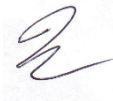


Quality Assurance (Teaching & Learning) Policy

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School



Approved by:	Mr J Coucill, Chair of Governors 
Lead of Review:	Ms L Oakley, Assistant Headteacher
Last reviewed on:	August 2020
Next review due by:	July 2021

Rationale

The purpose of Quality Assurance (QA) is to support self-evaluation at Ellesmere Port Catholic High School. The Ofsted Framework places self-evaluation at the heart of the work of leaders and managers; put simply, schools must know themselves. Quality assurance activities are engaged in so that we have confidence in our view of the work that we do. All QA feeds into departmental and the whole-school self-evaluation form (SEF).

QA processes examine a range of our work and when appropriately engaged in ensure that self-evaluation is accurate and robust. Moreover, the collection and analysis of rigorous data, both quantitative and qualitative, allows us to monitor the implementation and impact of policies and interventions.

Evaluation at all levels is critical to the success of the school. We need to be reflective practitioners so that attention is given to making improvements to provision and, as a consequence, students have their best chance of maximising their potential. Evaluation should take place in a non-threatening environment so that honest appraisal of our work is undertaken and appropriate planning for improvement can follow. QA should focus on identifying strengths which can be celebrated, built upon and shared as much as on areas requiring attention.

When properly conducted and gathered together, QA provides a firm foundation for further subject and whole-school improvement plans.

Aims

- To improve the quality of learning and teaching across school.
- To review the work of subjects, departments and other teams in school.
- To identify best practice and enable that to be shared.
- To pinpoint specific areas where intervention is needed and CPD is then used appropriately.
- To enable exploration of aspects of our work where development is required.
- To determine the impact and success of policies and interventions.
- To provide tools, specifically BlueSky, for quality assurance that enable provision to be appropriately evaluated.
- To ensure that data informs priorities and improvement plans.

Process & Activities

A number of approaches and activities are engaged in to ensure the QA is thorough and robust. At a whole-school level a calendar of activities is included in the school calendar, with specific deadlines so that a clear picture is developed of the QA of each department at the same time. Evidence from these activities is collated and evaluated in BlueSky, where reports will be produced to ensure a transparent, whole-school picture but departments will also record this information in their QA file. Actions arising from these processes are recorded on BlueSky, but also in the QA file too.

QA is supported with a programme of fortnightly meetings between subject leaders and the member of the senior leadership team (SLT) that line manages them. The agenda for these ensures that key aspects (e.g. progress of specific groups, curriculum, and staff performance) are included in the professional conversation, and specific links are made with the QA calendar, supported by a line manager meeting proforma that uses the QA calendar as a focus.

Formal Lesson Observations

- Lesson observations serve as a source for both professional development and a tool for departmental/school self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- Lesson observations should always be a purposeful activity and the focus should always be clarified between the observee and the observer (typically, this will be a whole-school teaching and learning priority, a department learning priority, or an individual area for development).
- The focus for observations is the extent to which the teaching leads to learning for the young people and, therefore, attention will be on the impact on the learners of the activities taking place.
- Teachers are entitled to at least three formal observations in the year (by their line manager, by a member of SLT, by their subject leader, other member of the department or peer).
- Where there are specific concerns the number of observations may exceed the above.
- The value of peer observation is affirmed and supported where practical.
- Lesson observations are not graded. Aspects of teaching and learning are considered against criteria which have been developed at a whole-school level, and the needs of the department.
- Observers take a broad view when observing lessons – not only the lesson snapshot is considered but the progress of the learners is looked at, learners are spoken to about their work and learning and books and folders are examined for consistency and in line with department and whole-school policies.
- Teachers themselves are encouraged to reflect on the success of the lesson observed.
- Strengths and areas for development are recorded through the appropriate electronic form on BlueSky. Feedback for improvement is limited to a manageable scope (typically, two or three aspects).
- A conversation following the observation should take place within 48 hours.
- Next steps for the teacher's practice should be agreed from this discussion.

Learning Visits

- Learning visits enable SLT and Curriculum Leaders to monitor the quality of provision and learning in the school on a day-to-day basis.
- The focus for learning walks is communicated to teachers in advance of them taking place through the calendar and weekly briefings.
- Visits to classrooms do not exceed 15 minutes.
- The focus for the classroom visits is the learning of the students and the particular identified theme.
- Findings are gathered and shared with staff (individual teachers and classes are not identified).
- Brief individual feedback is recorded in BlueSky under the correct proforma.
- Visits to classrooms should be respectful and supportive of the teachers involved; concerns should be addressed in private at a later time.

- Departmental teams are encouraged to collaboratively work through learning visits focused on their own specific issues.
- A report of all learning visits should then be generated by BlueSky in order for SLT to assess the strengths of teachers/departments and areas for development, dependent upon the focus of the learning visits.

Book Looks

- 'Book look' processes allow leaders at different levels to monitor the quality of provision and learning in the school.
- Leaders at all levels should ensure that the correct proforma for Book Looks is used and completed on BlueSky, therefore allowing for a full picture to be generated across the department/faculty or on a whole-school level.
- Scrutiny allows teachers and leaders to explore the progress of students and classes, to examine movement through the subject curriculum, and enables the checking of the implementation of strategies, such as the marking and feedback policy and the way that this is implemented by the curriculum area for that stage of learning.
- Student work may also be looked at as part of an observation or a learning visit, where applicable.
- Records of work scrutiny activity and actions to follow should be recorded and kept in the QA file, and recorded on BlueSky (as above).
- Self-review and evaluation at a departmental level complement whole-school activity, and adheres to the QA calendar.

Documentation

- Schemes of learning are looked at to ensure that the planning is clear, developmental and appropriate to what is required by the National Curriculum and exam boards at GCSE and A Level, where applicable.
- Assessment practice is considered so that policy is being adhered to and effective approaches can be shared more widely.
- All documentation is available on BlueSky and findings are recorded there by leaders at all levels.

Achievement and Pastoral Data Analysis

- A key element in the evaluation of the quality of teaching is the regular review of progress through data meetings, in line with the most recent data collection. These meetings will take place during the most appropriate SLT line manager meeting slot.
- In advance of the meeting, teachers need to analyse the attainment of their classes and subject leaders need to develop a departmental perspective.
- Data related to attendance, punctuality, behaviour, and exclusions is also analysed and discussed through pastoral data meetings.
- Interventions to make improvements are identified as part of the process.

- A governor may attend data meetings but in the light of Covid have the option of joining over Zoom.

Student Voice

- Specific whole-school questionnaires or surveys examining different aspects of provision are carried out on a regular basis by departments.
- Each questionnaire is uniform for each year group with the exception of five specific departmental-related questions. The feedback and evaluation of these student voice activities are to be logged on BlueSky, using the appropriate form.
- As the Curriculum Leader logs the evaluation of student voice in their department, this allows for a whole-school picture to be developed through the reporting process. This further ensures that areas of strength are celebrated at a department, or whole school level, but also that areas of development are identified and a plan put in place where appropriate. There are clear deadlines outlined in the QA calendar for completion of student voice.
- These are scheduled to ensure a broad coverage of the student body.
- Further investigation through student panels are sometimes used in order to find out how provision can be improved.

Form Time Monitoring

- Pastoral leaders and SLT carry out regular visits to form rooms in order to ensure that this aspect of the school day is of a high quality.
- Results of the monitoring are gathered and shared; appropriate actions to create improvement are identified.
- Findings are recorded on BlueSky to ensure that a whole year group, or whole-school picture is developed.

Conclusion

- At a whole-school and departmental level, it is important that information from different QA activities are triangulated, using BlueSky as the tool, to properly evaluate our practice.
- QA should not encourage mere conformity but should help us probe for understanding in areas where improvements need to be made.
- Quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation are not ends in themselves. The activities we engage in should serve to help us make improvements in provision for our young people and, ultimately, to help promote their achievement.