

Differentiation Policy

1.0 Policy Rational

"At Trinity, our aim is for all students to achieve their God given potential". Differentiation is the process by which curriculum objectives, teaching methods, assessment methods and learning activities are planned to cater for the learning needs of the individual student. To provide for this basic entitlement, students in the same group must have learning opportunities matched to their particular needs and teaching must take into account the differences in learner characteristics. This in turn requires flexible planning, careful assessment and the provision of a variety of approaches to learning and teaching. "Mixed ability teaching implies that all abilities must be catered for when planning a lesson".

2.0 Whole School Aims:

- Differentiation is an ongoing process in which teachers and departments plan for the interventions that will appropriately address the differences and the characteristics of the individuals in the class.
- To maximise individual student potential through the implementation of effective differentiated learning opportunities both in and out of the classroom through a wide range of interventions, strategies and resources developed by the classroom teacher, departments and the whole school.
- To promote differentiation as an ongoing and evolving priority in teaching and learning within the clear framework for inclusion.
- To provide guidelines that will allow departments to consider all aspects of differentiation when addressing their particular needs.
- To assist departments in targeting priority areas and the setting of realistic, achievable departmental targets.
- To provide guidelines for monitoring and evaluation in terms of current and future practice.
- To encourage departments to examine a range of strategies for differentiation.
- To promote consideration of differentiation in terms of planning and organisation of courses and staff training.
- To nurture the setting of individual attainment targets and statements of attainment which are a driving force behind differentiation.

3.0 Roles & Responsibilities

3.1 Role of Senior Management Team

- To annually review the effectiveness of this policy in ensuring high standards are maintained and student needs are fully met.
- To ensure that there is systematic good practice with regard to differentiation and which is employed consistently by all staff across the department.
- To ensure that the training needs of staff are met.

3.2 Head of Department:

The HOD has overall responsibility to ensure that departmental practice and policy in all areas reflects the full school aims in relation to differentiation. In particular, each HOD should:

- Make effective use of available assessment data to help inform departmental strategies for enhancing learning and teaching within the department.
- Ensure that their schemes-of-work meet the needs of the range of learners in all classes.
- Provide training and support for class teachers to help develop the range of teaching strategies employed in lessons across their curriculum area.
- Embrace a continuum of differentiation and promote this with staff in all areas of teaching & learning.
- Ensure that teachers are setting challenging tasks that are matched to students' learning needs.
- Ensure that teachers' expectations in relation to teaching and learning are sufficiently high.
- Regularly review how teachers respond to their 'monitoring of learning' during lessons.
- Employ a variety of auditing systems that will help quality assure the extent to which teachers secure high quality learning for all pupils. This will include book check systems, lesson observations, planner checks, peer observations, learning walks...etc.
- Provide an accessible curriculum that recognises the learning needs of all students. This will be supported through carefully planned programmes of study and schemes of work that reflect differentiation.
 - which recognises a variety of teaching styles as well as knowledge of learning styles.
 - of tasks and activities to motivate and challenge students appropriate to their abilities.
 - that employs a variety of teaching resources appropriate to the range of abilities in a class.
 - that better matches task to student.

- in the development and renewing of learning resources, assessment materials & teaching tools.
- Ensure that departmental assessment, reporting and marking policies in relation to homework, classwork and testing will reflect the whole school aims regarding the differences and the characteristics of the individual.
- Coordinate an analysis of assessment data (KS2 results, mid-year & end-of-year data and GCSE grades) to help inform a departmental strategy for raising achievement in response to performance.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of programmes of study in relation to progress and learning needs.
- Ensure that the planned departmental programmes of work will:
 - allow students to work at different levels.
 - ensure that students maximise potential.
 - take into account achievements, strengths and targets.
- Promote the ongoing assessment of need by taking into account students' attainments and prior knowledge through reports, assessments and observation.
- Coordinate the identification of subject specific strategies that can be put into practice by teachers.
- Promote the full school policy on differentiation within their departmental development plan, handbook, schemes of work, timetabling, staffing and training.
- Regularly reinforce and define the full school aims and objectives on differentiation for staff and students expressed in terms of what is to be achieved, and why and how it will be achieved.
- Promote strategies, methodologies and task related differentiation within the department that will help match needs to delivery and thus presenting meaningful and purposeful learning experiences for all students.
- Develop the departmental monitoring, evaluation and recording keeping processes in order to facilitate accurate teacher/student feedback and to arrange for support if necessary.
- Promote the sharing of workload in terms of production of materials, development of resources and curriculum delivery.
- Ensure the ongoing development of appropriate resources/materials that will help make the curriculum accessible to all students.
- Departments will annually review their differentiation policy using the following model:
 - Departmental audit to review and identify successes, strengths and needs.
 - Establish priorities which include clear long and short term aims.
 - State objectives and goals in relation to what has to be done, how, when and by whom.
 - Implementation and monitoring of progress and completion of targets.
 - Evaluation and review.

3.3 Classroom Teacher:

The class teacher is responsible for the progress and development of all students in their care and therefore the class teacher has direct responsibility for the levels of differentiation that are utilised in the classroom. Good practice in the area of differentiation will require that teachers should:

- Ensure that expectations of all students (including those with SEN and G&T) are sufficiently high.
- Make sure lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all learners.
- Provide intervention at a suitable level when a child is identified as having SEN or G&T.
- Plan activities that enable all students to achieve at their level.
- Carefully track, assess and keep records of the progress of all learners (including SEN and G&T).
- Raise concerns regarding the progress of SEN students with the SENCO.
- Use assessment as a means to identify the unique learning needs of every individual in the class.
- Plan lessons which will engage, challenge and develop understanding.
- Provide students with diagnostic feedback and direction on what must be done to improve work.
- Plan to give all students access to learning as well as access to the curriculum.
- Ensure that teaching is relevant, well informed and purposeful.
- Use teacher questioning to reveal, clarify and extend students' thinking.
- Ensure that all students are engaged in their learning in every lesson.
- Engage students with a range of aptitudes and needs in order that all students will access learning.
- Regularly review students' progress and their development of learning skills.
- Utilise a variety of learning environments that will support students in their access and progression towards independent learning which include small group tutorials, self-study, paired-work, individualised work and group-work (organised in ability, friendship, mixed ability, gender or interest groups) as appropriate to task.
- Support students in their progression towards independent learning by enabling them to use a range of resources with the emphasis on learning how to learn.

- Employ a variety of teaching styles that can be matched with a variety of learning styles in lessons.
- Develop their classroom management, layout and organisation to help foster effective learning.
- Encourage students to make use of library, paradise club, Darius lessons, homework club, etc.
- Promote 'stretch and challenge' for all learners at all levels.
- Review student progress and target levels/statements with the students.
- Ensure that tasks are designed to enable students to progress at their own pace.
- Facilitate individual capabilities, strengths and interests in lesson planning.
- Ensure that teaching approaches and planning will take account of the presence of the SEN TA, the Guardian Angel or other adult support that is available in the classroom.

4.0 Teaching Assistants:

4.1 Deployment of the TA:

The Teaching Assistant (TA) is a valuable classroom resource deployed by the SEN Department to work alongside class teachers, to compliment their work and to help students to get the most out of their learning. The class teacher has responsibility to make best use of TA time in lessons and will carefully consider the varied ways in which they make use of the TAs that have been deployed to their lessons.

The class teacher has responsibility to:

- Create a climate that encourages high quality TA input.
- Plan the work of any Teaching Assistant deployed to their lessons.
- Take account of TA participation when planning lessons.
- Develop mechanisms to help reduce TA 'Passive time' in classes – TAs listening to teachers teach.
- Ensure that TAs are informed of the learning needs / behavioural difficulties of students in the class.
- Set out their instructions to TAs and ensure TAs have explicit roles and tasks.
- Ensure that TA supported students receive as much, if not more, teacher time during lessons.
- Ensure that TA supported students are not prevented from interacting with other students?
- Ensure that the support provided by TAs is precisely targeted and makes a marked contribution to the quality of learning.
- Include TAs in relevant written communications regarding classes and individuals.

4.2 Promoting Preparedness of the TA:

To promote the preparedness and ensure the most effective use of TA time the class teacher will share their lesson plan with the SEN TA at the earliest opportunity in order that the TA can understand and plan out for what is expected of them. The class teacher must be clear regarding the role that the TA will take in their lesson and lesson plans need to provide TAs with detailed and clear information about tasks given to them. This can include:

- The Objectives for the lesson, differentiated where appropriate to the needs of SEN students.
- The themes, topics and information to be taught.
- The facts and concepts that will be learned.
- The skills to be learned/applied/practised or extended.
- Pointers to strategies & techniques and links to other learning opportunities.
- Worksheets, key vocabulary and learning resources to be used in the lesson.

4.3 Teacher / TA Collaboration:

The class teacher will promote a culture of TA / teacher collaboration that will embrace forward planning and lesson feedback. This will provide clear opportunities for the TA and teacher to:

- Get regular feedback from TAs and use this to help inform lesson planning.
- Provide opportunities to address queries from the TA regarding topics, facts, concepts...etc.
- Plan out and discuss the role of the TA in lessons.
- Monitor TA understanding of tasks and the teachers' expectations of them.
- Ensure that the tasks set are well targeted, clearly defined and appropriately differentiated.
- Review whether the teaching approached used in the lesson were appropriate to the task.
- Monitor student outcomes and the effectiveness of lesson objectives.
- Provide help for the TA to gain subject knowledge of lessons.

5.0 Differentiation Strategies:

It is important to note that differentiation does not mean “different work” but instead refers to the wide variety of resources, teaching styles, classroom activities and support materials that can be used by teachers to help make the curriculum accessible and allow students to progress within their lessons.

5.1 Differentiation of Resources:

- Provide targeted students with help-sheets to explain particular questions.
- Use of extension activities and questions to stretch and challenge learning.
- Provide modified copies of papers (enlarged, simplified, annotated, with hints, etc.)
- Make success criteria explicit and provide a step-by-step guide for the students to follow.
- Use of alternative textbooks & worksheets pitched at targeted individual levels.
- Use of technologies such as graphic calculators, spell-checkers, tapes, dictaphone ...etc.
- Use of study guides, alternative text books and different revision papers.

5.2 Differentiation by Task:

- Provide students of varied abilities with varied tasks that are matched to individual students' needs.
- Match the classroom tasks to the students' NC Levels and which stretch them to the next level.
- Tasks can have graduated levels of difficulty to stretch and challenge learners.
- Open ended tasks that allow students to interpret them to their own standard
- Provide different tasks and allow students choice on these.
- Provide a range of tasks that allow choice and which recognise aptitudes and interests.
- Design tasks so that they enable a variety of outputs.

5.3 Differentiation by Support:

- Support from others is valuable therefore must be deployed effectively – SEN TAs, Guardian Angels & Peer Support. Using able students to help less able students helps both groups simultaneously.
- Help students to understand and master their learning through higher learning thinking questions such as ‘What if...’, ‘What next...’ and ‘What else...’.
- Using a traffic light system – green for ‘I am confident’, amber for ‘I need to practice this a bit more’ and red for ‘I need to go back over this again’.
- Allow students to practice their learning with graded examples of increasing difficulty.

5.4 Differentiation by Response/outcome:

- Avoid questions that require factual recall but instead use questions that require a greater variety of higher-order thinking skills such as ‘Which...’ questions for evaluation, ‘How...’ questions for synthesis and ‘Why...’ questions for analysis.
- Allow some students to expand or explore while others can describe or summarise.
- Allow students to produce outcomes by using different media – e.g. for a research activity allow students to choose their own response such as PowerPoint / presentation / display...etc.
- Teaching styles should accommodate the range of learning styles in the class through the balanced use of visual, kinaesthetic or auditory (VAK) activities/interventions.
- Students with dyslexia need a combination of VAK opportunities (multi-sensory) to stimulate learning.
- Timing:- Don't grade students on volume of work but instead on their outcomes/responses.
- The key question here is not “How would I teach this?” but rather “How would students learn this?”
- Provide a combination of oral and written advice.
- Feedback should be specific, encouraging and developmental – it should provide understandable and useful advice.
- Aiming different level questions at different level students and then using follow up questions to encourage elaboration.

6.0 Monitoring and Evaluation:

- This policy will be evaluated annually by the SENCO, the KS3 & KS4 Coordinators, the G&T coordinator and SMT.
- Heads of Department will oversee the review of differentiation within their areas of responsibility. Lesson observation and work sampling will be part of this process.