

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

Principles

- The policy for teaching and learning is the core policy of the school and informs the best classroom practice.
- All our pupils have special skills, abilities and aptitudes and are entitled to access a broad, challenging and appropriate curriculum.
- All pupils are entitled to experience a variety of learning and teaching styles and to acquire digital and other skills which enable them to achieve their full potential.
- Our aim is to help pupils to become creative thinkers who are not afraid to take risks and see mistakes as opportunities for learning.
- All staff have a responsibility, collectively and individually, to contribute to the delivery of the curriculum.
- The school recognises that continued professional support, coaching, mentorship and feedback at all levels are essential to empower staff to deliver effective learning experiences.

Roles and responsibilities

Governors

The governing board's role is to ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of this policy. They have established our strategic framework by:

- Setting strategic aims and objectives for the school.
- Adopting policies for achieving those aims and objectives.
- Agreeing internal targets through the school improvement plan and department/year group action plans for achieving those aims and objectives.

The governing board monitors and evaluates progress of its strategy and regularly reviews the framework for the school in the light of that progress. When establishing the strategic framework and reviewing progress, the governing board considers any advice given by the headteacher and the school's external advisors. The school improvement plan generally provides the main mechanism for the strategic planning process.

The senior leadership team

The headteacher has responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school and for implementation of the strategic framework established by the governing board. In particular, the headteacher has delegated responsibility across the senior leadership team for the quality of teaching and learning across the whole school. Consequently, the headteacher is accountable to the governing board for quality and standards. The senior leadership team provides appropriate support, training and resources for departments and individuals.

Curriculum Leads

Key stage and subject co-ordinators are responsible and accountable for the long, medium and short term planning of schemes of work taking into consideration the aims and objectives of the policy. They monitor and evaluate consistent delivery of the policy at team level, and provide appropriate support to team members through training and coaching.

Teaching staff

The teaching staff implement this policy by ensuring a consistent delivery of high quality learning experiences.

Support staff

The role of teaching assistants in supporting classroom teaching and learning is invaluable. Also, with the increased use by students of digital technology, the need for technical support is crucial. As schools in the future will increasingly use data retrieved from students' use of artificial intelligence for personalised learning, support staff able to collate and interpret quantities of data become increasingly important.

School context

We fully recognise that, by their complex nature, teaching and learning must take account of assessment, behaviour and learning support. We have policies in place for each of these and their content will not therefore be replicated here.

A learning community

As a school we believe it to be fundamental to our achieving an ethos of challenge and support that we project the whole school as a learning community. We believe, as a community of learners, we have a fundamental duty to ensure everyone associated with the school sees themselves as a lifelong learner.

Good teaching and good learning

It is important at the outset to determine what constitutes good teaching and good learning. A shared understanding is essential if we are to be successful in achieving our aims and objectives.

Quality teaching

Quality teaching:

- Provides carefully structured activities that are matched sensitively to learners' needs.
- Gives learners increased responsibility for their work and encourages them to be independent thinkers.
- Develops well planned, prepared and paced lessons that maintain high levels of interaction with the class.
- Provides ample, challenging work stemming from expert knowledge of the curriculum, how to teach it and how learners actually learn.
- Maintains high levels of learner involvement in tasks.
- Creates a positive atmosphere in the classroom through excellent relationships.
- Incorporates high levels of praise and encouragement whenever appropriate and positive criticism and strategies for improvement where relevant.
- Uses a variety of approaches including digital technology to enable learning. Strategies and techniques are well selected and time is used productively.
- Uses homework effectively, particularly to reinforce and extend what is learned in school, and to carry out research for new areas of study.

- Uses the techniques of assessment for learning to give pupils informative feedback to enable them to understand the level at which they are working and what their principle areas for improvement are.

Quality learning

Quality learning is:

- When learners are captivated and enthused by what they are learning.
- Where students are enabled to learn as efficiently as possible.
- An active process – a product of doing rather than receiving.
- Linked to prior knowledge.
- Supported by both the teacher and other learners.
- In the form of listening to and learning from instruction, as well as from interaction, collaboration and teacher intervention.
- The use of digital devices and artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance and support the learning process.
- Collaborative through co-operation, dialogue and creating knowledge with others, through the adoption of a collaborative, enquiry-based approach.
- Centred on the learners' responsibility for their own learning. They are able to exercise choice, develop goals, plan their approach and work independently.
- Reflective and enables learners to monitor and review the learning.
- Where learners make considerably better progress than may be expected.
- When learners display a strong desire to contribute the effort and concentration required, matching the teacher's passion for learning.
- Where students are gradually equipped with the skills to make them life-time learners.

Consistency

We do not confuse consistency with conformity. We encourage all who engage in teaching to be creative, innovative and empowering. However, there are a number of basic rubrics which contribute to a consistency of approach.

All who are engaged in teaching contribute to consistency by:

- Creating opportunities for students to enjoy learning: this is when students learn best, because their emotional state is fundamental to learning.
- Setting high expectations of learners at school that clearly define the effort and behaviours that students should put into learning in lessons.
- Communicating optimism by using positive language and designing challenging tasks.

- Demonstrating a commitment to every learner's success, making him or her feel included, secure and valued.
- Creating an environment where learners feel able to make mistakes and comfortable to learn from them, without feeling inadequate or foolish.
- Creating opportunities for learners to develop personal qualities such as considerate behaviour and positive and tolerant attitudes that will enable them to contribute effectively to the community.
- Setting high expectations of learners at home – engaging parents in their child's learning in partnership with the school. Parental involvement and support in the home are critically important.
- Providing a clear moral code and set of fundamental British values as a basis of behaviour which is promoted consistently through all aspects of the school that will enable them to be role models within the wider community.
- Creating a 'high-challenge low-stress' environment for learning in which students are relaxed, believe that they can learn (high self-esteem) and want to learn (motivated).

Policy into practice

Following extensive consultation it has been determined that all lessons should contain the elements listed below in some shape or form. They are the strategies formulated with staff as being most important to empower us to deliver consistently high quality lessons. In so doing we believe these elements are core to enable us to unlock a student's full potential and hence maximise their progress and levels of attainment.

Learning objectives are identified and shared

This is a two-step approach in which students are told not only the purpose of the lesson but also what the teacher expects in terms of outcomes from activity. There is a need to communicate why they are doing what they are doing and how it fits into the bigger picture of the subject or their wider learning across the curriculum.

This might be achieved through:

- The learning objectives being outlined to the students at or near to the beginning of each lesson.
- The students being clear about the learning objectives in terms of what they are expected to learn.

It has been found to be particularly helpful to learners if those responsible for the teaching use:

- WILF – what I'm looking for.
- WALT – we are learning to.

Review learning to link and consolidate

It has been determined that the development of skills, knowledge and understanding is greatly enhanced when clear links are made with prior learning. Constant and on-going review is a vital

ingredient in our recipe for success. Review should be part of all beginnings and endings of all lessons and episodes, because its effectiveness is important to learning.

This might be achieved through:

- Previous learning being recapped by the teacher.
- Students being involved in the recap of previous learning.
- Recap of learning being done throughout the lesson in relation to learning objectives. Establishing what learners know, understand, can do, are aware of or have explored, correcting existing misconceptions where necessary.
- Review of learning done toward the end of the lesson to consolidate learning and its retention (plenary).
- Making success criteria clear to assess learning and celebrate success.

Personalisation

We recognise the importance of personalised learning as the ultimate matching of teaching techniques and strategies to the individual learning styles and needs of each pupil, and to appropriate groups within each class. This correlation can still be achieved within the new national curriculum programmes of study but its implementation must always be translated into pupil tracking, performance measures, and the like.

To achieve a high level of correlation between need and provision we make effective use of teaching assistants, learning mentors and a variety of intervention strategies, including individual one-to-one tuition and personally tailored digital programmes.

On a day-by-day basis, teachers can contribute significantly to personalisation by:

- Using differentiation strategies effectively.
- Being confident, flexible and open-minded, willing to experiment and embrace change in terms of teaching styles, and adapting appropriately.
- Planning and delivering a range of activities that match the maturity of the learners and the material to be learned, reflect different learning preferences and involve high levels of time on task for 'making sense' of information. This may often be achieved by offering students choices and by negotiating learning strategies with students.
- Using creativity and imagination, and the resources offered by new technology, to engage, enthuse, challenge and support learners, and reward their effort and achievement.
- Engaging in a dialogue with students that centres on effective learning; what it looks like and how it can be developed.
- Setting tasks in a time context or that are 'time bonded'.
- Making the students aware of the timing in the lesson and of the longer-term deadlines.
- Setting activities in a sequential order that promotes progression and complexity of learning.

- Using assessment for learning strategies and activities effectively and using assessment to inform the decisions behind which activities are selected and how the students are grouped for them.
- Empowering students by involving them in planning, developing and evaluating their own activity and learning experiences.
- Introducing activities which are varied in order to access all learning styles and intelligences.
- Sequencing tasks that students are engaged in, allowing for appropriate variation in the pace of learning, and the level of challenge.
- Using blended learning strategies so that students can use digital devices to follow up what they have learned in plenary and group sessions in a personalised and individual way.
- Providing scaffolding to support the learning of anyone who might otherwise struggle.

Planning

We are constantly reviewing and refining planning to ensure it is as economical of teachers' time as possible.

Long and medium term plans are accessible through our intranet. Short term planning is the professional responsibility of each teacher and it is at the short term planning stage where decisions about differentiation are informed by assessment.

This might be achieved:

By task

Because students work in a variety of ways with their different strengths and aptitudes, a range of tasks spanning the spectrum of abilities can be an effective way of differentiating.

By resource

The careful selection of resources to support activities can help to extend the more able as well as support the low achiever. It means changing the resources by which students learn to meet their individual needs. A consideration of the following may be helpful in preparation:

- Layout, design, graphics and readability of the resource.
- Using pupil-friendly storage and retrieval systems that will facilitate independent approaches to learning.
- Training the pupils to use a variety of resources independently (including a study skills programme).
- Making use of both whole class texts and a variety of individualised/differentiated material.
- Variety of expressive media eg bigger, striking implements such as marker pens and poster paper, post-its, etc.
- Wide use of ICT and digital resources throughout the curriculum, particularly to support personalised learning.

By response

The response of the teacher/adult/fellow student is a form by which differentiation can be achieved. This is essential in cases where differentiation by outcome is planned as the teacher's written or spoken response will vary from student to student. Marking of a student's work is an important medium for differentiation by response.

By outcome

Students working on a common un-differentiated task will inevitably produce different outcomes to the task set, as long as the task is not too closed. These differentiated outcomes should be used primarily to assess and then inform our planning for differentiation in another way (task, resource, group, support).

By group

Differentiation by group is an important way to allow purposeful use of resources (including the other students in the group). Students could belong to semi-permanent groups within the larger teaching groups. The students will have a record of the groups to which they belong. The students need not necessarily be told how they are grouped other than there ought to be a mixed gender dimension to the groupings where appropriate, as per current school procedures on classroom seating arrangements.

By support

The different needs of the different students will inevitably mean that some students need greater support than others. There are a number of strategies that can provide that support. Using the skills of learning support assistants in the classroom to create a positive environment for learning would most certainly be one if they are available. We access additional support for our pupil premium students through the National Tutoring Programme.

Staff are given opportunities to take part in peer observation of good teaching practice both within the school and with partner schools

Overview

We recognise our teaching and learning policy is an invaluable tool in securing the highest possible standards in the education provided by the school. Elements of the policy will be revisited on a regular basis and where developments are possible these will be trialled, monitored and evaluated before being brought to governors for inclusion in or amendment to this policy.

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the governing board through regular reports from the headteacher and through a rolling programme of presentations from teaching and learning responsibility allowance holders.

The senior leadership team will monitor the policy through classroom observation and through the annual PDR process.

Ofsted will inspect teaching and learning when they come to the school. The curriculum content and its delivery will be the essential basis of their inspection. They will visit lessons to gather evidence about teaching and learning and will consider this first hand evidence alongside documentary evidence about the quality of teaching. Inspectors will also include evidence from pupils' learning in, for example, extra-curricular activities.

References

- The governance handbook (DfE October 2020).

- Ofsted education inspection handbook (September 2023).