

Horizon Community College Curriculum & Teaching and Learning Policy



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CURRICULUM & TEACHING and LEARNING POLICY

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Section 1 Aims of this Policy

Our vision is that all students become 'School Ready; Work Ready; Life Ready', through 'Challenging every learner, in every lesson, every day'. This ensures students will know more, remember more and can do more.

A rich programme of professional development, from 1-1 feedback to whole college CPD opportunities, is provided; developing all teaching practitioners regardless of their career stage and ensuring that highly effective, interesting and challenging lessons are delivered.

Section 2 Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of **all students** to demonstrate *outstanding character in the classroom* by engaging with their teachers, subject content and activities provided during a lesson to develop a growth mindset and reach their full potential.

It is the responsibility of **all teachers** to enable effective delivery of the curriculum continually reviewing, reflecting and improving on teaching practice.

It is the responsibility of the **Subject Leaders** and **Subject Leadership Teams** to monitor and improve the quality of the curriculum & teaching and learning within their department, and to offer high quality CPD.

The **Quality of Education Team** and the **Principals Team** are responsible for monitoring the quality of curriculum & teaching and learning across the college, recognising and sharing effective practice, and addressing areas of development at both individual and whole college levels.

Governors have a duty to monitor that the processes are in place and that the college is addressing students' learning needs.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the college's Behaviour for Learning Policy, Assessment and Feedback Policy, Staff Development Policy, Equality Policy, Appraisal and Capability Policy.

Section 3 Curriculum

College Curriculum Intent

Our curriculum aims to provide an education which enriches students' ambitions and love of learning and equips them with the skills, knowledge and cultural literacy they need to access aspirational post-16 pathways and the responsibilities and experiences of later life.

Key Principles

Our curriculum is:

- 1. Balanced**
Promotes intellectual, moral, spiritual, aesthetic, creative, emotional and physical development. Celebrates diversity and equality.
- 2. Focused**
Seeks to identify and teach the most important knowledge and skills within each subject, while remaining commensurate with or going beyond the National Curriculum.
- 3. Coherent**
Is purposely structured and sequenced. A spiral curriculum which focuses on progression by building knowledge over time. Combined with retrieval practice to give a truly powerful and balanced learning experience.
- 4. Connected**
It links knowledge and skills both within the subject and between different subjects and other learning experiences. It develops an interdisciplinary understanding of skills and knowledge.
- 5. Appropriate**
Is carefully matched to the individual so that it is cognitively demanding and challenging for all learners. It seeks to develop a deep understanding of subject knowledge and skills.
- 6. Ambitious**
It is ambitious for all students. It allows them to broaden their horizons and develop cultural literacy. It develops students so they can apply their knowledge and skills to solve complex problems and think critically for themselves.
- 7. Relevant**
Seeks to connect the knowledge and skills so students can understand the purpose of their learning. They can see the value of what they are learning and its relevance to their lives, present and future.

Subject Curricula

Every subject has an intent statement, which summarises core principles and aims for students.

Subject Teams have identified the key strands that run through their curriculum. These are a combination of knowledge and skills and allow students and staff to articulate how they are improving and building expertise across Key Stage 3 and 4. Each strand reflects an element identified in the subject's intent.

At Key Stage 4, students' work is assessed against GCSE (or vocational qualification) criteria. At Key Stage 3, subjects each itemise Age Related Expectations, so staff are clear what students should know, and should be able to do, at that point in their school career. Content and skills for each subject have been itemised and mapped, in detail, to ensure content is covered to maximise progress and retrieval across all five years.

Schemes of Learning are used in day-to-day teaching practice to deliver each unit. These include common elements, experiences, assessment and outcomes which enable effective delivery of the curriculum.

Section 4 Teaching and Learning at Horizon

Teaching and Learning Intent:

Through **six** key research-based aspects of teaching and learning, teaching at Horizon enables all students to reach their full potential.

Quality First Teaching: The six aspects

The aspects listed below (in no particular order), are to be used by teachers as a way of planning effective lessons to maximise the progress of students:

- 1. High expectations, ambitious academic goals and positive relationships**
Clear, consistent routines foster a climate for learning in which students are able and expected to discover their true potential.
- 2. Explanation and modelling**
Teachers plan opportunities to share subject-specific expertise, so that students understand and become confident to engage with new learning.
- 3. Questioning, retrieval and discussion**
Dialogue is planned to support students recalling previously learned knowledge, to provoke thought and to deepen subject-specific understanding.
- 4. Responsive teaching (be ready to go back as well as forwards)**
Teachers use a variety of techniques to gauge and respond to students' understanding within a lesson.

5. **Independent practice and scaffolding**

Learning activities are pitched to the top and designed to ensure that all students can achieve challenging outcomes.

6. **Growth mindset and metacognition**

Teachers provide opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and articulate their next steps, so becoming independent learners.

Reading and Literacy, Differentiation and Character in the Classroom underpin each of these aspects.

Effective reading and literacy skills not only underpin learning but also provide a springboard for success in both career and life. At Horizon, we believe that the core skill of reading will ensure students access the curriculum successfully, overcome barriers to learning and develop a positive attitude to college life.

Each of the six aspects listed are differentiated by teachers to meet the needs of individuals in each class. This enables all students, in all lessons, each day to reach their full potential engaging with appropriately pitched resources for their ability.

Students are supported to demonstrate Outstanding Character in the Classroom. Students are expected to take pride in the presentation of their work and pride in the work they produce. Character in the classroom supports students becoming independent learners and builds their resilience to ensure they are *'work ready, life ready.'*

What lessons at HCC may look like

To support students and facilitate staff in the delivery of a consistent experience for students, all teachers follow a similar lesson structure model in their planning. The length of each criteria below will differ dependent on where a lesson sits within a scheme of learning.

1. Review prior and introduce future learning
2. Teacher input
3. Checking for understanding
4. Student practice
5. Sharing success and reviewing progress

Section 5 Continuing Professional Development

Intent

CPD at Horizon aims to RAISE standards by addressing key areas of development in order to improve student outcomes.

Responsive

- Through regular CPD and Inset time devoted to Professional Development that responds to the developmental needs of teachers.

Appropriate

- CPD opportunities are designed to support teachers based on their career stage, experience and identified areas of development. For example, early career teachers access a large part of their professional development via the Early Career Framework Programme provided by University College London.
- Teachers at Horizon are provided with the opportunity to engage in external CPD programmes, such as the range of National Professional Qualifications.

Individualised

- Teachers are provided time to focus on the aspects of teaching & learning that they deem to be personal areas of development, in order to drive behavioural change in their classrooms.

Subject-specific

- Through Department Development Time, teaching staff collaborate on improving areas identified in their Improvement Plans. Within whole-college CPD, subject-specific practice groups work together to develop their teaching and learning based on a set number of focus areas.

Evidence-informed

- Teachers have access to up-to-date educational research through the Staff CPD Library, the Research Hub, and an array of CPD opportunities afforded to them to ensure their teaching is as evidence-based as possible.

Implementation

This is implemented via a Three-Strand approach to CPD: Whole College, Departmental and Individual:

Whole College

With a focus on College improvement priorities, the College Leadership Team support all leaders and teachers to secure improved student outcomes.

Departmental

Driven by Subject Leaders, teaching staff collaborate on improving areas identified in their Department Improvement Plans.

Individual

Teachers are provided opportunities to focus upon and develop key aspects of their practice to make alterations which improve the outcomes for the students they teach.

In addition, annually teachers engage in professional development on a range of essential areas, such as Safeguarding, Auto-injector training, and frequent briefings regarding individual students with specific needs.

Section 6 Review & Impact

In order to assess the impact of our Curriculum and Teaching and Learning, the following quality assurance measures are in place as a means of informing next steps in curriculum design, implementation and CPD opportunities for the college:

- **College drop-ins**

Led by the Principal's Team (PT) and the Quality of Education (QoE) Team, subject leadership teams work alongside leaders from these teams to discover the student experience of the curriculum through 1-1 conversations with students. Questions are asked around key content, skills and development of students' understanding across topics and years.

- **Departmental drop-ins**

Focus on the quality of the curriculum and its implementation by teaching staff, offering feedback with respect to with reference to the T&L aspects.

- **Work scrutiny**

Focus on the learning journey in books, presentation and implementation of the assessment feedback and response cycle.

- **Progress tracking**

Progress is tracked to ensure students are above that of their peers nationally. Analysis at College and Subject level identifies strengths and areas for development in planning and/or implementation of the curriculum.

- **Subject curricular review**

Subject leadership teams regularly review and improve their curricula, including curriculum intent. This ensures curriculum development continues in line with the 7 key principles above. The website is then updated to ensure accuracy of information for

parents and stakeholders.

- **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

CPD is responsive to the developmental needs of teachers as identified in the SIP, DIPs and regular lessons drop-ins. Professional Development programmes are evaluated to ensure they are as effective as possible.