Walthamstow Academy

Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

…and Quality Assurance

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Part 1: Curriculum Intent

Our aim is to provide an excellent education for all our students; our vision for 'best lesson, best day, best year, best future' is rooted in a desire to bring out the best in all students during their time at Walthamstow Academy, and prepare them for success in life. We have a powerful, intellectual and rigorous curriculum which is designed to provide the core knowledge, skills and cultural capital that will become the foundation of students' experience and success in life. We aim to maximise their talents and cognitive development, to develop the whole person so that our students become well-informed, curious, independent citizens.

We teach children how to think, how to evaluate and criticise, how to be active and curious recipients of information; but each of these skills are taught within the context of the rich knowledge each subject provides. By instilling our students with the best of what's been thought, said and done in each subject, we hope that our curriculum enables children to appreciate and participate in the full richness of the human experience.

Our curriculum goes beyond what is taught in classrooms. We develop the whole child through our broad and rich Education with Character programme, which includes our PSHE programme, extra-curricular provision and our Work Related Learning provision. Our curriculum is founded on the following key principles:

Knowledge – Our curriculum is designed for Walthamstow Academy students; it specifies the knowledge that should be taught, provides resources to assist with this and exemplifies successful learning. Our teachers bring this knowledge to life for our students through their passion, pedagogy and practice.

Mastery – all students should achieve a full understanding of the curriculum in each year, and teaching should not move on until this is achieved. We build, scaffold, extend, interleave and spiral our curriculum to ensure that topics are built on, reinforced and revisited over time, resulting in a clear pathway from Year 7 through to Year 11 and beyond to Year 13. We use rigorous examinations, formative in-class assessment and whole class feedback to promote the progress of our students and therefore find the moment when teaching can move on.

Stability – we make occasional adjustments in the light of feedback and experience, but we aim for stability over time, so that teachers can develop expertise, and we constantly build assessments and teaching materials to support our curriculum.

Entitlement, Equality and Inclusion – all students have the right to follow the Walthamstow Academy curriculum; we have a duty to ensure all students learn the whole of it. Our students have equal opportunities to succeed and are clearly represented in and see themselves in the curriculum. The knowledge students are taught champions equality and diversity, and this enriches each student and the whole community.

Education with Character – Our whole curriculum experience sparks curiosity and independent thinking and develops character. This is evident in lessons, in PSHE, in our clubs and extra-curricular life.

Part 2: Implementation – Teaching and Learning

At Walthamstow Academy, high quality teaching ensures high quality curriculum delivery. Our pedagogy is underpinned by cognitive science and rooted in research, and it is founded on Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction and the I-We-You

structure. Teacher passion and subject knowledge is a significant focus, ensuring that students are engaged, curious and interested in what they are learning.

Teacher Subject Knowledge

Teachers at Walthamstow Academy have a passion for the subjects that they teach. Every teacher believes that their subject is the best of them all, and shares their excitement about their subject with their classes every lesson. Teachers have a deep and up-to-date knowledge of the curriculum and the exam requirements for their subjects. As a result of this, we hope that students in Year 9 and Year 11 struggle to make their GCSE and A level choices, because they love all their subjects so much.

Teachers use Explicit Direct Instruction to clearly guide student learning of new material and the teacher's role as expert in the classroom is understood and respected by students. In classrooms around the school, students listen to their teachers first and are then keen to get involved in questions, discussions and activities that put their new knowledge to the test.

Teachers are supported within their departments to develop their subject knowledge through masterclasses with subject experts and through constantly staying up to date with changes and developments to the curriculum. Schemes of Work are centrally planned in departments but adapted by individual teachers to meet the needs of their students.

The Structure of Lessons: I Teach -We Check -You Practise and Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction

Each lesson begins with a 10 minute 'Do Now' which incorporates a review of prior knowledge via a Low Stakes Quiz, often using mini whiteboards. This may be a review of material from the previous lesson or interleaved material from elsewhere in the curriculum.

We then use *I Teach → We Check → You Practise* for all sequences of learning at Walthamstow Academy. Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction are incorporated into this framework to ensure that new knowledge is effectively integrated, practised and remembered.

1. **The I Teach section** of the lesson is the presentation of new, core knowledge that is delivered to the class. This stage of the lesson incorporates the following:

- Explicit Direct Instruction
- Teacher annotation on the board
- Modelling
- Sharing the success criteria

In this stage of the lesson, students are listening quietly and taking notes when directed. This phase of the lesson may be interspersed with questions from the teacher.

2. **The We Check section of** the lesson relies upon:

- Teacher questioning – systematic checking for understanding (e.g. with mini whiteboards)
- Teacher questioning – probing and developing student understanding
- Guided student discussion
- Peer assessment
- Self-assessment
- Guided practice of new skills and material

- Scaffolding for difficult task
- Addressing mistakes in their learning - teachers clear up misconceptions, give feedback to students and guide students to be successful in their new skills and knowledge.

It is also during this section that students are given the opportunity to deepen their understanding of new material and demonstrate curiosity and independent thinking. The teacher's depth of subject knowledge enables them to facilitate student discussions that stretch and challenge students, often recontextualising material or probing them to explain, extend or clarify their answers.

3. **The You Practise section** of the lesson involves students working independently with the new skills and knowledge that they have learnt.

This will be most successful when the 'I Teach' and 'We Check' sections have enabled all students to understand the new knowledge and skills in enough detail to then apply them independently to their own work. Teachers circulate with intent to check and give feedback on student work.

The ' You Practise' sections may need to be chunked into smaller sections, broken up by whole class questioning, peer assessment or self-assessment in order for the teacher to check for student understanding and enable the students to obtain a high success rate.

Feedback is crucial to this stage of the learning, as well as during the 'We Check' section. More information about the ways in which we deliver feedback can be found in the attached Feedback Policy.

Summary of *I Teach → We Check → You Practise*

Instructional Core	Looks Like…
I Teach – Part a	Teacher delivering EDI Students listening in silence
I Teach – Part b	Teacher delivering EDI/ sharing a model and occasionally asking questions Students listening in silence; answering questions when appropriate
We Check – Part a	Teacher uses a range of questioning strategies/ holds class discussion to check for understanding Students answer questions and engage in class discussion
We Check – Part b	Teacher sets 'think time' activity for students and circulates with intent Students complete 'think time' activity with peers and teacher when they circulate
You Practise – Part a	Teacher sets an independent activity and consistently circulates with intent; stops 'You Do' to re-teach if misconceptions arise Students complete independent activity
You Practise – Part b	Teacher circulates with intent and live marks or gives verbal feedback Students complete independent activity

Part 3: Lesson Preparation Guidance for teachers

Guidance for Planning/ Preparing Lessons for Teachers

Centrally produced resources and lesson plans save time and aid consistency across a department. Lesson preparation is the process of adapting these department curriculum resources for each class and for groups of students. Lesson preparation is a set of decisions a teacher makes about how they will teach from a lesson plan and how they will make it their own.

Know the content of your lesson well and ensure you develop your own subject knowledge: You can't deliver your best lesson if you're not sure what comes next and you haven't thought through how to teach sections from a lesson plan. Expert subject knowledge will enable you to predict misconceptions, break down learning into manageable chunks, choose good questions and plan for effective explanations, independent practice and assessment.

Adaptation of centralised curriculum plans and resources: it is very important to adapt these for your classes by preparing resources and scaffolds to enable all students to achieve the learning objectives. The core content (the 'what') of the curriculum has been decided, but you will bring it to life in our own context, and will adapt lessons (the 'how') to meet the needs of your classes. This enables you to be responsive to their misconceptions and gaps in knowledge and fluency. Some teachers adapt the PowerPoint slides, others create their own resources e.g. booklets.

Planning for Re-teaching: plan for opportunities to re-teach or address any gaps or misconceptions picked up on in previous lessons from formative assessment. Plan scheduled 'Pause Lessons' for re-teaching and re- testing.

Plan backwards: visualise what you would expect the highest achieving students to be able to know/do by the end of the lesson/sequence of lessons, and plan how you will get all students there by chunking down the learning into small steps using I Teach>We Check>You Practise.

Segues: connect upcoming content to the previous task or to what's coming next. Look ahead and backwards to see how parts of lessons and topics fit together. This makes lessons feel more connected and helps students make connections – it helps them see the curriculum map in action over time.

Prepare Model Answers: these are exemplar answers that you will write out in the 'I Teach', 'We Check' and 'You Practise' phases of lessons, which should also be adapted for the needs of individual classes. They are the answers you hope a student will give to your question. It would be easy to overlook this step or underestimate its value in planning. By having exemplar written answers written down and in front of you, it allows you to diagnose what students have done wrong more quickly and accurately. This frees more of your working memory to be more responsive and to think why students are making mistakes and what can be done about it.

Plan for Error: predict misconceptions and plan how you will respond, intentionally thinking though (and writing down) what students will misunderstand about key questions in the lesson and then planning potential corrective actions. You can record the errors to inform what needs re-teaching as well as noting which work can be used as an exemplar. This will give additional purpose to your circulation. Ideally, predicting errors can help hone your EDI, so that the errors don't happen in the first place.

Script and plan teacher talk to help ensure clear exposition for th e ‘ I Teach’ and ‘ We Check’ phases: It is very important to ensure exposition is clear and accurate. Plan how you will model. Plan to use annotations to help enhance the quality of your live modelling. This is more powerful and responsive than using a static PowerPoint slide to model.

Identify and plan how you will explicitly teach Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary: annotate/mark up new Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary in advance. Plan how you will teach this vocabulary and where you will enable the students to use it.

Plan for practice at each stage: select independent practice and retrieval activities in advance to support students gaining the level of fluency needed. Build in spaced retrieval practice in the ‘Do Now’ activity and throughout the lesson. Retrieval practice can be closed or open book.

Reading Comprehensions: use these as classwork or homework to develop literacy, involve parents, extend subject knowledge and broaden cultural capital.

Pedagogy Booklets: use the Walthamstow Academy Pedagogy Booklets to help you plan your lessons. Each booklet gives you practical tips and strategies to help you develop your teaching in the following areas: Questioning, Challenge, Independent Thinking, Review and EDI.

Homework: should serve one of three purposes: to front load information, eg pre-reading; to extend or continue work done in a lesson; to revise or recap work done previously. See the Homework policy for more information.

Part 4: Our Universal Offer

Universal offer (quality first teaching)

This means high quality, adaptive teaching and whole-school practices. The idea is that needs can be met before targeted support is needed. Identification of barriers to learning is key, so that the class teacher can seek to address these in the first instance. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/inclusive-teaching/adaptations-additional-support

Everyone gets (universal offer):

1. Explicit instruction
2. Guided practice
3. Independent practice
4. Clear examples
5. Modelling and worked examples
6. Live marking and feedback – teacher circulation
7. Assessment for learning
8. Scaffolding
9. Positive relationships
10. Calm classroom environments
11. Praise and rewards
12. Dual coding
13. Clear expectations of work and behaviour
14. Established routines
15. Clear success criteria
16. Suitable challenge
17. Meaningful and accessible homework

In-class adaptations for some:

1. Additional explanations or modelling
2. Cues and prompts
3. Thinking time
4. Chunks of time
5. Seating plan / groupings
6. Support from LSA
7. Dictionary / ipad / text-book
8. Time out pass
9. Movement break
10. Be given a job to do
11. Larger font
12. Different colour paper
13. Rule reminders ahead of warning

Targeted support

Targeted support will be brought in when the universal offer is 'not enough'. This happens outside the classroom and for a fixed period.

The stronger the universal offer is, a greater number of students will benefit, then fewer targeted interventions are needed – meaning that this resource can be spread amongst fewer students.

Targeted support should be aligned with the curriculum so that learning is cohesive.

Part 5: Impact – Guidance for Teachers on Feedback and Assessment

Assessment is how we measure and evaluate the impact of our delivery of the curriculum. As teachers, this is done during lessons (formative assessment); through reading student work and through summative assessment. Feedback is how we let students know how well they are doing: how well have they grasped a concept and what could they do to further enhance their knowledge and understanding. Feedback can be informal and formal. It can be given to an individual student verbally or in writing, or it can be given to the whole class at once.

Planning Formative assessment and checking for understanding throughout your lesson should occur in all stages of the lesson. Examples of techniques include: Do Now quizzes, closed book knowledge tests, cold-calling, use of MWBs, lots of independent practice during the 'You' phase, circulating with intent during independent practice, live marking, and Exit Tickets. Misconceptions can be quickly addressed with live feedback and possibly re-teaching.
MWBs: Mini Whiteboards greatly enhance the quality of your formative assessment

Visualisers: support formative assessment through being able to show and narrate examples of excellent work, as well as misconceptions.

Questioning – participation: consider and plan what questions to ask, and also how each question is asked and answered e.g. via cold-calling, Think, Pair, Share or MWB et**Questioning - voice equity:** Using Mini Whiteboards and getting responses from all students at the same time is important for a fully inclusive classroom. The ideas of quiet students matter too. Think about individual students when planning for Cold Call. Think about who has been quiet in previous lessons.

Questioning - Hinge questions: Hinge questions are questions that you ask a class that can give you confirmation of being able to move on to the next stage of the lesson, or whether you need to revisit the material and clear up some misconceptions. Plan these questions for robust formative assessment so you can be confident that your students are ready to move on.

Whole class feedback

It is important that you plan activities for students that will demonstrate their learning, then look at books to understand common mistakes and misconceptions. This does not need to be an entire exam or assessment – it could be part of a longer response or a selection of appropriate exercises. Use a whole class feedback sheet to note down what needs to be retaught, as well as spelling and grammar mistakes. Planning your DIRT (Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time) activities for students then becomes very easy. Next lesson, make it really clear to the students why they are doing the DIRT activities and how they link to the mistakes or misconceptions you read in their work, thus enabling a greater understanding of the content

Part 6: Impact – Quality Assurance of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning is what teachers and students spend most of their time doing and so we all have a responsibility to ensure that they are both of the highest quality. All staff should undertake quality assurance activities throughout the year and these should identify best practice so we can learn from each other; alert us to things that aren't working so that we can quickly fix them; identify patterns and trends so that we can target our resources in the right places. Quality assurance activities include learning walks, data analysis, book scrutinies, student voice and analysis of curriculum coverage.

Quality Assurance at Walthamstow Academy is based around the following principles:

1. Everyone is involved in and responsible for undertaking quality assurance activities
2. All staff should quality assure their own work and their own initiatives, with support from their line manager and their team
3. Leaders should quality assure the work of their teams so that they are in the best position to provide guidance and CPD, and to direct time and resources to the right place at the right time
4. Quality assurance brings improvements to what is being looked at; it does not simply monitor it. Monitoring is an important first step in quality assurance, but what follows the monitoring is more important
5. Monitoring follows the principles of 'Genchi Genbutsu' (actual time, actual place). We need to see for ourselves what is happening in classrooms, lunch queues, playgrounds and toilets to fully understand what is happening and therefore how to improve the experience of our students.
6. Data plays a vital role in quality assurance, but data itself rarely allows us to see the 'root cause' of an issue. Instead, data drives our curiosity and leads to questions we might ask to determine what is really happening.
7. At Walthamstow Academy, we ensure we have found the root cause of an issue before we decide on actions. We use techniques like the 'five whys' and 'fishboning' to explore every possible explanation before we are sure we have found the best solution.
8. Once we have found the root cause, we put in place actions that, if successful, will have a clear and measurable impact on quality.
9. We monitor the impact of our actions over time to see if they have solved the issue. If they have not, then we think again until we get it right.
10. Informal quality assurance happens all the time, every day. We are always evaluating what we do. Formal quality assurance activities are those which we are all focused on at the time, using our QA calendar. This whole school approach helps leaders identify best practice within and across teams, and therefore puts us in a stronger position to identify patterns and themes, and also to support and learn from each other

Questions we ask ourselves are:

- Are we doing what we said we were going to do?
- How well are we doing it?
- Where is it being done well?
- Where are the gaps?
- Is what we said we were going to do, still what we need to do, or has it changed?
- Is what we are doing value for money? • Is there anything else we need to do?

Every half term, a series of whole school QA activities will take place. The content of the activity and the questions we are curious about will be determined in the lead up to the event, to allow maximum flexibility. There is more Quality Assurance information and some exemplar resources are in Appendix B. Middle Leaders and teachers are welcome to carry out any further QA activities themselves based on what they are curious about.

Appendix A: Feedback Policy

When	What
Every Lesson	**Teacher/ Peer Feedback in the Classroom** • Highly interactive EDI, with the teacher constantly checking for student understanding Use of mini whiteboards to strategically check whole class understanding • "Live marking" = checking and correcting the written work of a few individuals as they complete it whilst the teacher circulates the room • Targeted questioning to check understanding and responses of all students through 'Pose, Pause, Pounce, Bounce' or a combination of lower order and higher order questions • Regular mini-plenaries built into each lesson, where the teacher checks for student understanding in order to help students learn new material/ skills • Teachers monitor students' independent practice during lessons through SUPER circulation of the room and offering feedback where necessary
During Lessons	**Low Stakes Quizzes and AFL** • A Low Stakes Quiz during the 'Do Now', reviewing the knowledge gained this week via student Knowledge Organisers then peer or self-marked with the teacher noting those who need extra support. • Students provide feedback for their peer or critique their own work in green pen, with strong teacher guidance to ensure quality of feedback
Outside of Lessons on a regular enough basis to ensure teachers know student understanding and misconceptions	**Exercise Books – Teacher Feedback** • Each teacher's class set of books are read by the teacher on a regular basis. • Teacher makes notes on set of exercise books in their class marking folder noting: • What are common misconceptions/ mistakes? (content, assessment criteria and SPaG) • What needs to be retaught and how? • Which students struggled in particular and may need extra help from now on? • Which students produced excellent work which can be shared with the class? • These notes are used to form the basis of the next lesson/s where 1) **key content is retaught** where needed and 2) **students complete DIRT tasks to improve their skills**
Each Half Term	**Exams, PPEs and Assessments** - Marked by teachers at least once a half-term - Percentage scores/ Grades/ KPI feedback given to students - Written feedback may be given by teacher; whole class feedback on given to class in the form of a lesson - Students complete DIRT tasks following receipt of test scores and whole class feedback

Appendix B: Quality Assurance Guidance

Quality assurance just means the assurance of quality. To be able to assure quality, before you start any quality assurance activities, you need to have a clear understanding of what quality looks like in the area you are examining. What is your expected standard? What are the success criteria? What is outstanding practice? How do you know what you are looking for? Is this comparable across the school and is it in line with policy?

Quality assurance includes two main processes: monitoring and then action. You are monitoring to see what is happening and then you can celebrate and share success. You can also take action to improve things where necessary. If nothing happens following you noticing something, then you are just monitoring. You aren't bringing about change or improving quality.

Quality Assurance is important because we want to make sure we are doing everything in the best, most efficient and most effective way possible. This saves us valuable time because we aren't doing things that don't have an impact. We are directing time and resources in the right place. Quality assurance also includes identifying brilliant practice and considering why it is so: how has it happened, what are the ingredients, why does it work so well, how can it be shared and developed?

The following elements of school need to be quality assured and outlined below are some of the thought processes you might have and some questions you might ask yourself – these are not exhaustive.
In addition, when evaluating, please always ask yourself *why* something is the case. Why are the books like this? etc. Asking *why* helps you get to the root cause, and this then helps you understand it better.

Quality of Education

The monitoring (fact finding) element is done through learning walks, lesson observations, looking at lesson planning and schemes of work, looking at students' books and more. You need to be clear about what you are looking for: you can refer to the Pedagogy Booklets for clarification, and to the Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy also. You will be able to see the practice that is working well for individuals and across a team and you will identify what needs to be developed. You might see something which was a one off, and it is important to get a view of practice over time. You might only see a snippet of something initially that you think is brilliant or that you need to know more about, and this will prompt you to go back for a longer look next time.
Then the actions (improvement) will be around 121 feedback and discussion, through planned CPD for one or more of the team, through team meetings and through sharing good practice.

Curriculum (*intent, implementation, impact*)

Quality assurance of the curriculum is clearly linked to the quality of teaching. Does the planned curriculum (intent) facilitate teaching and learning (implementation)? And how do you know (impact)? Is the curriculum 'working'? You need to pay particular attention when monitoring curriculum coverage: what has been well-learned and why? Why needs to be revised or re-taught and why? What should you do next time to ensure it is taught just once? Any common misconceptions? Anything that students disengage with and how can this be addressed to make it more accessible and engaging? How is the curriculum differentiated and is there suitable challenge throughout the abilities and years?

Sixth Form

The Sixth Form is very much a part of the school of course, and it is important to evaluate it alongside KS3 and 4 so you can see the routes through the curriculum, for example, but it should also be monitored separately.

Homework

Homework is a vital part of school life as it fosters independence and enables students to revise, consolidate and extend learning. How do you know about the effectiveness of the homework being set in your department? How much is set, how long does it take, what impact does it have, what is the completion rate? Who sets the best homework and what

do they do? Which students always complete it or never complete it? What do your students think about homework? What type of homework is likely to be completed and have an impact? Is homework part of the scheme of work and pre-planned or do your team set their own? Which is most effective?

Literacy

You will have spent time thinking about and planning literacy as part of your curriculum and what has been the most effective? Is a lack of literacy holding back progress for your students and what have you done to address this? Did it work? Do your team know the reading ages and capabilities of their students and do they develop their literacy through their teaching, their resources and through the activities they include?

Progress and engagement of target groups

What does the data show – curriculum coverage, topic tests, end of term tests? What does the homework data show for your target groups? Any PPE analysis will be done on a separate document.

S tudents ' w or k

Real evidence of progress can be found in students' books and folders (although it can be found elsewhere too). The most effective work scrutinies look at similarities and differences between groups – eg girls and boys, HPA and LPA, two teachers, the same students' books in two or more subjects, PP and non. Book scrutinies also look at presentation, recording of work, amount of copying, usefulness of notes and more. Where is the best practice and how can this be shared?