



Teaching & Learning Policy 2020

Nurturing today's young people,
Inspiring tomorrow's exemplary citizens



January 2020

To be reviewed Jan 2022 or as required

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Key Themes

Teaching and learning are the core purpose of what we do. High quality learning, teaching and subsequently achievement is what we want for every student within the school. We believe that the more that we have a shared understanding of what constitutes effective teaching and learning, the greater our success will be.

The key themes of our teaching and learning policy are:

The basics – consistent expectations are our most powerful tool to ensuring a climate for learning in all classrooms

A climate for learning – students makes most progress when they feel respected and valued, and are developing a broad set of life-skills.

Lesson structure – clearly structured lessons promote learning

Differentiation – our classes are made up of individual learners with a variety of needs; teaching and learning should take account of students from different cohorts and with varied abilities

Assessment – assessment gives students clear guidance about the standard of their work and how they can improve

Professional development – all teachers have both the right and the responsibility to engage in sustained and relevant professional development throughout their careers

Basics

Setting the tone for a purposeful learning environment is critical. Students learn, progress and develop in a structured and stimulating classroom. Our shared expectations are set out below.

Punctuality and regular attendance are essential:

- Sanctions for lateness apply if students arrive late at lesson start. Teachers should note lateness, and notify pastoral staff/Head of lateness which will lead to a detention
- Students should be dismissed in time before the official end to the lesson

Students must enter and leave the classroom in an orderly way at the instruction of the teacher:

- Students should not enter the room unless a teacher is present
- Teachers should welcome students into the room
- Students must take coats off, have books, planner and equipment on the desk and bags on the floor
- Students are dismissed only when litter and graffiti has been checked and students are quiet.

Taking a register sets the tone for the lesson

- Aim to take a register within the first 10 minutes of every lesson: if not formally, by calling out names, it is important that students know the register is nevertheless being taken
- A formal record must be kept
- When students are absent check the absence list and inform division leaders/tutors

The seating of students is very important and must be at the direction of the teacher.

Strategic seating can challenge underachievement and promote learning

- The teacher will consciously decide upon and plan the seating arrangements for students in order to maximise progress
- Seating arrangements should be changed to suit different activities and allow students to work independently and collaboratively as required
- A seating plan should be available with cover work when the teacher is absent

Classrooms that are clean and uncluttered set the tone of a purposeful learning environment: a stimulating and engaging environment can be used as part of the learning process within a lesson

- Any graffiti should be reported, furniture moved to normal places at the end of each lesson, teacher desks kept clutter-free
- Displays are changed regularly (termly recommended), relating to current student work (use of support staff)
- Appropriate health and safety procedures should be followed at all times; no teacher or student should ever stand on furniture to deal with displays
- Rooms should be kept well-ventilated

We believe that certain approaches improve students' learning.

When appropriate behaviour for learning is made explicit, students make most progress.

Students should be taught to:

- listen to each other
- adopt various roles in groups
- be prepared to volunteer their thoughts and opinions
- respect the values, ideas, contributions and beliefs of others
- give honest and positive feedback to each other
- The 3-stage behaviour guide should be followed

Thinking time allows students to make higher quality responses

- When asking questions to the class, teachers should pause or give students a specific time to consider their responses
- A 'no-hands-up' rule contributes to a culture where all students are expected to contribute and avoids discussion being dominated by a minority
- Pupils learn best by doing and demonstrations

Exploratory talk allows students to think

- Teachers should plan time in the lesson for students to discuss their learning with a partner/group before committing themselves to a response. Exploratory talk involves answering the questions “why?” and “how?”

Rewards recognise achievement and motivate learners

- Teachers should praise much more than criticise using formal and informal approaches
- Formal rewards are: issuing an initialled commendation sticker for student planner (aim for several per lesson to recognise genuinely good work, increased or sustained effort); phoning students’ parents; work on display; sending a postcard/letter home; inviting the student credits towards the school Award Scheme (leadership, participation, personal development)
- Informal rewards are: congratulating students privately or publically within a class; saying ‘well done’ to the whole class; positive written feedback on written work

Learning progresses faster when disruption is minimised. The teacher should manage disruptive behaviour by:

- Giving a recognised non-verbal cue (e.g. eyebrows raised, frown)
- Referring to the students by name to draw them back into the lesson
- Having a quiet word while the rest of the class is engaged
- Moving the student to a different seat
- Where appropriate, giving students a task or leadership responsibility, which engages them in the learning
- Discussion with student giving choices, and making explicit the sanctions which follow a poor choice
- In exceptional circumstance, such as serious defiance, calling for support from another member of staff (send a reliable student)
- For longer term improvement of disruptive behaviour, teachers should prompt further discussion with the student or pastoral staff outside the lesson environment

Lesson Structure

Lessons which are structured and well-planned create a purpose to learning. All lessons should be built upon the same underpinning foundations. These shared principles are:

- The success of lessons depends upon clear objectives, pace, variety of activity, level of challenge and opportunity for reflection
- Students must “learn how to learn” in order to become independent learners
- Teachers should explicitly teach students how to learn, reflect and improve
- Examples of ‘learn to learn’ techniques are:
 - Discussions with students about learning
 - Explanation of topic/task - by teacher, between students, by students to whole group, and students to the teacher
 - Reading and thinking time
 - Scaffolding (writing frames, sentence starters)
 - Modelling (sharing students’ work, working through examples, guided writing, sharing planning and demonstrations)
 - Developing effective learning and study skills (e.g. Revision techniques, recording notes, summarising) and sharing of good practice
 - Formative feedback (oral and written) and continual target setting on how to improve by teacher and/or student
 - Regular reviewing of progress against set targets

Effective lesson planning takes account of students’ prior learning. Dividing lessons into sections helps to maintain pace and challenge.

An appropriate structure will include:

- a starter activity to engage students’ interests
- introduction of new learning
- a variety of activities to embed learning
- a review of learning

Lesson objectives allow students to engage with the process of learning:

- Teachers will make the learning objectives explicit to all students.
- This will usually happen at the beginning of the lesson but could happen at other stages in the lesson
- This can be done in a variety of ways:
 - written or projected onto the board
 - orally; written by students in their books; printed on handouts
- Using longer-term objectives across a topic, unit or series of lessons should be made clear and reviewed

Opportunities for reflection upon lesson objectives and progress throughout and at the end of the lesson improves learning.

- Objectives must be revisited throughout and at the end of the lesson by:
 - students reviewing their learning against the lesson objectives
 - using differentiated teacher questions
 - students recording 2 key learning points (individually or in pairs)
 - students being encouraged to explicitly reflect upon their behaviour: for example, positive and negative behaviour, their ability to concentrate, motivation etc.

Students learn in different ways – teaching and learning which incorporates a variety learning styles will engage a wider range of learners and create a more stimulating diet.

We therefore encourage teaching and learning that is lively and takes risks – where students demonstrably learn. Recognising this and planning for it provides stimulus and is inclusive.

- A range of teacher/student-led and student-centred activities should be used
- Students should have the opportunity to work in different ways, such as individually, in pairs, small groups, whole class situations
 - Leadership, group work and teamwork should be promoted using effective models where students know their roles and which give students accountability, understanding of group dynamics, and opportunities to lead

Differentiation

Differentiation takes into account the needs of all learners and plans to ensure that all learners are set challenging goals and make expected progress. We recognise that:

- Different students have different needs, related to influences both within and beyond the classroom. Awareness of the needs of specific groups will enhance the provision for individuals
- Teachers will be aware of the needs of specific groups such as SEN, G&T, EAL (English as an additional language), FSM (free school meals) and will provide the appropriate support
- Further information on specific students' needs e.g. Health care, IEP, IBP

Lesson planning should take into account the variety of students' abilities and will aim to maximise progress for all. Differentiation can take many forms and can often be grouped into differentiation by process (how students learn), and /or differentiation by content (what students learn)

Differentiation by process includes:

- Providing a range of alternative tasks
- Deliberate grouping of students according to tasks (e.g. grouping all of the most able students together to work on a particularly challenging task; using 'jigsaw' grouping; mixed ability grouping for peer teaching etc)
- Assigning roles to individual students (e.g. leader, scribe, questioner, spokesperson etc)
- Varying degrees of challenge within teacher questioning and response

Differentiation by content includes

- The qualification/tier students are studying for
- Developing and adapting resources to both support and extend students, taking into account all students' needs

Use of intervention strategies can help students to make greater progress:

- Teachers should be aware of students who are making less than expected progress and plan for intervention
- Where lack of progress is sustained over a long period of time in spite of this intervention, pastoral and other Teachers should be notified

- Teachers should work alongside departmental strategies for addressing underachievement
- Teachers need to be aware of those students on the Inclusion Register list and keep the Pastoral/HT informed of their progress
- IEPs and IBPs can support this

Other ideas:

- Small group withdrawal for specialist teaching
- Subject mentors for targeted students
- Drop-ins by subject leader for a focussed conversation
- Tailor praise to students taking account of motivation, confidence and target
- Individualised feedback taking account of student progress

Assessment

The aim of formative assessment is to give students clear guidance about how to improve their work and how they have been successful. Formative assessment allows the learner to reflect and then put in place strategies to improve. Formative assessment works best when students are engaged in an ongoing dialogue about their progress. In subjects with a largely practical component this dialogue will primarily be verbal, with systems in place to ensure that the feedback is understood and acted upon. Where there is less practical work, this dialogue will take place through verbal interaction and regular written feedback.

Students should be actively involved in the assessment process, giving them ownership of their learning and encouraging independent learning. Key principles of assessment that improve the quality of teaching and learning and hence achievement is:

Formative feedback should encourage and support the individual needs of students in a constructive way and allow students to take ownership of their learning

Formative comments should:

- be concise and accessible to students and highlight their achievements
- indicate how improvement can be made, giving two targets
- be personal by using the student's first name
- encourage and support the individual needs of students in a constructive way
- at GCSE, refer to the mark scheme where relevant

Students should be given opportunities to act upon assessment

This could be done through class or homework, for example:

- time set aside during a starter or a plenary activity to make improvements
- students set their own targets by themselves, with the help of peers/teacher
- discussion with the student
- peer teaching
- re-drafting pieces of work which are checked by the teacher
- students keep guidelines on how to approach a particular question
- a peer assessment activity

Sharing understanding of assessment criteria allows students to know what they need to do to be successful and hence make more progress

Teachers should aim to make assessment criteria explicit to students by:

- 'Translating' exam board grade/level criteria into accessible language
- Using exemplar material of grades
- Using peer and self-assessment routinely (students need to learn the skills of peer-assessment before they can assess their own work reliably)

Effective and meaningful assessment records allow teachers to monitor the progress of individuals over time and intervene where there is underachievement

- Teachers will keep sufficient records of attainment to allow the planning of appropriately challenging lessons for all students.
- Records should support high-quality feedback to students and parents and allow effective "hand-overs" if the teacher of a class or student changes.
- Teachers should ensure that all assessment information is recorded according to departmental policy.
- A minimum of three "key assessments" each year will feed into the whole-school assessment records. The exact nature and timing of these assessments are decided by

the subject team

A key assessment should:

- indicate progress in a key area of the curriculum
- be used to provide high-quality formative feedback
- have clear success criteria shared with students
- be assigned a grade or level (which may or may not be shared with students)

High expectations and benchmarking against national “average” expectations ensure that underachievement does not go unrecognised

Students should be set target grades using the school data and Teacher tracker. Students benefit from seeing their progress over time and within the context of different assessments. Examples of effective practice contain elements of:

- reference to benchmark grade
- visual representation of progress
- shared and open class results in a culture of peer support

Learning takes place both inside and outside the classroom. Students benefit from opportunities to complete work beyond the classroom

- Learning outside lessons is vital for building the skills to become an independent learner
- Homework is an integral part of the curriculum and should be used to consolidate, extend and enrich students’ learning.
- Homework should be purposeful and meaningful, and support achievement towards the aims of the current episodes of lessons. Where students are engaged in controlled assessments and other extended projects in school, they should be provided with opportunities beyond the classroom to develop the required skills further
- Teachers are expected to set homework regularly
- Year 9 students should be expected to spend approximately 5 hours per week working beyond the classroom: this equates to 30 minutes per subject per 3 lessons
- Year 10 and Year 11 students should be expected to spend approximately 60 minutes per subject per week working beyond the classroom (7 hours per week)
- Homework can take a variety of forms including answering questions, reading, extended writing, thinking, planning and researching.

- Where large ongoing projects are set over several weeks the teacher will ensure that students meet interim deadlines at the appropriate time. Subject and teaching tracking procedures should mean that students do not leave the majority of the work until the final deadline; regular feedback on their work as it is completed will allow faster progress.

All homework must be assessed promptly after the hand-in date. Methods of assessment could include:

- marking by the teacher
- testing
- peer/self-assessment
- oral feedback

To ensure accurate recording, the setting of homework should take place in the first part of the lesson and could be revisited or fully explained at an appropriate time in the lesson if necessary.

Professional Development

We believe that all teachers have both the right and the responsibility to engage in sustained and relevant professional development throughout their careers. Core and post-threshold standards (from the Training & Development Agency) include the following themes:

Attributes:

- Relationships with children and young people
- Frameworks
- Communicating and working with others
- Personal professional development

Knowledge and understanding:

- Teaching and learning
- Assessment and monitoring
- Subjects and curriculum
- Literacy, numeracy and ICT
- Achievement and diversity
- Health and well-being

Skills:

- Planning
- Teaching

- Assessing, monitoring and giving feedback
- Reviewing teaching and learning
- Learning environment
- Team-working and collaboration

In order to continue to meet core and post-threshold standards, and broaden and deepen their professional attributes, knowledge, understanding and skills, all teachers are expected to engage in a minimum of monthly CPD and Inset days over the year.

The Performance Management process provides the context for twice - yearly discussions (September and January) about teachers' career aspirations and future development.

Evidence of continuing professional development may take a number of forms which could include:

- Reflection/evaluation of training sessions attended
- Observation records where the teacher has observed a colleague, or has been observed, in order to develop their own practice
- Coaching reflections where the teacher has worked with other colleagues on a particular skill area
- Teaching materials which the teacher has developed for their subject team, with reflection/feedback
- Research undertaken to broaden the teacher's understanding of a pedagogical issue

Performance Management targets will reflect both the individual teacher's developmental aspirations, and those of their department and the school and linked to the Teachers Standards and the Ofsted / SDP.