

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

(Reviewed June 2017)

“It turns out that as long as you go to school (and that’s important), then it doesn’t matter very much which school you go to, but it matters very much which classroom you sit in” (Dylan William 2011).

POLICY STATEMENT AND PROCEDURE

The ethos of our school grows out of a distinctive philosophy of Catholic Education which believes that the service of the individual child and their flourishing is the ultimate purpose of all we do. We strive to provide an outstanding education that makes a real difference to the life of each student – academically and in terms of personal development.

Our vision is to draw out and nurture the potential in each and every student so that their experience of life is richer, more fulfilling and that each student is prepared for a lifetime of learning. We firmly believe that all students should aspire to a standard of excellence and as such the school is committed to supporting and promoting excellence through a culture of high expectation, an environment where every student is cared for and supported to be the best they can. Each and every one of our students is entitled to an outstanding education and we strive to develop and maintain this standard knowing that the work that each of us does daily must aim to enhance the life of each student for the better.

Since knowledge about effective teaching and promoting good learning is developing and being refined continually, this policy does not provide a manual of what should be done. However, it expresses the general principles that should inform good teaching and learning within the school to promote continuous improvement.

Aims:

- Promote excellence in all aspects of teaching and learning.
- Foster and encourage a love and curiosity for learning.
- Provide every student with a positive and meaningful learning experience.
- Provide a personalised learning experience that meets students’ individual needs, interests and aspirations.
- Cultivate excellence through fostering a strong sense of students’ own self worth and respect for themselves and others.
- To support and challenge students to do their best.
- To ensure that students are highly literate and numerate, able to apply their skills and knowledge to new situations, to achieve well in school and beyond.
- Foster students’ creativity and develop essential skills for life.
- Support students to become autonomous learners who take an increasing responsibility for their own learning and progress.
- To provide guidelines for teaching and learning and establish clear criteria for best practice and consistency.
- To identify and share best practice in teaching and learning across all curriculum areas.
- To improve levels of achievement and attainment as a consequence.

Responsibilities

SMT, Teaching and Learning Leaders

The senior leadership team is responsible for the quality of teaching and learning across the school. They will:

- Ensure that the organisation of the school day and year support good teaching and learning.
- Ensure that teaching and learning can take place within an ordered and purposeful environment.
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning across the whole school.
- Ensure the plan for school improvement places a high priority on teaching and learning and that structures are in place to support these priorities. Set priorities and targets for improvement based on evidence from monitoring of achievement / standards and quality of provision.
- Monitor and evaluate achievement and attainment across the school.
- Ensure that Heads of Department are fulfilling their role in improving teaching and leading across their teams.
- Ensure that all staff are appropriately trained, and are fit and competent to teach the programmes of study that they are directed to participate in.
- Ensure pedagogy across the school allows all students to achieve to the best of their ability.
- Ensure that a system to develop teachers' skills, knowledge and understanding of learning and teaching.
- Intervene and take appropriate and decisive action where teaching falls below the standard expected.
- Promote whole school approaches that encourage enthusiasm for learning and continuous improvement among students.
- Monitor and evaluate attitudes to learning across the school.
- Evaluate findings and develop approaches to improve attitudes and achievement continuously.
- Ensure good practice is spread across the school.
- Ensure that other school policies and systems support this policy.

Heads of Department

Heads of Department are responsible for the effective teaching of their subjects, the evaluation of quality of teaching and monitoring students' progress. They will:

- Champion teaching and learning in their subject area.
- Evaluate the teaching of their subject and the planning of lessons.
- Ensure curriculum coverage, continuity and progress for all students.
- Ensure staff are trained in relevant teaching and learning strategies and are competent to teach their subject.
- Support subject staff to update their subject knowledge and have a firm understanding of the courses being taught.
- Analyse data on students' performance against school expectations and other comparative data; set expectations and targets and implement actions to achieve these targets.
- Plan support and intervention where underachievement is identified. Monitor and review the effectiveness of support provided; modifying and adapting support as required.
- Support department staff in challenging underachievement and holding staff to account where attainment and progress does not meet school expectations.
- Intervene effectively and decisively where teaching in the subject falls below the high standard required; support and monitor improvement.
- Implement the Performance Management Policy to promote high standards and the development of subject teachers.
- Support department staff to create and maintain effective conditions for learning.
- Organise teaching and learning materials and resources, the timetable and the deployment of staff to best effect.

- Ensure schemes of work and assessment are high quality, rigorous and sufficiently challenging. Closely monitor the implementation of SOW.
- Ensure that school and subject policies and procedures are applied consistently by all department staff.
- Monitor students' work through work scrutiny: regular sampling of home study, class work, students' feedback and attitudes as part of ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
- Ensure that Teachers in Charge, Co-ordinators, Learning Support Assistants and staff with other positions of responsibility within the department are focused on promoting excellent teaching and learning within their areas of responsibility.
- Inspire students' interest through active promotion of the subject.
- Develop approaches to improve students' attitudes and achievement.
- Ensure that support and cover staff are able to play a full part in maintaining the high quality teaching.

Pastoral Staff

The responsibilities of pastoral staff are to encourage positive attitudes and aspirations among students; help students to develop the skills of study and take responsibility for their own learning. Pastoral staff will monitor the progress of students for whom they are responsible and liaise on their progress with other staff and parents. Pastoral staff will:

- Support and manage the personal, academic and overall well being of all students within the year group.
- Monitor student progress across all subjects, liaising with subject staff and parents as necessary, to help secure excellent progress.
- Work with students and their parents to ensure that subject choices are made that will maximise student achievement and support aspirations.
- Encourage enthusiasm for study and learning among students.
- Monitor and celebrate students' achievement.
- Counsel and mentor students to encourage confidence, aspiration and effective learning habits.
- Liaise with parents to improve attitudes, advise on courses and encourage high aspirations.

Classroom Teachers

The responsibility of every classroom teacher is to continuously improve their knowledge, skills and understanding of teaching and learning and to apply these consistently to support students to maximise their learning potential. Classroom teachers are responsible for creating conditions for excellent learning with the groups for which they are responsible. Staff will:

- Demonstrate high expectations which motivate, engage and challenge students.
- Have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject and curriculum areas; update and extend subject knowledge regularly as well as knowledge of examination and curriculum requirements.
- Take responsibility for improving teaching through professional development, responding, in a timely manner, to advice and feedback from colleagues.
- Update their personal mastery of the technology available to support teaching and learning.
- Consistently implement all school and department policies and procedures.
- Ensure they are aware of the capabilities and specific needs of all students in their classes so that they plan lessons, differentiate, and deploy support well so that all students can access the curriculum and make very good progress regardless of their background, abilities and dispositions.

- Plan well structured and well paced lessons which employ a wide variety of interesting and imaginative activities and resources, including the use of technology, to sustain student engagement, motivation and application.
- Monitor and evaluate the commitment and progress of all students reviewing and modifying teaching/ assessment approaches and strategies to maximise the learning of all students.
- Establish a positive and productive climate for learning in which students demonstrate good attitudes to their work and have mutual respect for both teachers and peers alike.
- Have high expectations of behaviour, and establish a framework for discipline consistent with school expectations.
- Provide students with regular, detailed feedback, both orally and written, so that students know how well they have done and are aware of what they need to do to sustain progress.
- Ensure lessons develop the learning capabilities of all students providing students with opportunities to work both independently and collaboratively with their peers.
- Recognise that literacy, numeracy and ICT underpin learning across the curriculum and plan for the appropriate development of these skills.
- Share with colleagues ideas on how to improve teaching and learning.
- To reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching and learning.
- Set meaningful home study to consolidate and extend knowledge and understanding and support skills development.
- To ensure teaching bases are well maintained with a wide range of stimulating displays.

Planning and Preparation

Effective teaching starts with good schemes of work. Heads of Department will ensure that schemes of work:

- Take full account of the National Curriculum but are not limited by it.
- Take full account of Examination Board Specifications and requirements.
- Specify content and methodology in accordance with best national practice.
- Outline the resources needed and available for each topic.
- Outline appropriate and differentiated teaching and learning approaches for all topics.
- Outline clearly assessment approaches and details.
- Support the development of literacy, numeracy, IT and SMSC.

Teachers will plan lessons which:

- Allow all students to make excellent progress in their learning.
- Set the learning in a clear subject context – its relation to previous work, future work, its place in the examination syllabus; its context in relation to the bigger picture.
- Use a variety of approaches and methods to engage students in their learning.
- Are enjoyable and interesting.
- Build on students' capabilities and prior learning.
- Are differentiated for the varying needs of students by tasks, questions, resources, use of student grouping, or outcomes (see Differentiation Policy).
- Provide students with the opportunity to work in a variety of ways.
- Provide pace and challenge for all students.
- Relate learning to student experience and to the real world, making learning relevant and authentic.
- Use effective questioning and afl techniques.
- Allow students to develop high level thinking skills.
- Use stimulating resources, including the use of ICT, which are differentiated as appropriate.

- Make use of formative and summative assessment to secure student progression.
- Promote the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- Make use of modeling as a way of demonstrating outcomes.
- Include reviews and plenaries to assess, consolidate and reinforce learning.
- Encourage students to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their learning and study.
- Build the fundamental skills for effective learning and enable students to reflect on the learning process and their development as learners.
- Ensure that home study is differentiated, clear and meaningful.

Delivery

All staff should:

- Implement procedures and systems set out in the Classroom Management Policy.
- Begin and end lessons on time and in a structured manner establishing clear and appropriate routines.
- Maintain engagement, pace and challenge.
- Ensure that the lesson is planned and is appropriate to the age and ability of the students, using, where appropriate, differentiated materials and resources (e.g. technology).
- Have high expectations of student work and behaviour.
- Employ a range of teacher strategies/approaches/activities within a lesson or sequence of lessons and ensure an efficient shift from one activity to the next.
- Identify where it is necessary to change and adapt plans.
- Make effective use of questioning (pitching low order and high order questioning appropriately) and ensure thinking time for students to make connections in their learning.
- Value students' contributions and make use of praise and reward to underline the value of achievement.
- Ensure students are given feedback on work completed and that they know how to move on to the next level.
- Demonstrate checking of progress during the lesson in a variety of ways
- Regularly set, monitor and mark homework in accordance with school and department policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Teaching and Learning

Aims

- To make secure judgements of teaching and learning across the school.
- To monitor and evaluate the student progress and attitudes to learning.
- To judge and evaluate the performance of individual teachers against the Teacher Standards and check that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained.
- To identify group and individual training needs across the teaching and support staff.

Reviews of T&L will take place on an on-going basis and will involve:

- Management of performance over time, in line with the Teacher Standards, by Line Managers.
- Lesson observations conducted by members of the SMT/ leadership staff /line manager/performance reviewer
- Learning Walks
- Student Work scrutiny
- Student voice within lessons or as part of a sub group to provide evidence for T&L audit.

Protocols for Lesson Observations (including joint observations)

During the lesson:

- Teachers may expect to be observed for part of, or a whole lesson. Lessons will be graded where an observation lasts for at least 25 minutes.
- The observer will talk to students and look at their work as part of the evaluation process.
- Evidence: seating plan, pre- lesson information template, lesson plan and resources, assessment data, student feedback, standards in books, classroom environment.

Feedback:

- Feedback will be given as soon as possible, within 5 working days. Written feedback will be given on the lesson observation form. Staff will be asked to self evaluate the lesson initially.
- Feedback will be honest and clear, setting out grading, strengths and areas for development.
- Lesson observation forms will be stored centrally to inform the T&L audit trail and management of performance. Targets set from the previous observation will be carried forward for review. If the observation is linked to a specific objective from your appraisal the teacher should be reminded of this by the observer.
- Judgements made about the quality of the teaching and learning will be based largely on Ofsted criteria for lesson observations which has been adapted by the school.
- Lesson observation grades will be shared with the relevant senior and middle leaders.

Protocol for learning walks (including senior leadership learning walks, joint learning walks and middle leader learning walks)

The purpose of the classroom visit is to obtain a brief snapshot of the classroom in order to collect evidence based on the specific T&L focus. Learning walks are a powerful tool to observe and develop common trends in classrooms and to audit typicality.

During the learning walk:

Evidence will include: lesson plan and resources, assessment data, student feedback, standards in books, classroom environment.

- Senior and middle leaders will conduct learning walks as part of the evaluation process.
- Learning walks will be used to quality assure school and department policies and will be recorded in self-evaluation documents (SEFs).
- Learning walks will not result in lessons being graded.
- Written feedback will be given.
- There will typically be short or no notice of learning walks.
- The outcome of learning walks will be stored centrally to inform the T&L audit.
- Where possible learning walks will have a focus which will be given in advance.

Feedback

- Feedback will be given as soon as possible, within 5 working days. This will be written feedback.
- Feedback will be honest and clear, setting out strengths and areas for development.
- Learning walk feedback will be stored centrally to inform the T&L audit.

Work Scrutiny Protocol for work scrutiny (including classwork, homework, coursework, controlled assessment, internal exams)

The purpose of the work scrutiny is to monitor and evaluate the progress of student cohorts within lessons or as part of a sub group, and capture evidence of typicality of teaching and learning across the school community. Work scrutiny is a powerful tool to observe and develop common trends in learning, teaching, marking, assessment and feedback.

During work scrutiny:

- Senior and middle leaders will conduct work scrutiny as part of the evaluation process. This may occur within lessons or as a sample requested for monitoring.
- Work scrutiny will be used to quality assure school, department policies and standard operating procedures and will be recorded in self evaluation documents (SEFs).
- Written or verbal feedback will be given.
- There will typically be short notice of work scrutiny.
- The outcome of work scrutiny will be tracked by coverage: staff, subject, year group, cohort, sub group and will be stored centrally to inform the T&L.

Feedback

- Feedback will be given as soon as possible, within 5 working days. Written feedback will be given on the work scrutiny form.
- Feedback will be honest and clear, setting out strengths and areas for development.
- Work scrutiny forms will be stored centrally to inform the T&L audit.

Evidence will be:

- Feedback – formative comments and advice/targets on each substantial work assessed with grades/levels where appropriate.
- Literacy/Numeracy: Use of whole school literacy framework/numeracy framework
- Progress: Do students learn from their mistakes and modify their work?
- Challenge and expectation – books orderly with work complete.
- Presentation - high expectations of handwriting and presentation.
- Variety of activities/ resources to support learning.

Continuous Professional Development

We are committed to providing high quality CPD through a structured programme of events and opportunities throughout the CPD school calendar. Teachers should:

- Continuously update their subject knowledge and teaching practice in line with current developments and initiatives;
- Discuss learning and teaching in Department Development time in order to share good practice;
- Plan their own CPD programme in conjunction with their Line Manager as a result of the self-evaluation process and by reflecting on the Teacher Standards document.

The monitoring and evaluation of the Teaching and Learning Policy is linked directly to the following school documents:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- ARR Policy
- Classroom Management Policy
- Performance Management Policy
- Home Study Policy

Appendix 1: Deployment of Teaching Assistants in Class:

The Teaching Assistant (TA) is a valuable classroom resource deployed by the school to work alongside class teachers, to complement 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 must carefully consider the varied ways in which they make use of the TAs that have been deployed to their lessons. The class teacher will

- Create a climate that encourages high quality TA input.
- Plan the work of any TA deployed to their lessons.
- Take account of TA participation when planning lessons.
- Develop systems to reduce TA 'passive time' in classes – TAs listening to teachers teach.
- Ensure 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 the support provided by TAs makes a marked contribution to the quality of learning.
- Include TAs in relevant written communications regarding classes and individuals.

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 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 learning objectives for the lesson, differentiated 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.

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 approaches used in the lesson were appropriate to the task.
- Monitor student outcomes.