



STEP Academy Trust

Teaching and Learning Policy

DATE OF POLICY: Spring 2018

Review: Autumn 2020

Introduction

The STEP Academy Trust Board of Trustees has agreed this Policy and as such, it applies to all Academies within the Trust.

Teaching and learning in STEP Academies is driven by the STEP Way and the intent to ensure consistent excellence in instruction and outcomes.

Approaches:

Approaches to teaching and learning within STEP Academies are driven by the needs of the pupils within individual Academies and the context of those Academies and are, therefore, discrete, singular and distinct. Nonetheless, any approach is expected to ensure that the STEP Standard is achieved and that academicians are on track to attain this standard by the end of KS2. All approaches are expected to provide access, opportunity and the chance to study subjects in greater depth to every child in the Trust.

Assessment

All assessment within STEP Academies is used to inform teaching in the classroom to ensure pupils attain the STEP Standard.

Appendix 1

Mastery learning in STEP Academies

Mastery learning breaks subject matter and learning content into units with clearly specified objectives which are pursued until they are achieved. Learners work through each block of content in a series of sequential steps. Cohorts move together with the express purpose of avoiding widening gaps in knowledge and understanding. Differentiation is not through different activities but in the provision of opportunity to study at greater depth. The language of 'more able' and 'less able' is inconsistent with the approach; pupils either grasp content at a faster or slower rate. This is in contrast to a spiral curricular approach which moves instruction on to alternative areas of study with the intention of returning later but at a higher level and looks to challenge faster grasping pupils with different content.

In mastery learning students must demonstrate a high level of success on tests, typically at about the 80% level, before progressing to new content. Mastery learning can be contrasted with other approaches which require pupils to move through the curriculum at a pre-determined pace. Teachers seek to avoid unnecessary repetition by regularly assessing knowledge and skills. Those who do not reach the required level are provided with additional tuition, peer support, small group discussions, or homework so that they can reach the expected level.

The Education Endowment Fund research suggests that a mastery approach may result in faster progress for pupils. This is nevertheless dependent on the quality of the instruction.

Academies are free to adopt a mastery approach for any or all subject areas. Whichever approach is adopted; the intent must be to achieve the STEP Standard for those curriculum areas by the end of KS2.

Provision for HIGH-PRIOR-ATTAINERS

Academies that adopt a 'mastery' approach to teaching and learning provide opportunities for faster grasping academicians to work at a greater depth within lessons and deepen their understanding. These academicians are not accelerated onto new content but remain within the focus of the learning.

Progress of faster grasping academicians is not promoted at the expense of slower grasping academicians.

Although it is likely that HIGH-PRIOR-ATTAINERS will grasp concepts more quickly, this will not always be the case and is not assumed.

Identification of HIGH-PRIOR-ATTAINERS in a 'Mastery' curriculum

HIGH-PRIOR-ATTAINERS are academicians who have been assessed as:

- 'Exceeding' at ELG for English and/or maths.
- 'Working at greater depth' at KS1 for reading and/or maths.