The Westminster Specialist College

2025/2026

Teaching and Learning Policy

Approved by Board of Governors on:	**14/10/2025**
Head of College:	O Flowers
Lead Personnel:	**B Taylor**
Date of Review:	**September 2026**

1. Introduction

The Westminster Specialist College provides high-quality education and training for learners aged 19–25 with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The teaching and learning framework reflects the College's commitment to enabling every learner to achieve meaningful outcomes in education, employment, and independent living. This policy outlines the principles, expectations, and approaches to teaching, learning and assessment across the College, including delivery of Functional Skills in English and Maths, Personal and Social Education (PSE), and vocational learning through DFN Project SEARCH.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a consistent and evidence-informed approach to teaching and learning across the Specialist College. It aims to foster a culture of high expectations, inclusion, and continuous improvement, supporting learners to achieve their EHCP outcomes and prepare for sustained employment or further progression.

3. Principles of Effective Teaching and Learning

Teaching at the Specialist College is underpinned by evidence-based practice and current educational research, including Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction (2012), Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988), and Universal Design for Learning (CAST, 2018). These frameworks emphasise structured teaching, clear modelling, retrieval practice, and adaptive instruction to meet individual needs.

Key principles include:

- Clear learning intentions and success criteria linked to EHCP and individual learning outcomes.
- Sequenced learning to support long-term memory and cumulative knowledge.
- Differentiation and scaffolding to ensure access for all learners.
- Active engagement and feedback loops that promote reflection and self-regulation.
- Integration of Functional Skills English and Maths across the curriculum.
- Opportunities for real-world application through Project SEARCH placements and employability modules.

4. Curriculum Delivery

The Specialist College curriculum is designed around the needs of young adults with SEND and aligns with the DFN Project SEARCH model. It integrates accredited and non-accredited learning, including Functional Skills English and Maths, PSE, and work-related learning modules. The curriculum promotes employability, independence, and personal development while supporting learners' progression towards adulthood.

PSE delivery focuses on areas such as health and wellbeing, relationships, community participation, and reflection on workplace learning. Project SEARCH modules provide structured vocational learning, supported internships, and skills development within host employer settings.

5. Assessment and Feedback

Assessment at the College is formative, inclusive, and linked to each learner's EHCP outcomes. Tutors use initial, baseline, and ongoing assessments to identify starting points, monitor progress, and plan next steps. Feedback is constructive, timely, and focused on celebrating progress while identifying strategies for improvement.

Functional Skills assessments in English and Maths follow awarding body guidelines and are complemented by in-context assessments during Project SEARCH placements. PSE and employability modules are assessed through observation, learner reflection, and portfolio evidence (i.e. Evidence for Learning)

6. Quality Assurance and Monitoring

Teaching and learning are monitored through the College's annual Monitoring Cycle, which includes lesson observations, work scrutiny, data reviews, and learner feedback. The process is developmental, promoting reflection, peer collaboration, and professional growth. Leaders triangulate evidence from observations, learner outcomes, and staff self-assessment to inform improvement planning.

Findings from the Monitoring Cycle feed into strategic review and are reported to the Governing Board to ensure accountability and continuous enhancement of educational quality.

7. Staff Development and Training

The College invests in staff development to ensure teaching and support staff maintain up-to-date knowledge of SEND practice, evidence-based pedagogy, and the requirements of DFN Project SEARCH. Training includes:

- Instructional strategies and scaffolding for learners with additional needs.
- Assessment for learning and use of data to inform planning.
- Behaviour support, safeguarding, and trauma-informed practice.
- Employer engagement and supported internship facilitation.
- Use of assistive technology and inclusive communication methods.

8. Legislative and Policy Context

This policy aligns with the following statutory and guidance documents:

- Children and Families Act (2014)
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Education Act (1996) and associated regulations
- DFN Project SEARCH Framework and Quality Standards

9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the College Leadership Team and approved by the Governing Board. Feedback from staff, learners, and external partners will inform updates to ensure ongoing relevance and alignment with best practice.

The review date for this policy is **September 2026**

Appendix One

Monitoring Cycle for Academic Year 2025-26

The Westminster Specialist College

Monitoring Cycle 2025-26

Purpose and Implementation of the Monitoring Cycle

The Specialist College Monitoring Cycle provides a structured approach to quality assurance across all curriculum areas, including PSE, English, Maths, and Project SEARCH. It ensures that teaching, learning, assessment, and employability development are consistently monitored and improved throughout the academic year.

The cycle supports staff, leadership, and partners to evaluate progress, maintain high standards, and prepare students for positive transitions and sustained employment. The cycle aligns with the 2025–2026 academic calendar, ensuring all monitoring activities complement key college milestones and Project SEARCH requirements.

Area	Monitoring Activity	Responsibility	Evidence	Linked Calendar Notes
All Subjects	Baseline assessments (English, Maths, PSE)	Tutors / Vice Principals	Baseline data sheets	Week 1–3
Project SEARCH	Initial Vocational Profiles & Placement Planning Task Lists completed Department Analysis Completed Weekly Target sheets approved Weekly cycle for visits from SLT agreed Continuous Improvement Review – NHS Review of Induction activities (i.e. First Aid at Work, SIPS Programme, Liaison with host providers)	Job Coaches / Tutors	Vocational profiles, EHCP targets Write up notes from visits with actions identified. Medium Term plans submitted CIR Report completed and actions assigned	Project Search Planning Deadline – Autumn – October 3rd 2026
Teaching & Learning	Learning Walks: Induction & Engagement	Vice Principal	Observation forms	Before October half term
PSE	Review of Curriculum Delivery Plans Knowledge Checkers Monitored and reviewed before implementation	PSE Lead	Scheme of Work, lesson plans	Week 4

English & Maths	Lesson planning moderation	Vice Principals/Tutors	Annotated SoWs Medium term plans submitted	Ongoing
Quality Assurance	Audit of ILPs / Target Setting	Curriculum Lead	Student files	End of half-term
Learner Voice	Whats working well/What could be better activity led by Student Board Representatives	Vice Principal Student Board Members	Student report fed back to the board	Early October ready for board meeting on 14th October 2025

Autumn Term 1 – September to October 2025
Focus: Induction, Baselines & Planning

Autumn Term 2 – November to December 2025
Focus: Progress & Quality of Teaching

Area	Monitoring Activity	Responsibility	Evidence	Linked Calendar Notes
All Subjects	Mid-term progress check (data capture 1)	Tutors / Leads	Progress data summary	Data Deadline – Work Readiness/Knowledge/Voc Fit – 5th December 2025
Project SEARCH	Workplace Observation 1 Employment Planning Meetings to review progress	Job Coaches / Employer Mentors	Observation forms Monitoring of quality of meeting notes and accessibility for parents and interns	November 2025

PSE	Work scrutiny – (including Knowledge Checkers) Reflection & Reintegration topics	PSE Lead	Student work samples	Mid-November 2025
English & Maths	Learning Walks: Functional Application Functional Skills progress review (focus possible early entries/resits)	SLT / Leads	Observation records	Mid November 2025
Review	Termly SLT review meeting	Principal / Vice Principal	QA summary report	End of term

Spring Term 1 – January to February 2026
Focus: Reinforcement & Independence

Area	Monitoring Activity	Responsibility	Evidence	Linked Calendar Notes
All Subjects	Data review & ILP update Submission of Termly Planning	Tutors / Leads Tutors	Updated ILPs Sharepoint submission	January 2026 January 16th 2026
Project SEARCH	Placement review meeting Updated Task List and Analysis	Job Coaches / Employer Partners	Review minutes	Early January 2026

	Updated Vocational Profile Scrutiny of CV's Evidence for Learning review Employment Planning Meetings Weekly visits		Review actions completed from previous employment planning minutes scrutiny	WB 9th February 2026
English & Maths	Work scrutiny: Practical skills integration Review of learner progress	Leads	Annotated evidence	February 2026
PSE	Learning Walk: Wellbeing & Self-Management lessons	Vice Principal	Observation records	February 2026
Quality Assurance	Student Voice (survey or group)	Vice Principal	Summary report	Early January ready for Board meeting on 20th January 2025

Spring Term 2 – March to April 2026
Focus: Progress & Transition Planning

Area	Monitoring Activity	Responsibility	Evidence	Linked Calendar Notes
All Subjects	Progress review (data capture 2)	Tutors / Vice Principal	Progress tracking	Early March 2026

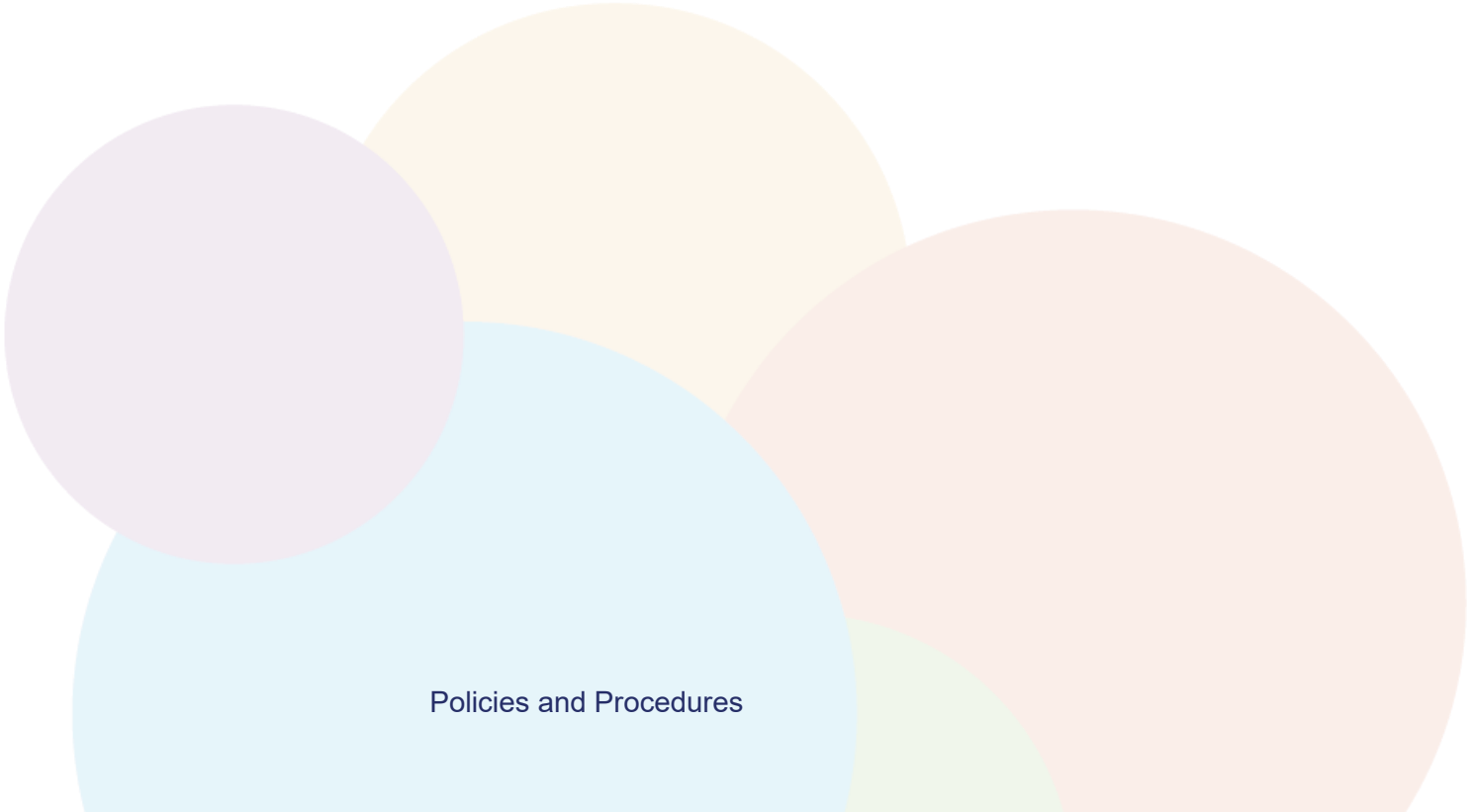
				Data deadline – 13th March 2026
Project SEARCH	Workplace Observation 2 Weekly Visits	Job Coaches/Tutors/Vice Principal	Observation forms	March 2026
English & Maths	Moderation of assessment evidence Moderation of Planning submitted	Subject lead/Vice Principal	Samples, moderation notes	Late March 2026
PSE	Review of Personal Development portfolios and Knowledge checkers	PSE Lead	Student folders	March 2026
Review	SLT curriculum & outcomes meeting	Principal / Leads	QA report	End of term

Summer Term 1 – April to May 2026
Focus: Consolidation & Accreditation

Area	Monitoring Activity	Responsibility	Evidence	Linked Calendar Notes
All Subjects	Internal verification of Accredited units completed where appropriate Review of evidence in interns professional and work portfolios	Leads / QA Officer	IV reports Actions outstanding to be completed ready for the end of term	May 2026

Project SEARCH	Final placement reviews & transition plans Review of Evidence uploads Updated Task Analysis	Job Coaches / Partners	Transition documents	April–May 2026
English & Maths	Observation: Functional use in work settings	Leads	Reports	Mid-May 2026
PSE	Reflection & Reintegration evaluation	PSE Lead	End-of-year reflections	May 2026
Review	Data review (data capture 3)	Curriculum Lead	Final data set	Data Deadline – Work Readiness/Knowledge/Voc Fit

Summer Term 2 – June to July 2026
Focus: Evaluation & Future Planning

Area	Monitoring Activity	Responsibility	Evidence	Linked Calendar Notes
All Subjects	End-of-year evaluation reports	Subject Leads	Self-evaluation forms	June 2026
Project SEARCH	Employer feedback & celebration event Review of Evidence uploads	Job Coaches / SLT	Employer evaluations	July 2026

	Updated Task Analysis			
Teaching & Learning	Learning Walks: Independence & Employability	SLT	Observation forms	July 2026
PSE	Annual review of curriculum content	PSE Lead	Revised scheme of work	July 2026
Quality Assurance	SLT/College-wide evaluation meeting	Principal / SLT/Tutors Interns	Annual QA report	July 2026
Planning Ahead	Staff CPD & Curriculum Planning for 2026–27	SLT	CPD records	End of term