



TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

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Person responsible for policy: JMB

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

1. Principles of the Policy

We recognise that all students have special skills, abilities and aptitudes and all have an entitlement to a broad, challenging and appropriate curriculum. All students are also entitled to experience a range of teaching and learning styles which allow the achievement of their full potential. The school aims, through successful teaching and learning, to develop the whole child and equip our students to be lifelong learners.

All teachers have a responsibility to strive to deliver lessons where the teaching and learning is of the highest quality and where the learning needs of every student are met.

We recognise that continued professional support, coaching and mentoring is essential if staff are to deliver consistently effective lessons

2. The purpose of the policy is:

- to ensure high quality teaching and learning experiences for students of all abilities and aptitudes
- to provide a framework for teaching and learning within which there is flexibility and scope for creativity
- to provide coherence of approach and consistency of expectation
- to make explicit the entitlement of all students
- to raise attainment by increasing levels of student motivation, participation and independence
- to ensure that every young person is making progress in every lesson
- to promote reflection on, and sharing of, good practice
- to promote an understanding of how learning takes place
- to make explicit a baseline for monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning that takes place
- to provide practical guidance and clear procedures
- to provide a focus for development
- to inform teachers, students, parents, governors and the wider community of the aims and processes of teaching and learning
- to identify specific areas of responsibility at a whole school, departmental and individual level.

3. Definition of Learning

Learning is the process by which an individual makes sense of new experience. Learning takes place when the individual constructs their own knowledge and understanding of a topic, skill or value. As learning often takes place through personal interaction, we believe that it is important to promote activities that allow the learner to work with others to solve problems, to explore concepts and to develop language as a means of learning and a tool for thinking.

We believe learning will take place most effectively when:

- the environment is secure, stable and stimulating
- students' self-esteem is high
- students understand the purpose of the learning and see its relevance to themselves
- students understand the ways in which learning takes place
- the learning builds on prior knowledge and understanding
- success criteria are explicit and models are provided
- the learning is active and collaborative
- student questioning, reflection, and discussion are encouraged
- independent learning and thinking is facilitated and encouraged
- there are opportunities for creativity and using different learning styles
- students can assess their own progress, know what they need to do to improve and are able to set appropriate targets
- students have opportunities to transfer skills, knowledge and understanding to other contexts.

4. Summary of Key Ingredients of Successful Lessons

Over a number of years colleagues have worked to reach a consensus about what will be seen in the most successful lessons. The key ingredients that have been identified, and will be looked for throughout our internal monitoring and evaluation, are as follows:

- a) Setting an appropriate climate for learning, including an engaging starter activity
- b) Involvement of students in recapping learning from the previous lesson
- c) Learning objectives which are differentiated, give the lesson a sharp focus and are shared effectively with students
- d) Teacher explanations which are clear, unambiguous and pitched at the right level
- e) Student grouping/seating plan which is engineered by the teacher for the most effective learning
- f) Activities which are differentiated
- g) Teacher and teaching assistant interaction and questioning which is structured, targeted and challenging
- h) High quality resources which are matched to the ability, strengths and interests of the students
- i) On-going assessment of understanding throughout the lesson and modification of explanations and activities where necessary
- j) High quality feedback involving students in their own progression by giving them time to reflect and setting an expectation that they engage in responses of their own to advice they are given.
- k) Summary/plenary/assessment for learning, cross referenced against the learning objectives
- l) Next lesson – continuity and progression – making the connections for the students so that no lesson is taken in isolation

5. The Learning Experience

This section of the policy sets out the school's expectations regarding planning, preparation, lesson structure and assessment for learning.

We recognise that colleagues may also wish to extend their repertoire of teaching methods and provision of learning experiences beyond this basic outline so that all students may learn effectively and achieve high standards.

a) Planning and Preparation

- Lessons are planned using the DSHS lesson planning form
- Lessons are planned with clear objectives, structure and challenge to ensure continuity and progression for all students
- Teachers know the different needs and starting points of individual students and plan their lessons to ensure all make the best possible progress.
- Lesson objectives are differentiated and based on:
 - Data provided about students' prior attainment
 - Other information about students' achievement
 - Assessment of progress during the previous lesson
 - Marking of recent work
 - The teacher's knowledge of individuals' preferences, strengths and weaknesses
- For students on the SEN register lessons are planned with due regard to information and targets contained in Education & Health Plans.
- Objectives are clearly linked to departmental long and medium term plans which are periodically reviewed
- Planning allows for a variety of learning styles and provides opportunities for developing a wide range of thinking skills
- Opportunities for developing literacy, numeracy, ICT skills and cross-curricular elements are integrated into lesson plans wherever possible
- Planning makes provision for the effective use of TAs
- Appropriate and stimulating resources are organised prior to the lesson

b) Lesson Structure

This framework is expected to provide the basic structure for all lessons. However it is recognised that it may be adapted to suit the objectives of a particular lesson or sequence of lessons.

Preparation for Learning

The start of the lesson has a clear focus, using activities which immediately engage the learner. The teacher establishes and communicates clear expectations for behaviour.

Setting Learning Objectives

The learning objectives are shared with students, in the context of prior learning, to ensure they understand what they are doing and why.

The success criteria by which the learning will be evaluated are made explicit.

Presentation of New Material

The teacher should:

- Present information with clarity, enthusiasm and pace
- Model activities and processes, making the reasons underlying their thinking and decision-making explicit
- Provide exemplar work so that students are aware of the sophistication of response expected
- Provide appropriate levels of scaffolding to support students' learning

Activities

The teacher should:

- Provide opportunities for progression which increase the level of conceptual challenge, the depth of understanding and the breadth of application of skills
- Vary groupings and seating arrangements according to the task
- Make learning active by providing tasks which enable students to make meaning, construct knowledge and develop understanding and skills
- Use a variety of questioning techniques to probe and develop students' understanding
- Promote active listening, inviting a range of different responses and building in time for reflection
- Give constructive, positive feedback on work in progress
- Provide opportunities for every student to succeed and create frequent opportunities for praise
- Demonstrate flexibility in his/her approach and be prepared to deviate from the lesson plan where appropriate
- Set a variety of homework tasks to deepen, extend, or initiate learning

Demonstration of New Understanding

- Students have the opportunity to demonstrate their new knowledge or skills

Review

- The teacher creates the time to review lesson objectives
- Students have the opportunity to identify their own progress and set themselves appropriate targets
- Students receive supportive feedback from the teacher or their peers where appropriate
- Opportunities are provided to celebrate success
- The end of the lesson is prompt and orderly, allowing for efficient transition between lessons.

Assessment for Learning

- There is frequent immediate verbal feedback in lessons
- Students receive frequent developmental and motivational feedback in a variety of ways to encourage them to progress
- Feedback will sometimes include written comments which recognise the strengths of a piece of work and identify individual targets for improvement in a constructive way
- Students are given the opportunity to improve their performance, using the advice they are given
- Students are expected to respond with their own comments, based on their feedback and further reflection, to engage in an assessment dialogue with their teacher.
- Students are encouraged to judge the success of their own work and set themselves targets for their own improvement
- Students are told the criteria for progression between levels or grades and are enabled to interpret these criteria in a meaningful way.
- Students are encouraged to critically, but supportively, judge the performance of others within their group.
- Levels of work are modelled through display and explanation

Throughout the lesson students should:

- Work effectively and purposefully in a range of contexts
- Be prepared to share their learning and ideas in an atmosphere of trust
- Ask questions where appropriate – of each other and the teacher
- Support one another, working collaboratively, recognising that the contributions of all are valued
- Undertake self-assessment or peer assessment with some confidence, becoming increasingly able to apply the criteria for success and to set appropriate targets for improvement
- Know where to go for help and recognise that further progress can always be made
- Use dedicated time for reflection to engage with and respond to the feedback from their teacher.
- Be able to select appropriate learning resources to help develop their own learning
- Work with increasing independence, developing the skills to become life-long learners
- Make increasing use of ICT to develop their learning, accessing a wide variety of sources and using appropriate methods to present their work

6. Roles and Responsibilities

a) Governors

- To ensure the effective and consistent implementation and monitoring of the policy.

b) Senior Leadership Team

- To provide appropriate support, training and resources for departments and individuals
- To monitor and evaluate the delivery and impact of the policy
- To modify and update the policy in the light of on-going developments and the changing needs of the school.

c) Teaching staff

- To implement this policy by ensuring a consistent delivery of high quality learning experiences
- To be responsible for short term planning, in conjunction with departmental teams.

d) Curriculum Leaders

- To be responsible for the coordination of long, medium and short term planning of schemes of work taking into consideration the aims and objectives of the policy
- To monitor and evaluate consistent delivery of the policy at departmental level
- To provide appropriate support to team members through training materials or coaching

e) Students

- To respond positively within lessons to enable staff to implement the policy effectively
- To extend the learning experience outside the classroom by completing homework.

f) Those with parental responsibility

- To support the policy of the school, in line with the Home School agreement, by providing support for students at home, allowing them to continue to develop their learning effectively.

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