

THE HALL SCHOOL
Learning and Teaching Policy

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LEARNING AND TEACHING

Having a clear view about what we are attempting to achieve with our students is fundamental to transformational education and guides the content and structure of our teaching. This section explores our overarching aims for Learning and Teaching.

THE ETHOS AND LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AS A COMMUNITY

Teachers here know that positive relationships and the climate for learning in a school – its values, its ethos and its life in the community – are essential starting points for successful learning.

The quality of relationships is vital in shaping our life together as a learning community at The Hall, empowering boys to flourish both within school and beyond. These relationships are built upon a core set of values at the heart of all that we do, creating a dynamic and caring environment. We believe that six fundamental values of integrity, confidence, responsibility, endeavour, curiosity and originality provide the base on which a Hall School education has always been built and will continue to underpin our lives together.

The wider life of the school – activities such as assemblies, community events and school projects – makes an important contribution to the development of the school day helping to enable all our boys to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. The ultimate goal is for our pupils to have what might be described as portable learning power with the ability to learn in whatever circumstances they may find themselves.

A successful learner at The Hall will develop display the qualities and characteristics describes in The Hall Values (Figure.1).



Figure 1: The Hall's Values

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These dynamic, energetic learners have the commitment to growing and changing as a learner. They are critically curious, asking questions that get beneath the surface knowledge and are able to make meaning by linking information across subjects and life contexts. They are creative and imaginative in their learning, resilient when faced with setbacks and strategically aware of their own learning processes. Further, dynamic learners are able to learn from and with other people in a range of learning relationships. They recognise learning whenever and wherever it occurs throughout life and make the most of learning opportunities.

We hope that all members of our community, boys, staff and parents identify with, embody and model these values. As staff and parents, we will teach, encourage and expect all our boys to behave according to these values and learning habits.

In our classrooms, we aspire to:

- foster a vibrant learning community for adults as well as pupils, in which every member is continually stimulated and challenged
- not be over-bound by exam requirements, but to encourage learning and knowledge for their own sake
- be open-minded and enthusiastic in our teaching, and encourage our pupils to question as they form and articulate their own ideas
- build on the boys' intellectual curiosity and stimulate an enjoyment of learning, analysis and scholarship
- have high expectations of our pupils, and applaud their efforts and progress
- foster good working habits and an understanding of the importance of application
- encourage a sense of working together, for example through pair and group work

KEY ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

Schools should develop a love of learning in pupils and prepare them for a world that is rapidly changing. In order for this to happen at The Hall, all staff play an important role in helping sustain a quality learning experience for our boys and to achieve our vision of a Hall School boy as someone who is encouraged to explore the opportunities open to him, develop the habits of a successful learner, has portable learning power, self-appreciation, exceeds his own expectations and develops a sense of his own worth. Through the use of our Values (see Fig.1), whole-school initiatives and day-to-day practices we effectively prepare our boys for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

All teachers set high expectations and challenge their learners by setting more adventurous targets. They consciously and deliberately open bigger 'gaps' for learners and have an ambitious destination in mind for all. Our teachers do not teach to the target but go beyond it to ensure that all boys exceed their potential and needs. While high standards are important at The Hall and we follow innovative and new approaches to learning and teaching, it is a strongly shared vision that as a school we should be leading these developments across the country and be viewed as a school that is continually challenging new approaches, adapting to meet changes to the curriculum and having the confidence to do something innovative rather than a school that follows suit.

As a school we believe that our boys learn best when:

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1. The learning environment is supportive and productive
2. There is a pupil-centred vision of leadership
3. The learning environment promotes independence, interdependence and self-motivation
4. Students' needs, backgrounds, perspectives and interests are reflected in the learning programme
5. Students are challenged and supported to develop deep levels of thinking and application
6. Assessment practices are an integral part of learning and teaching
7. Learning connects strongly with communities and practice beyond the classroom

We acknowledge that people learn in many ways and we recognise the need to provide opportunities in lessons that allow all boys to learn in ways that best suit them. These include, but are not limited to:

- investigation and problem-solving
- group work
- pair work
- independent work
- whole-class work
- asking and answering questions
- use of the computer
- use of iPads, netbooks, cameras and other ICT equipment
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest in Britain and abroad
- creative activities
- debates, role-plays and oral presentations
- participation in athletic or physical activity

Setting prep and getting boys to continue their learning outside of the school walls is an important part of what we do at The Hall. We strongly believe that school should be viewed as a 'base-camp' for learning, providing enrichment opportunities and promoting learning through investigation. For further information prep please refer to the Prep policy.

PROMOTING BRITISH VALUES

The DfE and ISI have continued to reinforce the need 'to create and enforce a clear and rigorous expectation on schools to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs'. We are proud to be a multi-cultural school, with boys from a range of backgrounds and cultures, we encourage and enhance the boys understanding of their place in a culturally diverse society by giving them opportunities to experience such diversity. Assemblies, conference days, discussions and, in learning in class, all promote and effectively prepare the boys for 'opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society'.

Within every curriculum area and throughout everyday school life the boys will encounter the principles of fundamental British values. Listed below are some examples of how we promote these values in our school community:

Democracy:

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Our house system and later in the senior school, the school council, all promote student voice and opportunity for boys to share their experiences and opinions in a safe environment. Boys have a great deal of input in regards to the food they eat, after-school activities and a lot of the time, what they are taught and how. Pupil questionnaires and interviews are also conducted as and when needed. We know that the formation of the house system and school council and the active participation of all our boys will help to sow the seeds for a more sophisticated understanding of democracy in the future.

The rule of law:

Boys will encounter rules and laws throughout their entire lives. We want our pupils to understand that whether these laws govern the class, the school, the community or the country, they are set for good reasons and must be adhered to. This understanding of the importance of rules will be consistently reinforced through assemblies and our curriculum and by staff throughout the school. The involvement of our pupils in the creation of the school rules helps them to understand the reasons behind the rules and the consequences if they are broken.

Through enquiry in our Life Skills curriculum and the wider curriculum, we allow opportunity to debate and discuss the reasons for laws so that boys can recognise the importance of these for their own protection. Throughout the year we welcome visits from members of the wider community including police, politicians, religious members, war veterans, the fire brigade and many more. We believe that clear explanations and real life stories emphasize the importance of the rule of law for the boys.

Mutual respect:

Mutual respect is at the core of our school life. Boys learn to treat each other and staff with great respect from the moment they arrive into Reception or Year 1. This is evident when walking around the Schools and in the classrooms.

Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs:

Through the teaching of TPR (formerly RS) and Life Skills we offer a culturally rich and diverse curriculum in which all major religions are studied and respected. We strongly believe that tolerance is gained through knowledge and understanding. Through our curriculum and the routines of our daily school life, we strive to demonstrate tolerance and help children to become knowledgeable and understanding citizens who can build a better Britain for the future.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We recognise the importance of providing a stimulating, interesting, welcoming, safe and engaging learning environment. All rooms are organised and resourced to provide a range of learning opportunities.

DIFFERENTIATION (see Learning Support Policy & Enrichment Policy for more)

It is a school expectation that all lessons and work are differentiated where applicable and that each boy will be treated as an individual learner. As a school we believe that differentiation implies that teaching must consider differences in learner characteristics. This in turn requires careful assessment, flexible planning and the provision of a variety of approaches to learning and teaching. It is the responsibility of the individual teacher, with support from the Learning Support Department, Head of Enrichment and Deputy Head Learning and Teaching, to provide the appropriate levels of differentiation to all boys.

STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (Please also refer to the Continued Professional Development Policy)

The school actively encourages staff to attend courses. There is a budget for this, and information on courses is published via the Head of the Junior School, Deputy Head, Learning & Teaching and/or on the Staffroom boards. Individual staff may also find and source their own training and seek approval by the Deputy Head – Learning & Teaching.

Booking a course:

1. Individual collects form from Deputy Head, Learning & Teaching or from the JS Office and completes all the relevant information.
2. Individual gets Head of Department/Head of Year (MS/SS) or Head of JS (JS) to sign.
3. In the MS/SS staff must see Deputy Head Pastoral for cover implications. In the JS they must see the Deputy Head.
4. Individual gives form to Deputy Head, Learning and Teaching.
5. Deputy Head, Learning and Teaching discusses course with individual and if deemed appropriate signs off
6. Deputy Head distributes authorisation copies to the relevant individuals.

Staff are actively encouraged to develop themselves professional whether that be in school or in-service training and courses. All staff must do this in consultation with their Head of Department based on their own needs, school priorities and interest. Courses often emerge through discussion arising from the appraisal process. When contemplating longer courses or wishing to acquire further qualification, they should discuss initially with the Deputy Head, Learning and Teaching or Head of Junior School and Headmaster.

Once a member of staff has been on a course they are required to provide feedback to the relevant colleagues and meeting forum.

An INSET programme is also organised on an annual basis by the SLT. The focus for these days can vary as a result of the whole-school development plan, current issues/areas of discussion or areas identified during learning walks by SLT and/or inspections.

Teacher Learning Communities have also been established to facilitate staff professional development and to encourage internal and external collaboration. See below.

Protected time has also been given to staff within their weekly timetable as a means of providing staff with the time to conduct their own development either on an individual or Department basis.

TEACHER LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Teacher Learning Communities in the school are used to promote professional development and collaboration amongst staff. The SLT strongly believe that the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, to empower staff and give them the skills and resources to be the teachers they are capable of being. It is about recognising strengths, building awareness and promoting a culture of sharing good practice. While analysing data and monitoring achievement is important, this will only ever identify problems, it will not solve them. Having a strong system of professional development is vital in promoting a collaborative approach to change and development.

'TLCs...are ongoing groups...who meet regularly for the purposes of increasing their own learning and that of their students'

What are they?

TLCs are based on the idea that educators can learn from one another.

They encourage and support teachers to examine their practice, to try new ideas, and to reflect together on what works and why; and they provide opportunities for the collective construction and sharing of new knowledge.

What are the aims of TLCs?

The main aim of TLCs is to enhance the learning and achievement of all students.

- Teacher Learning Communities aim to promote professional development and collaboration amongst staff and all teaching staff are involved.
- We strongly believe that the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, to empower staff and give them the skills and resources to be the teachers they are capable of being. It is about recognising strengths, building awareness and promoting a culture of sharing good practice.
- TLCs...are ongoing groups...who meet regularly (about once a half term) for the purposes of increasing their own learning and that of their students'
- TLCs are based on the idea that educators can learn from one another. They encourage and support teachers to examine their practice, to try new ideas, and to reflect together on what works and why; and they provide opportunities for the collective construction and sharing of new knowledge.
- The main aim of TLCs is to enhance the learning and achievement of all students. They can be used to foster collaboration, increase confidence and promote learning amongst staff.

The main elements of TLCs:

- Guide reflection on teaching through reflection on learning
- Encourage a reconceptualization of professional identity and linking it to a professional community
- Eliminates teacher isolation
- Create a public forum for sharing
- Encourage engagement in dialogue and research
- Turning ownership over to learners
- Builds relationships between and among teachers who share students and who are working for greater student learning

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- To promote a ‘Theory of action’
- Exposes teachers to what they need to know, offering support and opportunities to learn from one another about how to provide the richest possible opportunities for student growth.
- Develops trust and openness among staff

TLCs are about giving you time to share best practice, learn together and improve our skills as a group to enhance the learning experience of all our boys.

TLCs at The Hall

In order for us to achieve the above aims we need to create time and space for you to reflect on your practice in a structured way.

Every member of staff, across all three sections, including some non-teaching staff, will be put into a TLC group containing eight to ten members. The TLC programme will be organised by the Deputy Head Learning and Teaching. However, there will be scope for many of the topics of discussion to be identified by the staff. Groups will be self-run and all group members will help in the facilitation and organization of individual group meetings.

The groups will meet approximately 4 times a year at specific scheduled time (see school calendar for specific dates).

Learning and Teaching Strategy Group

The Learning and Teaching Strategy group (an optional working party) will work closely with the TLC leaders to help plan, prepare and reflect. The Learning & Teaching Strategy group’s role is to enrich and promote the learning, teaching and assessment culture of the School.

- Enhance the student learning experience,
- Encourage excellence and innovation in learning and teaching.
- Encourage collaborative and co-curricular provision across the sections of the school
- Discuss policies and literature in educational development
- Consider outreach activities and enhance and safeguard the School’s reputation for an excellent learning journey.

INSET/IN-House CPD

An annual INSET and IN-House CPD programme are put in place each year.

This year we have signed up to the IAPS iLearning platform Nimbl. All staff will be provided with a username and password. The website provides access to a range of courses that staff can access as they wish or sign up to complete in in after school sessions.

Click here to access the 2020 Annual CPD Programme:

https://hallschool-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/j_johnson_hallschool_co_uk/EepXW4ms6kNErGjNkUEsmNwBVgGFnm0X0fePZR6DLbO8nQ?e=jVXpco