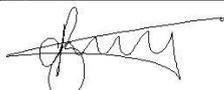# Teaching & Learning Policy

THE **LADDER** SCHOOL
Redefining alternative provision

MERCIAN

Date of Creation (first edition)	April 2020
Date for Review	April 2023
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Member of staff responsible for the policy	Tracey Lecointe
Date adopted by the Local Governing Body	April 2022
Signed by Principal	
Signed by Chair of Governing Body	
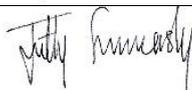
Version Control

Version	Author	Date	Changes Made
1.0	TL	April 2020	First Edition
1.1	TL	May 2021	Formatting
1.2	TL	April 2022	Amend paragraph 6.9 and 7.8 Further formatting

Mission Statement

The Ladder School is a safe, well ordered and caring environment for learning. It delivers high quality education to all its students and supports them to develop their individual potential for growth, self-worth and self-control.

High quality outstanding teaching, and clear and consistent guidance and support facilitates students in succeeding in education. Our broad and balanced academic and vocational curriculum will provide students with access to a broad range of accredited qualifications as well as educational and social experiences, which will address their learning and emotional needs. Our purpose is to support every student to develop their true potential, make positive contributions to their families and find fulfilment in employment.

Values

1. Alternative Provision doesn't mean a dumping ground…it's mainstream with the reasonable adjustments to succeed
2. High standards and high expectations are incredibly important and are the corner stones to a successful school
3. The Ladder School should become the go-to place for educators from across the country to see best practice
4. Good simply isn't good enough
5. Learning is about a journey and there is more than one way to get to the destination
6. Qualifications, manners, respect and opportunity should be the foundations for students that need a second chance.

School Ethos

| High Standards | Daring to Dream | Traditional Values | Success | Personalised Support |

High standards – students are pushed to achieve beyond their potential, and staff work to ensure everything that we do is better than people expect.

Daring to Dream – students at The Ladder School may have been in an educational setting where they lacked aspiration to be successful, at The Ladder School we challenge students to reach their potential and go on to further education and employment.

Traditional Values – some things often get forgotten in education, at The Ladder School we pride ourselves on mutual respect, good manners, making a positive contribution, supporting one another and an orderly, litter free environment.

Success – can come in many virtues, at The Ladder School we celebrate the small steps every day and tell students when they are doing well. We ensure that students can have a successful future.

Personalised Support - all students at The Ladder School have a Learning Coach who guides them, sets them bespoke targets and supports them in making social and academic progress.

Statement of Purpose

This policy will outline how The Ladder School will manage behaviour throughout the school to ensure we provide a safe, caring and orderly learning environment for staff, students and visitors. The Ladder School prides itself on our ability to deal with students that may have found mainstream education difficult, but in turn we will not settle for second best. We expect all of our staff, students and visitors to adhere to the guidelines set out in this policy, without question.

The Ladder School expects;
- Students, staff and visitors to behave respectfully always;
- There is a focus on positivity throughout the school;
- That the school is safe, calm and orderly;
- Students become self-managers of their own behaviour and in turn support their peers on how to behave correctly;
- Staff to find resolutions and solutions to negative behaviour in school.

Positive Behaviour

It is clear from extensive research into supporting behaviour management in schools, that the best strategies are the ones that focus on positivity. This should not be confused with a 'soft' approach when dealing with student behaviour. We aim to offer preventative strategies that reduce the need to challenge poor behaviour as they allow students to conform to a positive school culture. We encourage self-management, self-respect, responsibility and co-operation.

We want our students to feel they are part of The Ladder School family and whilst families sometimes fall out they have a bond that unites them. We want students, staff and visitors to feel welcome at our school and see that our positivity is embedded into everything that we do. Praise and acknowledgement are a key foundation that will be evident throughout the school.

Students learn best when they are in a safe, secure and positive environment, it is important that they buy into this concept, so they can be effective learners. The Ladder School wants to develop young people into positive members of society.

Student Expectations

To ensure that students leave The Ladder School as well-rounded individuals that can contribute positively to society we expect;

High Standards	• Wear uniform correctly in accordance with the school dress code • Use appropriate language and do not swear • Keep hands, feet, objects and personal comments to yourself • Look after the school, building, displays and equipment
Daring to Dream	• Always try your best in everything that you do • Want to work towards your next destination in your education • Be prepared to show others how great we are
Traditional Values	• Arrive on time to school and all lessons throughout the day • Hand in any mobile phones/contraband at the beginning of the day without question • Eat and drink in designated areas and clean up after yourself
Success	• Aim for 100% attendance • Listen to others and in turn be listened to • Be safe and all follow instructions
Personalised Support	• Ask for help if/when you need it • Remain in school for the whole day and be prepared to stay to rectify any mistakes you have made

1. Legal Framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2018) 'Primary school accountability in 2018'
- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'.
- DfE (2018) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and college.

1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- SEND Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Communications Policy
- Behavioural Policy

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1. The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Ensuring reports are provided by the Principal and subject leaders and that action is taken where areas are identified as requiring improvement.
- Visiting the school to increase knowledge of classroom activity and conducting the following activities:
- Observing lessons
- Viewing recordings of lessons as appropriate
- Viewing samples of pupils' work
- Viewing records of achievement
- Talking to pupils about their experiences
- Talking to teachers about their experiences
- Reporting their findings to the entire governing board

2.2. The SLT is responsible for:

- Taking a general overview of the atmosphere in the school on a day-to-day basis by visiting classes and talking to staff and pupils.

- Liaising with parents to ensure needs are being met.

- Working in classrooms, including teaching, regularly.

- Carrying out focussed classroom-based observations.

- Reviewing and commenting on planning and target setting.

- Discussing all annual reports with staff.

- Completing a self-evaluation of the school's quality of teaching.

- Reporting on the quality of teaching and learning in the governors' report.

- Acting as role model for teaching staff.

2.3. Curriculum Leaders are responsible for:

- Developing and reviewing curriculum policies and schemes of work in collaboration with colleagues.

- Taking accountability for the progress of pupils in their given subject.

- Reporting on the effectiveness of the curriculum to the SLT and the Board of Trustees.

2.4. Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Monitoring and evaluating their teaching.

- Seeking professional dialogue and constructive criticism from their head of department.

- Reviewing and evaluating their planning regularly.

- Setting appropriate and challenging targets for pupils based on ability.

- Collaborating with colleagues to moderate pupil achievement.

- Involving parents and other professionals in the monitoring process.

- Completing termly reviews assessing the progress of their pupils.

2.5.   Pupils are responsible for:

- Being on time for school.

- Being prepared to learn.

- Placing coats and bags in the appropriate area.

- Storing personal belongings in the area provided.

- Not eating or chewing during lessons.

- Being attentive.

- Listening to and following all reasonable instructions.

- Treating everyone with respect.

External monitoring

2.6. The Director of School Improvement will work with staff to monitor teaching performance.

2.7. The Director of School Improvement will scrutinise all available data and discuss the school's self-evaluation, along with all matters arising from it.

2.8. The Director of School Improvement will undertake lesson observations.

2.9. The support of leaders from local schools will be sought to evaluate the work of the school through professional discussion and joint lesson observations.

2.10. Ofsted inspections will be used to identify strengths and weaknesses, and to develop an action plan for improvement.

Self-evaluation

Discussion with senior leaders

2.11. Senior leaders should discuss the following questions to assess the quality of teaching at the school:

- What is the school's view on teaching?

- What is being done to monitor teaching?

- How is assessment used to inform planning, ensure appropriate challenge, set targets and provide feedback?

- To what extent do teachers use assessment within the lesson (for example mini-whiteboards and questioning) to ensure that all pupils understand the lesson objectives?

- Are judgements based on the interpretation and evaluation of data and evidence?

- Are strengths and weaknesses in teaching and management identified?

- What strategies do support staff employ to support learning?

- Do pupils work independently, co-operate to solve problems, develop workplace skills and understand what they need to do to improve?

- What happens if pupils are absent or fall behind with their work? What support is in place to help them?

Discussion with pupils

2.12. The following questions should be discussed with pupils to assess the quality of teaching at the school:

- Do you know your targets? What are they?

- What subjects do you have targets for?

- How do you know your targets? How often do you work on them?

- How do you know when you have achieved your targets?

- Who helps you to achieve your targets? What sort of things do they do?

- Do your parents know your targets? How do they know?

- When do you get new targets?

- What happens if you can't achieve your targets?

- How does having targets help your learning?

- Tell me about this piece of work. What were you learning?

- Show me a piece of work that you are really proud of. Why?

- Do you know how to improve your work? Do you have the opportunity to improve your work?

- Which aspect of Maths / English / Science do you find challenging/difficult?

3. Learning environment

Setting the tone

3.1. The teacher will set the tone for sessions by taking the register on SIMS. If no formal register is taken, the teacher will call out the names of the pupils to catch their attention and to indicate that the session has begun.

Seating arrangements

3.2. The teacher will consciously decide upon and plan the seating arrangements for pupils in order to maximise educational attainment. Arrangements will be changed to suit different activities and to allow students to work independently. A seating plan should be available for those providing cover when the teacher is absent.

The classroom

3.3. It is imperative that the learning environment maximises opportunities to learn. Desks should be free from clutter and arranged in a manner providing suitable space for all. The room is well-ventilated and maintained at a suitable temperature. All pupils are encouraged to bring a water bottle to lessons (except in science lessons where water could create a risk).

4. Our Philosophy

4.1. Through our teaching philosophy, pupils are encouraged to:

- Listen to each other.
- Adopt various roles in groups.
- Volunteer thoughts and opinions.
- Respect the thoughts, ideas and contributions of others.
- Give honest and positive feedback.

4.2. To encourage all pupils to contribute to lessons, teachers:

- Ensure pupils raise their hands before speaking to allow all pupils the chance to contribute without being interrupted.
- Allow sufficient thinking time between questions to allow pupils to consider their responses.
- Plan time in their lessons for pupils to discuss their learning with a partner or group before committing to a response.

4.3. We reward and recognise achievement in the following ways:

- Praise more than criticise, using formal and informal approaches.
- The school formally rewards pupil in the following ways:
- Achievement Points
- School trips and visits
- Positive phone calls home
- Celebration assemblies
- The school informally rewards pupils in the following ways:
- Congratulating pupils privately or in class
- Saying 'well done' to the whole class
- Writing positive feedback on written work

4.4. The teacher will manage disruptive behaviour by:

- Using non-verbal cues such as raising eyebrows or frowning.
- Referring to the pupil by name.
- Quietly speaking to the pupil while the rest of the class is engaged.
- Giving the pupil a task to encourage responsibility.
- Reminding the pupil of the sanctions that follow a poor choice.
- In exceptional circumstances, calling for support from another member of staff.
- Ensuring the school's Behavioural Policy is adhered to at all times.

4.5. To ensure that the quality of teaching is of the highest standard, we commit to ensuring that our teachers:

- Understand what excellent teaching is.
- Creatively plan and deliver lessons.
- Motivate pupils effectively.
- Enjoy and have a passion for teaching.

- Continue to learn and enhance their skills.
- Hold high expectations for all pupils.
- Understand how thinking and questioning develop learning.
- Are consummate professionals.
- Engage pupils of all abilities.
- Seek out and accept constructive feedback from peers, pupils and parents.
- Are given opportunities to lead.
- Involve parents and carers in their teaching.
- Understand and implement effective behaviour management strategies.

5. Teaching Strategies

The Curriculum

5.1. The Curriculum is balanced, with suitable proportions of time spent on statutory core in addition to an options based vocational programme which students decide on in Year 10. The curriculum is carefully timetabled and content is suitable for the age and ability of the pupils. In addition, the curriculum is made accessible to all through differentiation and the provision of the necessary resources.

5.2. While teaching the national curriculum, wider aspects of learning, such as the development of social skills and self-esteem, also form a significant part of pupils' education.

Planning and preparation

5.3. Lessons are clearly linked to the national curriculum. They are differentiated to show how pupils of all abilities are catered for.

5.4. Lessons have clearly identified learning objectives and success criteria, showing continuity from one lesson to the next.

5.5. Lesson plans clearly show how teaching assistants are used to enhance learning. Each plan contains a list of resources to be used during the lesson and how these resources will complement teaching.

5.6. All lessons are planned using a framework that Connects, Activates, Demonstrates and Consolidates the learning.

5.7. Timings and structure are made clear and the plan clearly demarcates the salient parts of lessons.

5.8. The school gives teachers adequate preparation, planning and assessment (PPA) time, as per the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD).

Delivery

5.9. Lessons cater for different learning styles and include a mix of teacher and student led activities. A range of lesson types are used including practical, visual, dramatic, investigative and group work. All lessons at The Ladder School follow an Accelerated Teaching and Learning Cycle.

Resources

5.10. Resources are prepared in advance and made readily available to pupils. They are accessible to all and appropriate for the learning objectives of the lesson. In addition, they cater to pupils' different learning styles. Resources are shared between teachers and departments in order to facilitate good practice.

In-class support

5.11. Support staff are encouraged to actively participate in the lesson to aid pupils' learning. As far as possible, they are involved in prior planning and preparation, and possess a good knowledge of the needs of individual pupils. They support different pupils at different times as directed by the class teacher - for example, pupils with SEND and academically more able pupils. In some circumstances, support staff are utilised on a one-to-one basis with a child in need of additional help.

Pupil involvement

5.12. Pupils are provided opportunities to follow-up teachers' marking with questions. Pupils are also allowed opportunities to mark their work (self-assessment), and that of their peers (peer-to-peer assessment). The learning objective of each lesson is explained at the start and displayed throughout.

High expectations

5.13. The school sets high expectations for all pupils, regardless of ability, circumstances or needs.

SEND

5.14. Pupils with SEND are treated as individuals. Every pupil is provided with the appropriate support. Pupils causing concern are discussed at weekly meetings with pastoral staff and if necessary, additional support is provided. Teachers also discuss, informally, the needs of individual pupils, enabling all teachers to be

aware of pupils requiring support. In addition, the school has adopted a SEND Policy containing strategies and procedures for assisting our pupils with SEND.

6. Assessment

Baseline assessment

6.1. Pupils joining the school will receive a baseline assessment when they start.

6.2. Strategies for baseline assessment include:

- Use of past national curriculum tests.
- The results of GL Assessments in Maths and English
- The results of GL Assessments which test ability in verbal reasoning, non-verbal reasoning and reading and spelling, rather than national curriculum content.

Formative assessment (assessment for learning)

6.3. Formative assessment creates a positive learning environment where pupils can see the steps necessary for their own success. It enables teachers to set appropriate work at the level necessary for pupils' continuing progress.

6.4. Formative assessment is a powerful way of raising pupils' achievement. It is based on the principle that pupils will improve most if they understand the aim of their learning, where they are in relation to this aim and how they can achieve the aim. One formative assessment is completed each half term and recorded.

6.5. Formative assessments are used to:

- Identify pupils' strengths and gaps in their skills/knowledge.
- Identify the next steps for learning.
- Inform future planning.
- Enable appropriate strategies to be employed.
- Facilitate the setting of appropriate targets for the class, group and individual.
- Track the pupil's rate of progress.
- Facilitate an evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- Inform future teaching and learning strategies.
- Identify individuals and groups for specific intervention support.

6.6. Formative assessment will not be punitive. It is used to guide teaching and learning and help pupils achieve their targets. It is not used to judge a teacher's performance.

6.7. Formative assessment is not included as part of a pupil's final grade, but will be recorded as part of individual learning plans (ILPs).

6.8. Methods of formative assessment include the following:

- Question and answer sessions
- Hot seating - where students take on the role of a character eg Macbeth and other students then ask pertinent questions of that character.
- Quizzes
- Self-assessment

Summative assessment (assessment of learning)

6.9. Summative assessment is important for:

- Accurate information regarding a pupil's attainment and progress.
- Informing both parents and teachers of a pupil's attainment and progress. One summative assessment is completed each half term and recorded.

6.10. Summative assessments:

- Identify attainment through one-off tests at any given point in time.
- Record performance in a specific area on a specific date.
- Provide end of key stage test data against which the school will be judged.
- Provide information about cohort areas of strength and weakness to build from in the future.
- Are used to determine a pupil's final grade.
- Are used to judge a teacher's performance.
- Are used to monitor the progress of individuals and groups of pupils.

6.11. Methods of summative assessment include:

- End of year exams.
- Coursework which contribute to a final grade.

- External examinations such as the national curriculum tests.

7. Individual Learning

Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs)

7.1. PLPs are available for pupils who are not progressing as expected, to allow pupils to lead their own achievement.

7.2. PLPs are reviewed half termly to ensure that they are still effective.

EHC plans

7.3. Some young people with SEND may require additional support from professionals outside of the school setting. In these cases, the views of parents, psychologists and further specialists will be sought. Based on these views, and in collaboration with the pupil, an EHC plan will be sought.

7.4. More information can be found in the school's SEND Policy.

8. Monitoring and Reporting

8.1. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal and the Lead for Teaching and Learning.

8.2. The governors' annual report will contain updates and analysis regarding teaching and learning at the school.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is Mar 2023