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# FOREST HILL SCHOOL

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## TEACHING & LEARNING POLICY

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*April 2015*

*Review: every three years, or if a  
situation occurs which  
necessitates amendment*

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## **Introduction**

Teaching and learning is central to our function as a school and every student should experience a high quality education. This policy outlines the fundamental elements of effective teaching and learning. If all of these are in place and consistent across the school then students' learning and progress will be maximised.

## **Framework**

Our Teaching and Learning Policy is made up of a number of policies which cover different aspects of teaching and learning. It is comprised of:

- Assessment for Learning Policy including effective written feedback
- Differentiation Policy
- Literacy Policy
- Homework
- Lesson Observation Protocols and Procedures

This document is an overarching document that sets out key principles and guidelines for successful lessons.

## **Aims**

At Forest Hill School we aim to:

- ensure that all students have high aspirations and are enabled to achieve to their full potential
- continually work towards raising standards of teaching and learning across the school so that levels of attainment and achievement are improved as a consequence
- identify and share good practice in teaching and learning across all curriculum areas
- continually work towards developing our range of teaching and learning strategies so that we provide effective, stimulating and creative lessons and learning experiences for students

- provide learning experiences that are specifically tailored to individuals so that the needs of all students are met and in order to maximise progress for all
- enable students to be autonomous, independent and confident learners who are able to reflect on their own learning and are aware of how they best learn

## **Key Principles**

We believe that outstanding learning stems from high quality planning. We do not believe that there is one approach to teaching and learning but believe that teachers have to continually assess and plan for the needs of the particular students they are teaching so that they can all make outstanding progress. Consequently, we believe that teachers must be actively encouraged to take risks, be innovative and then reflect on and evaluate the outcomes.

Therefore, we do not have one fixed approach to lesson planning but do believe that successful learning is underpinned by common principles.

- Teachers need to gain a thorough knowledge of the individual students that they are teaching and must make full use of prior data including SEN stage, prior attainment, CATs data, EAL, Pupil Premium in addition to the knowledge and understanding that teachers gain from thoroughly assessing students' work.
- Planning lessons effectively takes into account differentiation, anticipates students' responses and how to manage these.
- All lessons should be differentiated in order to meet the needs of all students. There is not one approach to successful differentiation, but rather a blending of different approaches. Top down differentiation is key to ensuring that the needs of the most able are met. (See *Differentiation Policy* for more detail.)
- Assessment for Learning is integral to effective teaching and students need to have a clear idea of their own strengths and weaknesses as well as the teacher. Effective written feedback is only effective when students respond to it in a meaningful way and it is essential that this happens. (See *Assessment for Learning Policy* for more detail.)
- Linked to effective written feedback, students should be taught to and regularly provided with opportunities to reflect on how they learn most effectively and on their progress.
- Literacy and numeracy are the responsibility of all teachers, regardless of the subject and the Literacy policy must be adhered to. This is within lessons as well as when providing effective written feedback. Teachers should aim to model the use of standard English at all times.
- Good and outstanding teaching is only possible when positive relationships are being fostered between students and between the teacher and students. Teachers must always remember and address the wider context within which we teach and our overall aims as a school that believes in restorative approaches. Our lessons need to reflect our values and opportunities taken to promote these.
- The promotion of Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural values should be encouraged and PLTSS (Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills) are an important aspect of this.
- Teaching and learning are long term processes and do not happen in one lesson alone. Ensuring that lessons are varied and covering all the skills and knowledge that need to be taught, requires mid and long term planning.

- Underachievement must be challenged and it is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to do this. Effective intervention is essential and it is important that as classroom teachers we review progress and intervene when students are not on track. Interventions such as student and teacher discussions, contacting parents, changing seating plans, etc are key.
- Teaching and learning is not passive and students need to be actively engaged in their learning. Purposeful student talk through group work and pair work is usually a part of any successful learning.
- Curriculum Areas should produce schemes of work for all key stages. Ideally, these will provide sufficient support for teachers and should allow for the sharing of good practice and resources, but these must not preclude teachers from trying different approaches.
- Students should be constantly stretched and challenged.

### **Essential Procedures**

- Homework must be set in accordance with the homework policy and uploaded onto Fronter. Students need to record this. Homework must be differentiated and a relevant continuation of the learning in the classroom. It should be marked regularly and feedback given if it is to be a meaningful experience for the students.
- When formal lesson observations take place, teachers must present a lesson plan and seating plan. Teachers are encouraged to use the school Lesson Form which can be found in the Teaching and Learning section of FHS Connect, in the Lesson Observation folder.
- Teachers need to plan their lessons and most teachers will find their own way of recording lesson plans.
- Homework records and suitable records of assessment must be kept by teachers.
- The register needs to be taken on SIMs and the travel log filled in as appropriate.

### **Role of Leaders of Teaching and Learning**

#### **Senior leadership**

Have a clear vision of how teaching and learning can best be moved forward and developed

Have a strategic plan

Reporting to governors on teaching and learning

Monitor the quality of teaching and learning

#### **Curriculum Leaders and Directors**

- Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, including effective written feedback and homework within their subject area
- To be proactively developing their subject in terms of pedagogy and constantly striving to ensure that the teaching in their area is as effective as possible
- To use Teaching and Learning time as INSET time to develop the teaching and learning within their area and not to use it for administration
- Students have access to a high quality and engaging curriculum which leads them to making rapid and sustained progress
- Seeking student voice to inform their curriculum development

## **Teachers**

- To plan effective lessons which lead to rapid and sustained progress for all students
- To provide highly effective written feedback and to ensure that students respond to this (copy and paste from AfL policy)
- Written feedback must take place regularly to be effective, eg at least once every two to three weeks for subjects that have 3 or 4 periods a week; once every 3 weeks in two period subjects; and at least once a half term in one period subjects
- Effective feedback must be specific, accurate and clear
- Guidance must provide students with specific information about what they have done well for example '*...was good because you used vocabulary correctly*'
- Feedback should compare what the student is currently doing with what they have previously done e.g. '*It is clear from your answer that you have been trying to write in more detail...*'
- Feedback should promote further effort, striking a balance between support and challenge
- Feedback should provide specific guidance including an improvement action
- Improvement marking is only effective when students act upon the advice they have been given. Planning must include time for students to act on the advice given and this is best at the start of the lesson. This is sometimes referred to as DIT (Dedicated Improvement Time) or DIRT (Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time)
- Teachers must ensure that students respond to their marking. Improvements must be clearly signposted e.g. different colour pens or titled. Where students and teachers have established a dialogue via the written feedback, it further highlights the progress that students are making and also their reflection.
- Teachers need to train students to respond to feedback – it is not acceptable for students to ignore the advice that they have been given
- With longer pieces of work e.g. projects or coursework, feedback may involve a longer response time and several re-drafts before completion
- Effective workload management will involve some homeworks being marked by students themselves and facilitated by teachers
- Research and evidence shows that students when looking at marked work e.g. 5/10, grade B, etc. will focus on that grade rather than be able to absorb the feedback. So it is recommended that when marking, we do not always share marks with students.
- A level or grade is given on at least a half termly basis so that students can gauge their progress towards targets. Effective levelling or grading needs to be accurate, consistent and moderated.
- Spellings need to be marked in line with whole school policy (see Literacy Policy and Spelling Guidelines)
- Teachers need to ensure that students adhere to the Presentation Rules when presenting written work (see Literacy Policy and Presentation Guidelines)

## **Students**

- Respond to effective written feedback
- Take responsibility for their achievement and learning
- Take an active part in lessons
- Seek help when necessary
- Complete all homework
- Develop effective study skills, including revision skills
- Respect others at all times including in lessons