



Dame Alice Owen's School  
The Dame Alice Owen Foundation - 1613

# TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

Policy agreed by Governing Body Curriculum Committee  
Next review  
*To be reviewed annually*

Summer 2026  
Summer 2027

To be monitored by Senior Leadership Team and the Teaching and Learning team.

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## Introduction

The Teaching and Learning Policy:

- promotes consistency and high standards of teaching and student learning throughout the School. It should be read in conjunction with the School's stated aims and values.
- summarises expectations that teachers adapt the curriculum as far as reasonably possible to meet the needs of all students in order to ensure that they all learn, make progress and are well prepared for their next steps in their education and towards the world of work.
- informs teachers, pupils, parents, and the wider school community about the procedures and plans of the school with respect to teaching and learning.
- should be viewed alongside the policies for [Curriculum](#), [Assessment and Feedback](#), [Use of AI](#), [SEND](#), [Behaviour for Learning and Anti-Bullying](#), and [Single Equalities](#).

## Principles and Aims

High quality teaching and learning is at the heart of what we do at Dame Alice Owen's School. It is central to our work as educators and stems from the School's vision of inspiring, developing, and supporting every student to be their best. Underpinning this is the expectation that every teacher has solid subject knowledge and knows their students well, and that they use this understanding to plan the curriculum and adapt teaching, as far as reasonably possible, to support all students to make progress and develop a lifelong love of learning.

Therefore, this policy aims to ensure that:

- Consistently high-quality teaching and learning takes place throughout the school in a safe environment conducive to learning.
- All teachers are supported in teaching lessons which move learning forward.

- Lessons incorporate a wide range of approaches enabling students to learn in the most effective manner.
- Common criteria are established (the DAOS Teaching and Learning Expectations below) against which consistently high-quality teaching and learning can be recognised and against which any shortfalls can be identified and addressed.
- Best practice in teaching and learning is understood, shared, and developed within and between departments. Teaching and learning developments are shared across the School through the Subject Leader Forum, staff meetings, staff briefings, and CPD. Staff are further encouraged to make links with other schools and engage with CPD outside of school to inform these conversations.

This will afford our students the opportunity to:

- engage in and enjoy their learning across their time at our school;
- develop as independent, creative, and enquiring young people;
- develop as motivated, collaborative, confident young people with the skills that will support their future success;
- acquire and develop the knowledge, understanding and key skills required for life-long learning, particularly those of literacy and numeracy;
- reach their highest level of personal achievement by being challenged and progressing at least in line with their individual expectations;

### **Responsibilities and Accountabilities**

Teaching and learning in our school is a shared responsibility, and everyone in our school community has an important role to play.

Teachers at Dame Alice Owen's are accountable to Subject Leaders who are responsible for ensuring:

- All teachers follow the expectations for teaching and learning laid out in this policy regarding DAOS Teaching Expectations in order to maximise learning.
- All teachers maintain a secure and up-to-date knowledge of the subject and wider teaching pedagogy.
- All teachers know all their students well, including any pastoral or SEND needs, and make them feel they matter. All teachers make reasonable adaptations to learning resources to meet individual learning needs.
- An orderly and safe learning environment with clear sets of routines and standards is created in each classroom/learning environment as described in the [Behaviour for Learning and Anti-Bullying Policy](#).
- All teachers use effective assessment, feedback, and marking to address misconceptions and support progress as described in the Assessment and Feedback policy.
- All students are treated with respect and according to their needs and that no student feels discriminated against through lesson content or delivery.
- All teachers work effectively with all colleagues to maximise student learning.
- All teachers actively engage parents and carers in their children's learning by communicating with them, when appropriate, via Edulink, email, phone calls, parents' evenings, and progress reports.
- All teachers follow the expectations for teaching and professional conduct as set out in the Teacher's Standards and the [Staff Code of Conduct](#).

Support staff at Dame Alice Owen's work collaboratively with the teaching staff and are accountable to their line managers. They are responsible for ensuring:

- They know students they are working with well and, when working directly with students, make reasonable adaptations to meet individual learning needs and make them feel they matter.
- They support teaching and learning with flexibility and resourcefulness.
- They engage with and work collaboratively with teachers to provide high-quality lessons and learning opportunities.
- They feedback observations of students to teachers where appropriate.
- They have high expectations and celebrate the achievement of the students they work with.

The Subject Leader is accountable to the Senior Leadership Team and is responsible for ensuring:

- They collaborate with colleagues to have well-sequenced, broad and balanced curriculum plans/schemes of work in place that build knowledge and skills across all year groups.
- They know their department well and have clear oversight of how the curriculum is delivered by teachers within it.
- They monitor the implementation of the curriculum in their departments, at times in conjunction with SLT, to ensure the learning experience is consistent within the department and they take steps to improve any areas for development identified.
- There is a clear department feedback and assessment policy which results in actionable, understandable and helpful feedback being provided to students.
- Summative assessment data is recorded, reported as appropriate, shared across the department, and internally monitored against targets.
- They complete Department Improvement Plans annually in conjunction with the teachers in their department, and co-ordinate action to drive improvement in their subject area.
- They promote improvement in the teaching and learning of their subject through the sharing of good practice within the department, including teaching and learning as a regular part of their departmental meetings, and providing or signposting appropriate subject-specific CPD for the subject team of teachers.
- Their department is kept abreast of any changes to GCSE and A Level course requirements.
- They use their budget effectively to resource their subject in such a way as to maximise the benefit to learning, providing teachers with the necessary resources to deliver high quality teaching.

The Senior Leadership Team and Subject Leaders are responsible for monitoring Teaching and Learning through:

- Formal and informal monitoring systems, including lesson observations, learning walks, work scrutinies, departmental improvement plans, departmental reviews, and examination of performance data, with input and support from the Assistant Head (Standards).
- The embedding of teaching and learning as a central component of the school and department improvement planning cycle.
- The use of mechanisms for continuing professional development (including courses, INSET, mentoring, training, and so on) within the cycle and framework of performance management.

The Governing Body and the Senior Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring the overall implementation and monitoring of this policy, notably by ensuring:

- They have a clear vision for how to help all staff inspire, develop and support every student to be their best.
- Strategic planning, including a School Improvement Plan which provides a clear framework for Teaching and Learning, is shared.

- Staff and students are held to account for learning by celebrating achievement and providing support in managing student learning and behaviour.
- Teaching and Learning is regularly monitored to ensure that effective learning is taking place; school/departmental targets are being set and achieved, and appropriate support is being provided through, for example, the induction programme for new staff, continuing professional development opportunities to drive school improvement and targeted support for teachers who struggle to meet the DAOS Teaching and Learning Expectations in order to try to bring about improvement.
- They manage resources to support high-quality teaching and learning through staffing, resourcing, and creating a school environment that is conducive to learning.
- The curriculum supports the aims of the Single Equality Duty.

Students at Dame Alice Owen's will ensure:

- They take responsibility for their learning and support the learning of others.
- They demonstrate readiness to engage in learning activities in a positive way and with enthusiasm.
- They meet the expectations for good behaviour for learning at all times, respecting the rights of others to learn.
- Act on feedback given to them by their teachers and know how to improve.
- They put appropriate effort and focus into their work, both in lessons and at home, to maximise their own progress.

Parents/carers of Dame Alice Owen's students will ensure:

- They support the school by reinforcing its expectations of students' behaviour for learning.
- They support good attendance.
- They maintain a supportive relationship with school staff in order to provide positive support for learning, in line with the Home-School Agreement.
- Their child's homework is completed in a timely way and to a good standard, supporting their child's continued learning and progress.

### **The Teaching and Learning Policy in Practice**

The Teaching and Learning Team (formed of Assistant Head - Standards, Director of Teacher Development, Deputy Head - Progress and other interested members of staff) meet regularly to review standards of teaching and learning, to discuss new ideas and developments, and in light of this, to help plan future training for staff. The Teaching and Learning team work across the school to drive evidence-based teaching and learning forward.

DAOS Teaching and Learning Expectations have been developed by the Teaching and Learning Team with input from teaching staff and students. These outline what is expected of teaching at DAOS. Across a series of lessons, the elements listed below should be evident. We believe these elements are core to enable teachers to help students reach their full potential and hence maximise their progress and level of attainment.



## Teaching and Learning Expectations

These are the common criteria against which consistently high quality teaching and learning can be recognised and against which areas for development can be identified and addressed.

In lessons, you will see that teachers:

- are passionate and enthusiastic about their subject area;
- create an orderly and safe learning environment, with clear routines;
- meet and greet students at the door and engage them as quickly as possible such as with a "Do Now" style task;
- have high expectations of students in the lesson ("high challenge, low threat");
- have warm yet firm relationships with students;
- use a range of engaging activities, pitched at the correct level;
- take steps to prevent mental truancy;
- make the objectives of the lesson clear and set out the learning journey and link the lesson to prior and future learning;
- offer a variety of scaffolded teaching and learning methods;
- have secure subject knowledge and are able to address common misconceptions;
- give useful, regular feedback that is actionable by the students;
- use assessment for learning to reflect on learning and inform planning;
- teach the lesson with appropriate pace;
- set appropriate homework in line with the homework timetable, with sufficient time to complete;
- use a range of strategies to promote behaviour for learning, including seating plans where possible;
- use metacognition and retrieval strategies to promote learning;
- adapt the teaching to meet the needs of students and work with other adults effectively;
- provide opportunities for students to take part in deliberate practice;
- make clear the links to the specification requirements for KS4/KS5;
- use effective questioning techniques;
- use the full lesson time effectively;
- make students feel they matter.

Individual lessons are expected to be well planned, carried out in a safe, purposeful environment, and have a clear framework that includes phases of teacher input, independent student work, and regular assessment and feedback. Teachers should use assessment to ensure they are responsive in their teaching, addressing misconceptions and gaps in learning that are identified. Teachers are expected to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of students within their classes, supporting all students to make progress. Teachers should make effective use of educational technology where appropriate. Teachers should systematically use effective pedagogical tools such as retrieval practice to help students *know more, do more, remember more*.

### Homework

At Owen's, we believe that homework is an intrinsically valuable tool for helping students prepare for, consolidate, or extend their learning. Homework may also serve as part of the assessment and feedback cycle within a subject. Homework tasks should move learning forward and not be set for the sake of it. Homework tasks furthermore serve as a means by which to support students in developing self-discipline and independence in their learning. This contributes to the high-achieving ethos of our school.

In Key Stage 3, homework tasks should typically last for 20 minutes each. Where longer projects are set as homework, the students are expected to split the time over the weeks with guidance. For Key Stage 4, homework tasks should typically last for 30 minutes each. At GCSE level, the Non-Examined Assessment work (where applicable) is often set across a number of homework sessions which makes individual time planning essential. The homework tasks set in Years 12 and 13 will be appropriate to

the level of study. The amount of homework time which a student should expect to spend on each A Level subject is in the region of 5 hours a week, consisting of specific homework tasks, research, or wider reading. Supervised study periods enable a certain amount of this to be done at school.

When setting open ended tasks, teachers should indicate a maximum length of time to spend on the task. Teachers should be careful when rewarding and praising students so that students are not encouraged to spend excessive time on their homework.

Teachers are expected to set homework tasks according to the published timetable. 'Holiday homework' consisting of additional tasks and projects set specifically to be completed over a holiday is not encouraged and **should absolutely not be set in KS3**.

### **Monitoring and Evaluating**

Within the School, this policy will be monitored and kept under regular review by the Senior Leadership Team and the Teaching and Learning team.