Carwarden House Community School

Teaching & Learning Policy

(including assessment, marking, moderation & accredited learning)

Policy owner:	**Alex Ewen**
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Curriculum overview

The school has devised an exciting & unique curriculum and assessment package to meet the needs of all our students – the 'Curriculum for Life'.

This has the explicit aim of developing all the skills, knowledge, behaviours & attitudes they need to be successful in adult life.

Our curriculum has evolved to meet the individual and changing needs of our students and to be entirely relevant to their future lives.

Following extensive consultation with staff, parents and students, we designed a new curriculum with the specific aim of developing the skills, knowledge, behaviours and attitudes that young people require ***learning for life, independence and employment*.**

We believe our curriculum supports the development of the whole student with the explicit aim that they become the best possible version of themselves.

We passionately believe all out students can make a valuable contribution to both the communities they live in and to the wider economy. Our commitment is to prepare them as well as we can for their future roles in society. Developing confidence, a pride in their achievements, resilience and a sense of wellbeing and positive mental health are all important factors in their journey to success. The focus we have is on preparation for adulthood and success for all students.

The Golden Strands

Extensive research and evidence from a wide range of sources helped us identify *Golden Strands* of learning and development essential to our students' future life chances:

1. **Academic Functional Skills**
2. **Social Skills**
3. **Daily Living Skills**
4. **Community Skills**
5. **Employability Skills**

Our curriculum and programme of study is organised around these strands, with a bespoke assessment framework capturing progress through the Entry Level continuum and up to Level 2. Capturing the small and incremental steps of progress is really important and allows us and the students to plan effectively for their 'next steps'.

We believe that effective learning and our students' ability to make progress is not limited to classroom activities but should also be supported by giving them the opportunity to take and apply their newly acquired skills and knowledge in the community. Our fleet of car and minibuses enables us to take our students into the wider community on a very regular basis. This approach is further enhanced by personalised work experience and FE college opportunities for all students in KS4 & KS5, access to a wide range of leisure activities and numerous educational trips and residential (both at home and abroad).

Assessment Rationale

We believe assessment for learning is a major factor in and supports the core purpose of our teaching and learning strategy. We look at this approach as a way of assisting teachers to modify their teaching to improve students' performance. We can see the benefits of teachers actively involving all students in order to stimulate and help them take their next steps in learning.

We agree with the Black's and William's (1998) definition of assessment as it refers to 'all activities undertaken by teachers and by their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged'.

Within our school, there are two main purposes for assessment:

- **Assessment of learning** (Summative assessment) which provides a summary of what has been learned in regard to both attainment and achievement at a specific point in time. Baseline assessments are undertaken by all students in their first term. The standardised tests used for the baseline are repeated at the end of the summer term thereafter.
- **Assessment for learning** (AFL) (Formative assessment), which we regard as the most important kind of assessment, is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. (Assessment Reform Group,2002)

Aims

- To involve students in their learning and to provide feedback to them and their parents.
- To encourage students to assess themselves and understand how they can improve.
- To use the results of assessment to adjust teaching.
- To work with other schools to share good practice to improve our practice.

Assessment Arrangements at Carwarden

We use a range of systems to ensure that the assessment we use is robust.

As stated above, assessment is an ongoing process and AFL is present in all lessons. Below is a timetable of assessment.

- Baseline assessment of Year 7 students using standardised tests in English and maths, internal assessments for English and maths, teacher assessments, use of SOLAR (where there is a bespoke assessment package for the curriculum).
- On entry to Year 12 an initial baseline assessment is undertaken using the in-house initial assessment, incorporating functional literacy, numeracy and life skills.

- Assessment continues throughout the academic year with data collection identifying students who are underachieving, on target or exceeding targets in December and March. This information is then used to plan targeted interventions to address underachievement.
- End of year assessments occur in June and are a combination of teacher assessment and a repeat of the standardised tests (Years 7-11).
- The information collected in June is analysed and used to prepare and target interventions for the following year and assists in our annual curriculum review.
- Programmes for therapies are set and assessed by the SaLT, Occupational and Physiotherapy professionals. The implementation of the strategies are then carried out throughout the daily curriculum as directed by the professionals and in line with EHCP requirements.
- EHCP outcomes are reviewed yearly as part of the annual review process.

Target Setting

Targets are set for students at the beginning of the Autumn term. Year 7 and Year 12 are baselined over the first autumn half term and targets set then.

Guidance is provided for targets setting based on previous learning and the profile of learners.

New starters are baselined for the first 6 weeks through their lessons so a clear picture of the level at which the are learning and gaps in their knowledge. This allows for appropriate and personal targets to be set.

Moderation

Internal Moderation

Non-accredited learning is moderated internally by teachers. This completed by the teachers and the extended leadership team termly.

Accredited Learning

- Accredited learning is moderated within the guidelines of the qualification standards. The internal and external moderation systems are in place to ensure that all assessments are applied consistently for all candidates and that the final judgement is accurate, reliable and recorded;
- Internal moderation is ongoing throughout all courses, with feedback for the assessors where appropriate;
- Summative internal assessment will be carried out prior to a candidate being entered for external moderation. Only those candidates who have fully met the standards of the qualification will be entered;

- It is the staff's responsibility to participate in the moderation process; keeping necessary records, attending relevant meetings and providing marked student work as requested;
- Once internally moderated, all assessment evidence will be kept on site until it has been externally moderated. The work remains the property of the candidate and can be returned to the candidate in line with the requirements of the relevant awarding body.

External Moderation

This is carried out by the relevant awarding body. The school currently use ASDAN, AQA, OCN, OCR, ESB, Ed excel, WJEC and Duke of Edinburgh.

Marking

We believe feedback and marking should provide constructive feedback to every student, focusing on success and improvement needs against learning objectives & incorporating EHCP targets where applicable; enabling students to become reflective learners and helping them to close the gap between current and desired performance.

Purposes: Reasons for marking

- To recognise, encourage and reward student's effort and achievement, and celebrate success.
- To provide a dialogue between teacher and student giving clear appropriate feedback about strengths and areas to improve in their work.
- To improve a student's confidence in reviewing their own work and setting future targets; involving student in the 'next steps' in learning.
- To identify students who need additional support/more challenging work and to identify the nature of the support/challenges needed.
- To indicate how a piece of work could be corrected or improved against assessment criteria.
- To aid curriculum planning.

Principles:

Wherever possible marking takes place with the student, either 1:1 or in small group sessions. It offers guidance as to the extent to which learning objectives have been met and suggests the next steps students might take in their learning.

If students are to develop as independent learners, with an awareness of their own strengths as well as areas for development it is essential that:

- They are made aware of the learning objectives of tasks/lessons and of the criteria against which their work will be marked/assessed. "*this is our activity…, this is why we are doing it…, this is what I will be looking for from you…".*
- The learning needs of individual students are understood and work is matched and marked appropriately.
- Where appropriate marking/feedback is linked directly to learning.
- Feedback can be verbal, visual or written.

The nature of feedback:

- Comments should refer to the learning objectives of the task and/or review targets.
- Comments may form the basis of a discussion between teacher and student, e.g. reviewing targets set
- Comments may be oral, visual or written, formal or informal
- Comments may be given on a group or individual basis

Oral feedback

We believe oral feedback is the most powerful and has maximum impact when pointing out successes and improvement needs against the learning objectives. Written reflections only can pull down the quality of articulation of the learning.

Oral feedback is usually interactive and developmental. It may give reassurance or a quick check on progress. The effect of teacher comments will be seen in a student's response in moving on to the next learning step. It may be in the form of a learning/reading conference or review.

Written feedback should be:

- legible and clear in meaning
- developmental, i.e. students will find out how they are getting on and/or what the next leaning step will be.
- Supported with oral or visual information.

Marking Methods / Classroom Practice

Teachers and teaching assistants at Carwarden House Community School know that immediate feedback is the most effective and is most often provided orally.

General Points:

- When written feedback is provided, time needs to be built into lessons/activity sessions for students to reflect on marking and to respond it. This may be an interactive/questioning session e.g. during the starter or plenary.
- Some written evidence of feedback would be expected to be seen approximately every 3rd or fourth piece of work or at regular points through a scheme of work and the conclusion of a topic. This will be positive element/s relating to the learning objectives and possibly include an 'even better if…' statement.
- Staff should focus on one or two points only. It should be rare that more than a sentence of text is written on a student's work.
- Teachers should always mark that aspect of a student's work which relates to the planned learning objectives or review targets. (Corrections should normally be limited to what the student should know).
- Where spellings or grammatical errors are being corrected we would expect no more than four corrections per half page. (Where many mistakes are made the teacher needs to review the differentiation of the tasks).
- Sensitivity should always be shown towards student's work and their feelings about it and comments should be positive wherever possible. Developmental comments should be followed by a suggestion or reminder for improvement in the next piece of work. These should start with; Even better if…
- Use of a student's name in a written comment personalises it.

- Self-marking/evaluation against shared learning objectives/agreed criteria can help empower a student to realise his or her own learning needs and to have control over future targets.
- Use of the 'Traffic Lights' system and ALF cards in the planner should be encouraged as a focus for AFL (Assessment for Learning)

  Red: 'I found it difficult or challenging'.
  Orange: 'I needed some help' or 'Almost there'
  Green: 'I worked without help and had no problems/difficulties'

- Appropriate aids may be used such as stamps and stickers, for example smiley faces are acceptable particularly with the younger students and non-readers.
- We believe that style of writing is largely a matter of the teacher's own personal preference but that marking should be done in a contrasting colour to the students' work.

  Initial marking in **pink** - identify areas of understanding or where further consolidation is needed.
  Revisited marking for corrections in **green** – this will be after direct feedback and further explanation. This will show feedback has occurred, oral, and been acted on.

- Work should always be marked before the next lesson.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the DHT to be approved by the HT.