



# Teaching and Learning Strategy

Updated July 2024

## 1. Introduction

At Aylesbury High School, we offer every student a balanced and broad curriculum which is ambitious, forward-looking, innovative and of the highest academic quality.

Our school vision is to develop “uniquely talented young adults, who are independent, strong and confident” and our mission “A girls’ grammar school creating a welcoming environment which draws the very best from all in our community. Achieved by providing an ambitious education that stimulates creative and critical thinking, values diversity and facilitates dynamic personal development.” We recognise each student’s individual need, and we go beyond using exam outcomes alone to benchmark our success.

As well as exam success we want students to exhibit our AHS Values of Boundless Aspiration, Resilient Bravery, Curious Engagement and Selfless Generosity. In all that we do, we aim to prepare students for life in the fast-changing world of which they will become adult members, ready to play an active and positive part in the local, national and international community.

This document aims to set out the main principles and shared responsibilities for promoting effective teaching and learning across the school community.

## 2. Learning at AHS

We expect and encourage students to actively engage in their learning and to take responsibility for it. They should be able to answer the following questions about their learning in each of their subjects:

- What are you learning?
- Why are you studying this? Why are you studying this now?
- Does your learning change, challenge, or build on previous learning? If so, how?
- Can you identify the new skills that you have learnt?
- Can you identify the new knowledge that you have learnt?
- How will you be assessed?
- How do you receive feedback from your teacher?
- How do you act on the feedback you receive?

## 3. Intent of high quality teaching and learning at AHS

At AHS, students learn through teaching that is rigorous, engaging and high quality. This is facilitated by the following principles:

- Teachers are ambitious for their students and plan their lessons so they support students to progress in their subjects and take ownership of their learning
- Teachers give careful consideration to the purpose of assessment, and think and plan beyond the exam specification
- Teachers have pride in their classroom practice and reflect their department’s Curriculum Design in their classroom
- Teachers recognise that not every student has the same needs or barriers; they take time to learn about their students’ needs by liaising with appropriate staff members (DSL, SEND team, PP Lead), how to support them, and pre-empt curricular barriers

- Teachers impassion students about their subject
- Teachers are encouraged to be innovative in their classroom pedagogy. They learn together and from each other by making the most of others in their teams, and around the school, and are encouraged to be open and honest if they need support
- Teachers promote the AHS Values in lessons; this includes ensuring that all students are challenged, creating opportunities to work independently and collaboratively, and explicitly and implicitly encouraging the development of students' own understanding of their learning patterns
- Teachers take advantage of appropriate opportunities to promote cross-curricular context, e.g. ROW (reading, writing and oracy), other subjects, Arts Mark and careers, and develop students' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education.

#### 4. Implementation of high quality teaching and learning at AHS

We recognise that high quality teaching and learning looks different in every subject; at AHS we value individual subject integrity. Each subject has devised its own curriculum which it is the responsibility of all team members to implement in their respective classes.

As such, there is no prescribed lesson structure at a whole-school level; lesson structure should be designed and adapted to deliver the curriculum best to the particular group of students. This autonomy is balanced by 'The AHS Classroom', quality assurance, work scrutinies, learning walks from a variety of staff members (including governors), lesson observations and data analysis, to ensure there is equity of provision for all students.

[The AHS Classroom](#) sets out three strands that should be evident in every lesson:

- 1) Core Expectations - teachers should ensure that these are met in every lesson, as appropriate
- 2) Pedagogy Foci - teachers are encouraged to continuously explore and develop teaching and learning techniques within their classrooms and are asked to focus on an area of pedagogy each year in line with CPD and the appraisal process
- 3) The AHS Values.

At its heart is the concept "what is vital for some students is valuable to all". All teachers are expected to annotate their seating plans and follow the ['first in line' approach](#) to support SEND, PP, DSL and YC.

#### 4.1 Curriculum design

When evaluating their curriculum, departments may find the following framework useful:

- Stage 1: Departments work collaboratively, taking cross-curricular opportunities into account such that the student's whole experience is connected, on their curriculum model.
- See Appendix 1 for questions to support discussions about curriculum evaluation and design.
- Stage 2: The Head of Department consults the team to define an ambitious vision for their curriculum. They consider the context of the School, its students and current pedagogical developments to inform that vision, and consider any gaps in student learning that may be ongoing as a result of the COVID pandemic. Curricular responsibilities are defined and distributed by the Head of Department.
- Stage 3: The Head of Department leads the planning of the curriculum with the support of their team. Planning documents and resources are created (e.g. schemes of work, long term plans, learning journeys, etc); these should systematically and explicitly break down the curriculum into components and sequence the content in a logical progression that ensures

effective progression of student knowledge and skills throughout the key stages.

Stage 4: All members of a department should be able to facilitate and articulate their Curriculum Design & the learning journey:

- Why the curriculum is sequenced and structured as it is
- How the curriculum allows students to progress in their subject
- How they have prepared students to study new topics and concepts.

#### **4.2 Support for the delivery of subject level teaching and learning**

The school supports teachers in providing students with a first class learning environment in the following ways:

- Support for attendance at subject-specific courses
- Support for subject association memberships for departments, giving access to recent examples of subject-specific pedagogy, best practice and academic support; a network of like-minded colleagues
- Admin removed from subject time as far as possible
- More INSET time specifically dedicated to discussing teaching and learning, pedagogy foci and sharing best practice
- Engagement with academic theory and research, supported by the School's membership of ICGS
- Opportunities to observe colleagues
- Opportunities to share best practice, learn from others, and support an open dialogue about teaching and learning in departments - within School and within a network of local schools
- Research opportunities to support staff in developing a self-reflective approach to classroom practice and evaluating the impact of their classroom practice
- Providing formalised opportunities to share findings with colleagues to develop their practice
- HODs can liaise with their line manager should further support be needed to drive change (e.g. time off timetable).

#### **5. Roles, Responsibility and Accountability**

All members of the AHS community play an important role in promoting teaching and learning of the highest quality. Comprising:

- The Governing Body is responsible for reviewing and supporting this strategy and the resources needed to carry it out
- The Headteacher (working with the Deputy Headteacher) is responsible for ensuring that:
  - the curriculum meets legal requirements
  - teaching and learning are of the highest standard possible
  - appropriate monitoring and evaluation are in place
- The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that this strategy is implemented, fit for purpose, reviewed regularly, and shared with teaching staff so they understand their contribution to promoting effective learning
- The School Improvement Plan (SIP) acts to ensure that the curriculum is kept under review and for proposing and consulting on appropriate modifications on an annual basis
- Head of Departments are responsible for ensuring that this strategy is implemented within their teams. This will be evaluated through biennial QARs (Quality Assurance Reviews)
- Teaching staff are responsible for being aware of whole-school and department guidance on teaching and learning, and for delivering teaching and learning which best suits the needs of the students
- All staff are responsible for supporting, cooperating with and encouraging their colleagues and students to promote effective learning
- Students are responsible for taking advantage of the opportunities that are afforded to them by showing a desire to learn with the appropriate mindset, persevering through

- challenges and bringing the appropriate equipment for lessons
- Parents/Carers are responsible for supporting their children in their studies. The school aims to support parents in this role through effective parental engagement and AHS information and consultation evenings.

## 6. Measuring impact of high quality teaching and learning at AHS - Assessment and Feedback

### 6.1 Assessment

Aims:

- To enable students to identify their strengths and areas of development in each subject area
- To ensure the feedback students receive is effective and meaningful
- To promote consistency in marking and feedback in each subject area
- To manage everyone's marking expectations.

Assessment at AHS has many strands. These broadly fit into Assessment of Learning (summative) and Assessment for Learning (formative) and can be defined as:

**Formative assessment:** used to monitor students' learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by teachers to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning.

**Summative assessment:** used to evaluate students' learning of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark.

Key aspects include:

- Regular review of student work
- Formal assessment, such as end of year exams or end of unit assessments
- Target setting and individual support
- Reporting, data assessment points and reviews
- Where appropriate, sharing success criteria ahead of assessed tasks.

Assessment for Learning refers to any assessment activity undertaken by teachers and students which provides feedback to be used to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. It is used to inform future practice and to improve learning and, as such, all assessment practice should have this as its primary goal. Formative assessment is a continuous process in the classroom, planned for and developed by teachers and their departments.

Feedback can take a variety of forms; written or verbal, individual, group or whole class, peer and self-assessment. As students have access to electronic devices, feedback may be shared electronically via Google Classroom or other digital learning forums. Teachers are encouraged to share with students the types of feedback they should expect to receive in their lessons. Feedback and marking can take into account class work, homework and both formative and summative assessment; it should:

- Validate student understanding and provide a basis to consider future learning and progression using a 'WWW/EBI' format
- Improve teachers' understanding of students' work by identifying their strengths and areas of development
- Monitor the quality and organisation of the students' work and identify any learning needs
- Motivate and support students in their understanding of how to progress and succeed
- Contribute to reporting evidence
- Inform planning and classroom practice
- Develop learning e.g. re drafting of work prior to an assessment
- Be manageable for teachers
- Provide clear guidance on how the students are progressing and how they need to improve
- Be shared with the student in a timely manner so that they can build on the set targets before the next piece of assessed work

- Encourage dialogue and develop the self-assessment skills of the student
- Provide a grade/mark/attainment descriptor for formal assessments/end of unit tests, etc.
- Promote high expectations for standards of presentation and organisation
- Highlight any concerns that are then shared with relevant staff via HODs and/or CPOMS so that appropriate academic support can be given
- Encourage students to reflect on their work and to take regular opportunities to review that students have made the improvements recommended to them.

Please note that students receive a different proportion of teaching hours per fortnight for different subjects that they learn. As a consequence, some subjects will give feedback on class or homework more regularly than others. It is expected that all work of significance completed by a student will be acknowledged within one to two weeks and that written or verbal feedback will ideally be gained within the timeframes below (although there may be occasions where an extra week is needed during particularly demanding seasons):

- Within two weeks of completion for subjects that see students more than once a week
- Within three weeks for subjects that only see students once a week

#### Regularity of Formal Feedback

- Students in KS3 should receive at least 1 piece of formal feedback per subject (from assessment or home learning) per half-term.
- Students in KS4 should receive at least 2 pieces of formal feedback per subject (from assessment or home learning) per half-term.
- Students in KS5 should receive at least 2 pieces of formal feedback per subject (from assessment or home learning) per half-term.

Students should be given time to respond to feedback - this can be completed as part of a lesson, homework or independent learning.

#### Feedback through peer and self-assessment

Peer and self-assessment can be in different forms, e.g. written or verbal. It is important for the students to recognise their own and others' achievements. Peer and self-assessment is to be used where appropriate and should be read and monitored by the teacher.

#### 6.2 Reports and Parent Consultation Evenings are part of the AfL process.

In addition to data collected for AfL, teachers record student progress termly on SIMS. Parents will receive three data reports per year (with the exception of Years 11 and 13 who have two data reports). Data reports provide students and their parents with the predicted attainment for the end of year at KS3, and the end of course for KS4 and 5. At KS3, the descriptor 'Working At' is based on where we expect the average AHS student to be for that year group at that point in time. We expect to see a fairly even distribution across the three descriptors, 'Working Towards', 'Working At' and 'Working Beyond'.

Report publication dates for the current academic year are on the school calendar. Additionally, each year group has one Parent Consultation Evening per year.

### 7. Homework

#### Rationale

Homework is work that is set to be done outside the timetabled curriculum to reinforce and further students' learning, and to develop their learning habits. It contains an element of independent study in that it is not usually directly supervised by a teacher, but homework tasks should always be planned and focused, and linked to class learning. Not all homework is necessarily done at home; for some students who find it hard to work at home, or for some tasks which may require resources (books, software, equipment) more readily available at school, it is desirable to carry out the task at school during e.g. Homework Club or during study periods.

It requires careful planning on the part of the teacher, to ensure that it is meaningful to the student and

manageable with regards to both the students completing the set tasks and to the teachers responding to the completed work.

## Aims

Homework enables students to:

- Revise/consolidate/practise or expand upon work/subject content covered in class
- Prepare for new learning activities
- Access resources not available in the classroom
- Develop research skills
- Have an opportunity for independent work
- Show progress and understanding
- Provide feedback to the teacher to evaluate learning
- Enhance their study skills e.g. planning, time management and self-discipline
- Take ownership and responsibility for learning.

## Expectations

In Years 7 - 11 students will receive a homework timetable (also available via the school website) to help organise their time. The homework timetable sets out the days of the week homework will be set for each of the subjects and will show the recommended amount of time that should be spent to complete it.

In the Sixth Form, students might reasonably be expected to complete one hour of homework for every lesson studied, as well as more general consolidation and extension activities.

For Years 7-9, homework should not be set for any of the holiday periods. For Years 10-13, homework can be set to be completed during half term breaks, but not during the Christmas or Easter holidays (although public examination classes may use this time for revision purposes or independent study).

## Incentives

High quality homework and a good work ethos should be sensitively praised in class. Merits for achievement and (sustained) effort are to be awarded and on occasions, homework may be included in display work.

## Support

Homework Club runs in the Library after school Monday to Thursday, for an hour, to provide students with a space to work independently. In addition, subject specialist support clinics which are run either by teachers or Subject Ambassadors, usually at lunchtime, can be attended by students on a voluntary basis. These should be listed in the Clinic Booklet (found in the Co-Curricular section on the website).

## Sanctions

Students are rarely asked to complete a task for the next day and so the expectation is for a student to seek support ahead of the homework deadline if they do not understand the task or require support with it. This support could be from a teacher, parent, peer or Student Ambassador/Mentor; Ambassadors/Mentors run lunchtime clinics or may be directed to work with a student during the school day. When homework is not completed, the following sanctions should be used as set out in the [Academic Intervention Timeline](#):

- The class teacher discusses the absence of homework with the student and places a homework mark on SIMS/Edulink. They may decide on suitable follow-up actions and note them on the Data Tracking sheet
- If there is no improvement the teacher should inform the parents to raise a low level concern and agree on actions to be taken and note them on the Data Tracking sheet
- The Head of Department may offer or insist on an intervention to support the student. If this is the case, the information needs to be recorded on CPOMs and the Data Tracking sheet and the parents should be informed

- The Form Tutor monitors behaviour mark reports on a weekly basis to identify students with homework problems across more than one curriculum area. They should refer any students of concern to the appropriate Head of Year
- The Head of Year discusses identified homework matters with the referred student and applies sanctions or support as appropriate

## Responsibilities

The role of the student is to:

- Regularly check and engage with their subject Google Classrooms and record any extra instructions or details given in class
- Inform the class teacher of any difficulties before the deadline
- Ensure that homework is completed independently (unless instructed otherwise) and handed in on time
- Attempt all of the set work and to give their best within the homework time allocated for their year group
- View homework as further learning and not as a task that simply needs to be completed
- If they have been absent, find out what homework they have missed from a student in their class or via the relevant Google Classroom or Google Site
- Seek further clarification from the teacher about missed homework (and class work) if they have already completed the step above and still have queries.

The role of the form tutor is to:

- Discuss homework in Active Tutoring and form time as appropriate
- Respond to the provided homework report from SIMS
- Refer students with any persistent concerns to the Head of Year.

The class teacher controls the direction of homework and the nature of tasks undertaken following the guidance provided by the department schemes of work. The role of the class teacher is to:

- Set all homework tasks on Google Classroom and a set due date and time, considering the relevant homework timetables and department SOW
- Give full and comprehensive instructions
- Respond to homework in accordance with section 6 above
- Provide help and support as appropriate
- Follow the procedure as set out on the Academic Intervention Timeline document [here](#), noting actions that need to be recorded on the Data Tracking sheet [here](#) or on CPOMS.
- Follow the procedures in the Staff Handbook regarding allocating homework marks on SIMS/Edulink.

## Homework and use of AI

Staff should refer to the AI Policy to understand its application for both classwork and homework.

Homework comes in numerous forms; students might be asked to complete a set of questions, complete a research task, finish a piece of classwork, write a piece of extended writing, and so on. Homework is an integral part of the learning process (see under 'aims' above); it is essential that students develop skills for themselves and not rely on AI to skip the learning process. Teachers should carefully consider the types of homework they set, in the knowledge that students will most likely be able to access AI at home.

As such, students should not use generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, for the vast majority of homework tasks. Exceptions to this include:

- where a teacher sets a task and clearly states that students may make use of an AI tool should they wish
- where a teacher sets a task explicitly instructing students to use an AI tool. They must be sure all students have equal access to the tool; if uncertain, then the use of AI should be made optional and an alternative, non-AI method should be suggested

In either instance, clear scaffolding and guidance should be provided to ensure the students understand how to use the AI tool effectively, responsibly and safely. When presenting their work, students should identify what AI application they used and the controls/prompts they gave it. This will allow the teacher to evaluate how extensive the use of AI was and how competently the student controlled it. The text generated by the AI should be included for evaluation.

Where a teacher permits students to complete a research task using AI, the following principles should be followed:

- The student should identify what AI application they used and the controls/prompts they gave it, like crediting a source
- Students should verify the accuracy and reliability of the information generated by cross-referencing the AI-generated content with established sources, peer-reviewed articles, and reputable references
- Students should consider how to best to effectively engage with and process the research, e.g. through reading it thoroughly, taking their own notes, adding their own insight, etc
- Generative AI raises ethical concerns, such as potential biases in training data or unintentional propagation of harmful content. Students should be aware of these issues and critically assess the output for any potential biases or inaccuracies

Teachers and students should take particular care when homework relates to non-examined assessment tasks (NEA). JCQ has strict guidance surrounding AI misuse and plagiarism and it is essential that students and teachers are aware of the School's policy which can be found [here](#).

Teachers should ensure that they have effective means of judging what 'the normal style of work' looks like for each of their students, for example through setting frequent in class assignments where the teacher can monitor that work is the student's own, or through leading in-class discussions to check student understanding.

Where the misuse of AI is suspected, consider using an automated detection program such as GPTZero (<https://gptzero.me/>) or The Giant Language Model Test Room (GLTR) (<http://gltr.io/dist/>) . N.B. these checking sites are not 100% reliable so should be only used as part of a holistic approach to considering the authenticity of students' work.

Where there has been clear misuse of AI towards a homework or classwork task, teachers should discuss their concerns with the relevant HOD, allocate the student a behaviour mark according to the behaviour matrix (if appropriate), and inform the parents.

## **8. Provision/Access to Lessons for Students when not attending School**

Students are not expected to complete work while they are ill and off school; it is their responsibility to catch up on missed work in a reasonable amount of time (e.g. by checking the Google Classroom or Site or asking a classmate for their notes). Staff will not be asked to provide access to Google Meets for students who are not in school, except in exceptional circumstances and thus agreed at SLT level. In agreed exceptional circumstances, please follow these guidelines for Google Meets.

[Guidelines to staff on delivering online lessons to students who are at home](#)

## **9. Monitoring and Evaluation of Teaching and Learning**

The Senior Leadership Team will ensure there are programmes in place for monitoring student work and it is the Head of Department's responsibility to ensure those programmes are carried out effectively within their teams.

Routine lesson observations are conducted by Heads of Departments, Line Managers and members of the Senior Leadership Team. Lessons are not graded but opportunities for praise will be sought and any improvements will be communicated. Biennial department QARs (see Appendix 2) comprise one part of the review process. These, alongside lesson observations, external exam data and wider T&L School foci (as

outlined in the SIP) will inform the Team Improvement Plans for the following year.

Twice a year, students are required to complete a survey that asks questions surrounding the progress they are making in each of their subjects, the feedback they receive and the homework set. Heads of Departments are required to complete a monitoring form which encourages them or other Key Stage responsibility holders to discuss the findings of the survey and conduct further student focus groups or work scrutinies as appropriate. Feedback and marking are also monitored through QARs or following concerns raised about a particular subject/teacher.

Student progress is monitored through regular data drops. Regular data summits are conducted by the Leadership Team, supported by the relevant pastoral teams, to identify any students who are falling behind in their academic progress. Actions and interventions should be agreed and allocated to the appropriate team, e.g. Pastoral, SEND, Wellbeing, or relevant subject area.

It is the Head of Department's responsibility to analyse and monitor their team's data following each data drop to inform any areas of concern or interventions needed.

## **10. Digital Learning**

All students have access to a digital device in lessons; digital learning is used by teachers to enhance classroom and home learning. All students must abide by the Acceptable Use of IT Student Policy.

## **11. Student work: online or on paper?**

HODs decide how the students organise their work within their department. The students may use physical exercise books, booklets or folders or they may have the equivalent online. Depending on the year group, the teacher may give the students an element of choice as to how they prefer to work and take notes. It is good practice for the teacher to discuss with students the best way to organise their work in their subject, whether that is digitally, handwritten or a blend of the two.

Where booklets are used, the following guidance should be followed:

Booklets should:

1. Be used carefully alongside other planned activities, to lighten cognitive load, increase lesson pace and ensure students spend quality time on activities that stretch them to think critically and creatively
2. Follow a logical sequence. Material should be broken into manageable chunks and put in an order that makes sense and prevents the students from having work to do based on material they have not been taught or to have to make too many cognitive jumps at once
3. Help promote effective note-taking. The booklets should provide students with a structure for their notes so that they are accurate, meaningful and effective. A further benefit is that the students can then spend more time engaging in the lesson and thinking about what the teacher is saying

## Appendix 1:

Questions to support curriculum design, implementation and evaluation

- What is the intent of our subject curriculum, and how is this communicated to students?
- Why have we included the content we have chosen, over other content?
- How does our curriculum allow students to get better at our subject?
- What is the best pedagogy to deliver our curriculum?
- What residual knowledge would you expect students to have by the end of Year 7, Key Stage 3, Year 10, etc.?
- What prior knowledge do you expect students to have?
- How do you make sure students are secure in their knowledge throughout your curriculum?
- What reference points will we include that will allow students to tackle forthcoming topics and concepts?
- If a sensitive topic is coming up, have students been given notice? Who will do so?
- What non-topic knowledge is required, and when?
- Are there disparities in students' experiences due to socioeconomic factors?
- How and when will we introduce it?
- When will students revisit x, and how will we ensure students are ready for this?
- What curricular barriers exist in our subject?
- How do we support students to overcome them?

## Appendix 2:

Department QARs 'The focus of subject evaluations is to improve learning in the school.'

### 1. Principles

- 1.1. The aims of the evaluation process are to improve subject processes, enhance learning and attainment and to spread good practice across the school
- 1.2. Subjects are evaluated biennially. The Senior Leadership Team work with subject leaders to conduct self-evaluations
- 1.3. Evaluations are led by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and assisted by a Head of Department acting as a critical friend. New subject leaders to the process will work in collaboration with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 1.4. Once the provisional report is published a full subject meeting is held to discuss the findings

### 2. Methods

An example template if the QAR process can be found [here](#).

3. Characteristically, evaluations will use the following methods and report on each:

- 3.1. Analysis of examination data
- 3.2. Lesson observations
- 3.3. Student questionnaires
- 3.4. Learning samples
- 3.5. Meetings with students and department staff
- 3.6. Such other evidence as may be deemed appropriate such as subject handbooks, improvement plans and parental questionnaires

4. Outcomes The conclusion of the report will identify:

- 4.1 the strengths of the subject, recognising areas of good practice
- 4.2 the areas for development.

The HOD will discuss the findings with their line manager and identify appropriate actions.