



Learning and Teaching Policy

‘Learning is at the centre of everything that we do’

DSTC has an important and significant role to play in the development of its students and, as such, will provide a range of high quality learning experiences responsive to students’ needs that will lead to achievements that reflect the true potential of each individual.

Learning

DSTC encourages students to develop lively and enquiring minds. Curiosity and creativity are valued and students are encouraged to ask questions. The aim is that students will be clear thinking, analytical and imaginative.

DSTC expects students to become independent learners who reflect on what they have achieved and how they learn best. We all learn in different ways and staff must, therefore, be flexible and imaginative in their repertoire. We seek to enrich our students’ learning experiences.

DSTC recognises the need for staff to explain to students what they will learn and how they can measure their success. Learning must be linked to what students already know. As well as celebrating success students are given the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

Teaching

All programmes of study will be informed by an understanding of the development of students’ personalised learning.

In lessons:

- Expectations are high and focus on learning.
- Learning objectives and outcomes are shared.
- Lesson content relates to prior learning, is appropriate to students’ needs, is stimulating and, moreover, challenging.
- Students know why they are doing the work and how they can improve.

In the classroom and beyond

- Care is taken with regard to ethos and classroom climate.

- Classrooms are attractive and stimulating places where students' work is valued and the seating arrangements are decided upon by the teacher.
- We recognise the importance of developing core basic skills and great importance is placed on developing literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
- We also recognise the importance of developing our students into responsible citizens and therefore our lessons are shaped to include aspects of SMSC, British values and our Co-operative values across the curriculum and beyond.
- Targeted students are invited to attend Essential 7 after school as an opportunity to further extend their learning.

Core elements of our provision:

- **Subject Knowledge**
Students learn best when teachers are well informed, knowledgeable and confident about what they are teaching. Our curriculum planning, our policy of sharing good practice and our CPD programme, ensure that learning is led by staff with excellent subject knowledge.
- **Planning**
Our planning is based on the systematic and accurate assessment of student's prior learning. We choose and adapt tasks that will challenge students, whatever the level at which they are working. These tasks allow students to develop their independence and resilience. We clearly communicate differentiated objectives, which enable all students to make good progress.
- **Interventions**
We plan interventions that will support students and move them on in their learning. These are determined by our knowledge of student's prior learning. We deploy additional support in the classroom.
In addition to routine verbal feedback during lessons, we have calendared AFL (Achievement for Learning) weeks. During these weeks teachers are able to have individual conversations with underachieving students or those students who are eligible for pupil premium or HNF. These conversations help students to move forward in their learning.
- **Homework**
We recognise the importance of students learning at home. All homework is set on our online portal 'Show my Homework' Teachers are encouraged to use flipped learning as a tool to maximise student's learning time and experience the classroom. All teachers are encouraged to make use of 'Show My Homework' to provide differentiated homework whenever appropriate.
- **Assessment for Learning**

We use a range of strategies to check student's understanding of the learning throughout the lesson. We are also ready to adapt our approach if a student experiences difficulties or misconceptions. Questioning is used effectively to assess understanding and stretch and challenge students of all abilities.

- **Marking and Feedback.**

We have agreements about our approach to marking: its frequency and format. We explain what students are doing well (**WWW**) and how they can further improve their work (**EBI**). Students are routinely encouraged to reflect on our feedback and demonstrate their understanding of that feedback in subsequent pieces of work. Self-assessment and peer assessment are also used as a tool for students to improve their work.

We use the following Literacy codes when correcting student's work:

LITERACY WRITING MARK CODES

Marking Code	Reason
SP	Spelling Mistake
WW	Wrong Word
P	Punctuation
C	Capital letter
Exp	Expression/ Sentence Structure
T	Tense
//	Paragraph
^C	Connective
HW	Handwriting
V	Improve vocabulary

When giving written feedback to students we also set subject appropriate **Literacy targets**.

Reporting and Feedback to parents.

Grade sheets are completed and sent to parents six times per year (every term) Grades are completed for every subject studied by the students.

The grade sheets report:

- Current Attainment
- Minimum expected target
- Teacher aspirational target (Always at or above the minimum expected target)
- Attitude to Learning
- Homework

Attainment levels and targets for Year 7 are reported using Grades 1-9 (to reflect the new GCSE structure)

For Years 8-10 Grades are reported using National Curriculum levels (except in Maths English and Science where Grades reflect the new GCSE structure)

In regard to Learning and Teaching:

- A range of teaching repertoires and strategies are employed, distinct parts to lessons are easily recognisable and a recap of learning should take place.
- Excellent behaviour is the expectation. High standards of presentation, accuracy and effort are insisted upon.
- Tasks are clear and purposeful, the pace of work challenging and all students are actively engaged.
- Staff have an understanding of students' abilities, targets and needs. Learning needs are personalised.
- Support and extension activities are systematically planned by staff.
- Staff give praise, constructive and instructive criticism, positive support and encouragement.
- Emotional intelligence comes high on our agenda.
- Co-operation is valued by all.
- Formative and summative assessments are built into learning. Opportunities to measure progress occur regularly and staff use such assessments to help inform new targets and tasks for students.

Gathering information about Learning and Teaching.

When DSTC reviews its performance through on-going monitoring and self evaluation it aims to:

- raise standards of achievement;
- enhance the quality of learning and teaching;
- increase the efficiency of leadership and management;
- provide staff with time to develop, reflect upon and evaluate their teaching.

Standards of teaching and learning are assessed mainly through formal lesson observation. There are three of these per year, (two during whole school focus weeks and one during a faculty review) but staff may be seen more frequently where there is a concern. Learning walks take place on a regular basis. The focus for each week is calendared and centrally monitored by the Vice Principal for Teaching and Learning. In addition to this, Directors of Learning and Key stage Leaders carry out their own learning walks as per their own agreed foci. We have an agreed proforma for work scrutiny focusing heavily on progress over time. Records of these work scrutinies are held by the Vice Principal for Teaching and Learning and Directors of Learning. Finally, student voice is also an important measure of our success in teaching and learning.

Ensuring Consistency at DSTC

As a staff we have agreed on the 7 Key Features to ensure consistency of approach at DSTC with regard to teaching and learning.

Sharing and developing good practice

We value the opportunity to share good and outstanding practice both informally through departmental coaching and more formally during our annual 'Open door week'. Our annual Take a Risk week provides an invaluable opportunity for staff to share outstanding practice and showcase innovative and creative methods of teaching that have been shared through our Teaching and Learning communities