principal that it is every teacher's goal to push up standards in terms of their students and their own practice. It is only through the continual reflective pursuit of best practice that we will achieve a best progress and sustainable best performance. Best practice is the foundation of all we do.

Our aim is that every learning episode will be at least good, and that many will be outstanding.
The following are some common characteristics of outstanding Teaching (this is not a checklist):

- **Clear Context**: the lesson should almost always begin with a recap of the previous lesson or an introduction to the new unit. This ensures that students are fully up to speed and ready for the topic that will be covered in today's lesson.
- **Clear Lesson Objectives**: It is vital that you know exactly what you are trying to achieve during the course of the lesson. These objectives should be shared with students in a way that they can understand. The objectives should be revisited during the lesson, and reviewed at the end, allowing students to chart their progress and enabling you to ensure that the lesson is on track.

- **Clear Explanations**: Language should be a tool for communication, not a barrier. Be careful to use accessible language whilst developing subject vocabulary and revisit the meanings of new words as often as is necessary to make every student comfortable with their use. Long sets of instructions should be avoided.
- **Assessment**: Carry out appropriate assessment of understanding and progress throughout your lessons. This may be brief and informal but it should never be missing. Without assessing progress regularly it is impossible to ensure that your lesson is providing a valuable learning opportunity to your students.
- **Feedback**: Give your students regular and unambiguous feedback on their progress whether this is better, worse, or equal to what you would have expected. You can feedback to the whole class, to groups or to individuals as appropriate.
- **Variety**: Outstanding lessons will invariably draw on a wide range of teaching and learning activities in order to tap into the learning styles of the different students in the class. A variety of activities will also keep your students engaged and motivated and help them to approach the same topic in a variety of different ways and gain new viewpoints on it.
- **Evaluation**: Take time at the end of the lesson to evaluate with your students, to what extent the lesson objectives have been achieved. You can also talk to them a little about what will be covered in the next lesson to begin to form a bridge for their continuous learning.

To achieve this we expect all teaching at BPA should be:

- **Well planned** - with a clear structure to lessons
- **Interactive** - involving the students in their learning
- **Motivating** - engendering enthusiasm for the subject in the students
- **Differentiated** - to meet the needs of all the students
- **Informed** - by what students know, understand and can do
- **Fun and enjoyable**.

Teachers should recognise that:

- Each learner is unique and has a preferred learning style
- Building and maintaining learner self-esteem optimises learning
- Learners make great progress in an environment rich in language and interaction
- Learners progress by setting appropriate learning goals for themselves and reviewing these regularly
- Learning is more effective in a safe and secure learning environment
- Long term learning is aided by structured peer learning with built in opportunities for discussion
- Learning is more effective when there is a variety of short, structured tasks and where there are learning choices
- Assessment for Learning is an essential part of teaching and learning:

It is prudent to note again this is not a check list and it certainly is not exhaustive but good teaching is built on Basic Foundations that all teachers at the E-ACT Burnham Park academy commit to.

The Basics

Planning; Planning for teaching should include:

- Clear teaching activities

- Appropriate subject related vocabulary
- Activities differentiated for groups of students
- Assessment opportunities for identified groups of students
- Appropriate questioning techniques to develop learning
- Resources to support and reinforce learning
- Homework that reinforces and extends what has been learnt in the lesson.

It is our policy that all lessons should be planned and the plan must be documented using the E-act Burnham Park academy lesson plan which is designed to facilitate structure and focus.

Planning for learning should include:

- Clear learning objectives
- Opportunities for collaborative working in pairs or groups
- Opportunities for independent study
- Making links between lessons on a similar subject
- Opportunities for students to ask questions and contribute to whole class discussion
- Opportunities to explore, investigate and research
- Frequent re-visiting of key concepts, vocabulary and facts
- Consideration of how to facilitate progression over time (within lessons and across a sequence of lessons)

Lesson Structure and Time Allocation

Lessons should include:

- A clear lesson structure with a beginning, middle and end.
- Plenaries and mini-plenaries are included to check progress
- Students engaged in a learning activity as soon as they enter the room
- Appropriate amount of time and number of lessons to cover the curriculum
- Differentiation
- Challenge
- Pace

Interactive Lessons; Teachers should use a variety of skills and techniques to ensure genuine interaction between teacher and all students, such as:
- Effective questioning using different modes of questions to elicit different types of information
- Planned opportunities for discussion and thinking time in pairs and groups
- Effective use of the plenary session to allow students to explain their thinking
- Effective use of technology to aid learning; interactive whiteboards, Web 2.0 technologies, multimedia devices etc
- A variety of activities that stimulate students' thinking, such as Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats and curiosity, which will encourage debate.

Motivating Students; Teachers should use a mix of strategies to motivate and encourage enthusiasm for the subject including:

- A variety of learning activities
- A variety of teaching styles
- A variety of resources and artefacts.

- Pace
- Challenge

Differentiation; Teachers should employ a variety of strategies for differentiation; these should include differentiating by:

- **Resource** - using ICT, a variety of media and study guides at all times ensuring readability
- **Response** - using clear objectives, accessible questions and explicit assessment criteria
- **Support** - using other teachers, LSAs/LSTs, EAL support staff and other students effectively
- **Task** - using a variety of tasks matched to students' abilities with some choice and a range of outcomes.

Teachers should employ differentiation in a manageable way whilst at the same time ensuring the needs of all students are met. This can be achieved by:

- Planning activities for no more than three or four groups of students
- Modifying the activities within these groups for students with different learning needs
- Employing LSAs/LSTs and EAL support staff in a planned and informed manner.

The Use of Assessment; Assessment should be an integral part of the everyday work of teachers. It should be used to:

- Inform the short term planning cycle
- Inform teachers about the progress of students
- Inform students how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve
- Enable students to undergo self-assessment, an integral part of Assessment for Learning
- Provide information for Student and parents to track
- Provide information for the Curriculum Coordinator/Subject Leader to monitor and pass onto the next teacher.

Classroom Organisation and Management; Teachers should organise and manage classrooms to include:

- Setting consistent classroom routines
- Seating plans to promote effective learning
- Appropriate grouping of students
- A stimulating learning environment including colourful and neat displays of students' work, key words, wonder walls, 'unanswerable questions', thinking strategies etc
- A variety of ways of working involving individual, pairs, group work and whole class
- Effective use of resources
- Modelling, scaffolding and planning for sequential steps in learning so pupils are clear how to progress.

In order to ensure high quality teaching and learning across the school LT aim to work collaboratively with staff to ensure the impact of strategies and approaches in the classroom is constantly being reviewed. To support this culture we have devised a robust monitoring schedule:

- Curriculum Leaders to meet with LT link weekly with an agreed agenda.

- Curriculum Leaders will conduct paired Lesson Observations to ensure consistency and accuracy of judgement as well as developing learning dialogue.
- Teachers and Teaching Assistants will be formally observed at least 3 times per year. Records will be kept of outcomes and used to drive personalised CPD programmes.
- LT and subject leaders will regularly undertake learning walks to share and disseminate good practice across the school and within subject areas
- Subject areas will conduct 'book looks' and planning checks on in house record sheets at least once per term.
- LT and Curriculum Leaders will undertake regular learning walks focused on a staff nominated aspect of teaching and learning.
- SLT and Curriculum Leaders will undertake a curriculum review process and report at least once per year (this will feed into the departmental improvement form and development plan).
- Peer observations are actively encouraged to share good practice and dialogue about teaching and learning.

Above all, every learning experience at The E-ACT Burnham Park Academy should strive through **Best Practice**, to facilitate **Best Progress** and **Best Performance**.

Continuing Professional Development

We recognise that 'the greatest effects on student learning occur when teachers become learners of their own teaching, and when students become their own teachers' (Hattie: 2012)

Continuing professional development is at the heart of BPA's teaching and learning strategy. In order to support colleagues in their progression we are committed to the following:

- Establishing and reviewing inset needs through regular discussion and lesson observation
- Providing regular opportunities for all colleagues to experience quality in-house training on specific aspects of teaching and learning
- Providing integrated opportunities for colleagues to share and discuss good practice in formal and informal environments – this includes the development of cross faculty learning communities to research, share good practice and develop new ideas/ approaches.
- To agree on a common language of learning to be used across the academy in order to evaluate practice and make reflection explicit to students
- To encourage risk taking and creative approaches
- Supporting colleagues in further educational aspirations linked to roles within the school
- Encouraging colleagues to attend external courses and disseminate ideas on new approaches
- Providing coaching and mentoring for colleagues
- Providing forums (online/ print based) for sharing good practice and ideas.
- Establishing a core teaching and learning group with specific responsibility for keeping abreast of current teaching and learning initiatives/ research, for trialling ideas, evaluating, and disseminating to staff.
- Ensuring that all teachers and teacher assistants are actively involved in developing Best practice at the E-ACT Burnham Park academy.

Above all we believe in supporting an innovative learning environment for both teachers and students, and any teacher wishing to experiment in new ideas and pedagogy will be supported in line with this ethos.

Best Progress

Having outlined best practice and its attributes this section intends to outline the characteristics of best progress and how best to secure it in a sustainable fashion.

It is the aim of every lesson at the E-ACT Burnham Park Academy that through expert teaching and building learning power (see attachment outlining the principals of building learning power) all pupils can consistently demonstrate 'best progress'. By its nature best progress relies on the two aspects of the learner

- The Qualitative aspect encapsulates the characteristics of the individual learner which must be addressed in order to aid the learner to secure best progress.
- The Quantitative aspect is the measures needed to demonstrate that all students given support through best practice ultimately achieve best progress.

Qualitative aspect

Following Hattie (2012), we recognise that students learn best in environments where:

- They feel the teacher **cares** about them as individuals.
- Where the teacher is in **control**, respecting them and respected by them.
- Where explanations are **clear** and difficult concepts are made accessible to all.
- Where they are **challenged** to learn, to evaluate and to develop.
- Where they are **captivated** by the thrill of the subject and ways of learning about it.
- Where they are encouraged to **confer** – to share their ideas and opinions in various different forums.
- Where they are able to **consolidate** learning through feedback and evaluation of their progress.

We expect that these to be feature of every learning environment and interaction within the school.

As part of our continuing review of teaching and learning, we will undertake to provide regular opportunities for students to feedback on the quality of their learning experiences, encouraging teachers to build in such self-evaluation as part of their classroom practice.

Claxton (2002) outlines the following characteristics of good learners. These should be displayed and referred to in all classrooms (posters to be provided):

What good learners do:

listen to others
Ask as well as answer questions
Co-operate with others
Ask yourself what went wrong and why

Don't give up when you are stuck. You could:
Read the question again
split the question into smaller bits
ask someone who has a similar problem
ask yourself; what do I know already that could help me?
Go on to another question and come back to the bit you are stuck on at the end.

In order to facilitate "Best Progress" we expect schemes of learning to reflect and embrace Claxton's four Rs of Learning Power (see Appendix 1 for fuller explanation of the 4 Rs and appendix 2 for some teaching approaches):

- Resilience
- Resourcefulness
- Reflectiveness
- Reciprocity

These should form the common language of learning across the school, used for reflection, evaluation and to demonstrate progress.

The quantitative aspect

These are specific measures that can be used to identify and demonstrate the progress achieved in lessons:

Prerequisites for students
- Knowledge of current level/grade
- Knowledge of target grade
- Knowledge of specific learning objective in lesson
- Knowledge of skills to be applied to achieve and indeed demonstrate the objective has been learned

How does the teacher demonstrate these in lessons? Some suggestions… (also see Teaching Strategies Suggestions- Sept 2012 document for more ideas)

- ✓ Assessment for learning (peer/ self/ teacher)
- ✓ Mini plenaries to review learning and set context for next phase
- ✓ Discussion; group/ paired/ class
- ✓ Questioning – use of Bloom's taxonomy
- ✓ 5 Es to structure learning
- ✓ Solo taxonomy to structure learning

- ✓ Using the language of BLP explicitly and regularly so pupils become autonomous in their ability to reflect and progress
- ✓ Excellent teacher feedback; verbal and written
- ✓ Modelling progression
- ✓ Modelling thinking
- ✓ Listening and responding to pupils – creating a learning dialogue
- ✓ Ask students to develop/ extend/ refine/ justify their ideas
- ✓ Be open to different possibilities/ interpretations
- ✓ Making explanations clear and succinct
- ✓ Encourage students' questions and trains of thought
- ✓ Present obstacles and challenges to students' learning
- ✓ Use the learning environment for exemplar work/ drafting advice/ pupil friendly level descriptors.
- ✓ Allow students to own part of the learning environment – what do your walls say about who does the work in your classroom? Wonder walls/ questions/ graffiti key words/ Poet-trees/ home learning reviews/ providing structures for questions eg through OPV/ thinking hats/ Bloom/ SOLO etc
- ✓ Use a range of learning styles to accommodate all students
- ✓ Offer choice of learning pathways where possible – it's part of differentiation

Characteristics

- All students can identify and articulate the learning objective (not just what they are doing and where they are on the board)
- All students know their current level and the level of the work they are doing
- All students know how to improve

Best Performance

The ethos of best performance is focused on the ultimate outcome for our students in terms of academic and personal achievement. But it does not negate or ignore the ultimate outcome for the teacher, subject, department or the academy.

For each of these again qualitative and quantitative characteristics are needed.

The Qualitative Characteristics

For the student

This is best encapsulated in the skills we believe in fostering through the delivery of our curriculum

- ✶ Independence
- ✶ Courage
- ✶ Questioning
- ✶ Teamwork
- ✶ Active Listening
- ✶ Creative Thinking
- ✶ Fluent communication
- ✶ Adaptability
- ✶ Open Mindedness
- ✶ Confidence
- ✶ Awareness of self and others

- ✷ Motivation
- ✷ Perseverance

These are essential skills for life and future employment. We need to ensure we teach our students these skills so that they will be able to be successful in the world beyond school. These are the intended outcomes of this policy for our students. To that effect we have developed the teaching and learning charter…

For the teacher
- ✷ Teachers facilitate and lead learning in a high challenge, low stress environment
- ✷ Teachers progress in their CPD goals
- ✷ Teachers are inspired and motivated to innovate and demonstrate their passion for their subject areas
- ✷ Effective support is given with areas for development
- ✷ Colleagues feel enabled to fulfil their professional ambitions
- ✷ Teachers are reflective, collaborative and above all enjoy overseeing the progress of the young people in their care.

For the Subject and or department
- ✷ A spirit of collaboration is fostered where innovation is encouraged
- ✷ Resources, including the learning environment are well maintained and respected by students and staff
- ✷ The business of learning is a priority at all times

For the academy
- ✷ Young people and teachers for whom courtesy and respect are a priority.
- ✷ Pupils who attend regularly, are well equipped for learning and who are excited about their lessons.
- ✷ Teachers and students alike who feel proud to be members of the Burnham Park Academy community.

The Quantative Characteristics

For the student

- ✷ Literacy
- ✷ Numeracy
- ✷ ICT Capability
- ✷ Meeting or exceeding their academic targets
- ✷ Accumulating a high number of merits
- ✷ Level of participation in the personal Best programme
- ✷ Etc….

For the teacher, subject and or department

- ✷ Assessment and work scrutiny identified as outstanding;
- ✷ Ability to progress with career aspirations
- ✷ teachers who are confident, who enjoy their work and who feel supported by the school's leadership;

For the academy

* outstanding pupil progress seen in lessons and over time, in their responses, in work and in assessment data;
* Students who are actively engaged in their own learning and demonstrating the skills outlined in the teaching and learning charter;
* pupils and parents reporting positively about teaching and learning at the school;
* Ofsted inspections ratify and concur with the school's improvement and self evaluation

Linked documents:

- BPA planning; common learning plan
- BPA Observation; common Observation form
- Assessment policy
- Display and the learning environment
- Induction/ training policy
- Home/ school agreement

References

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