

# **Teaching and Learning Policy**

## **Forest Hill School**

### **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.

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

Related policies are Assessment for Learning, Effective Written Feedback Policy, Written work policy and the Homework Policy.

### **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 deliver lessons within the framework of an overall broad and balanced curriculum plan.
- High quality schemes of work need to reflect the overall curriculum plan and must be developed in order to guide and support teachers in delivering high quality lessons.
- When planning, teachers need to ensure that their lessons reflect the identified characteristics of good teaching and learning which are outlined in the *Seven Essentials* document.
- 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 the needs of individual students, anticipates students' responses and how to manage these.
- We believe that differentiation is an integral part of high quality, effective teaching. It is a way of **thinking** about teaching and learning and should not be regarded as merely a set of strategies. 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.
- 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* and *Effective Written Feedback 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.
- 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.
- Students should be constantly stretched and challenged.

### **Essential Procedures**

- Teachers must follow the expectations laid out in *Forest Hill Lesson Expectations*.
- Homework must be set in accordance with the homework policy and uploaded onto Show My Homework..
- Teachers need to plan their lessons and most teachers will find their own way of recording lesson plans.
- 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

- Identify key areas of development within teaching and learning and this should be reflected in the SIP
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- Support Middle Leaders in developing effective teaching and learning within their curriculum areas
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- Provide support materials and disseminate good practice around teaching and learning
- Provide the necessary support and training opportunities to enable staff to enhance their expertise with differentiation
- Use student voice to gauge impact of teaching and learning

### ***Faculty Leaders***

- Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, including effective written feedback and homework within their subject areas.
- 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.
- Ensure that 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.
- To ensure that effective study skills, including revision skills, are included in the subject curriculum.

### ***Teachers***

- To plan effective lessons which lead to rapid and sustained progress for all students.
- To ensure that lessons reflect the characteristics of good teaching and learning identified in the *Seven Essentials* document.

- To provide highly effective written feedback and to ensure that students respond to this.

### **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

### **Appendices**

- 1) Seven Essentials
- 2) Forest Hill Lesson Expectations
- 3) Guidance on differentiation

# ***Seven Essential Elements of Teaching and Learning***

Attached is a diagram showing the seven essential elements or aspects of teaching and learning that would be seen if rapid and sustained progress was being made in a lesson.

This is accompanied by a definition for each aspect and descriptions of what this should look like and what it should not look like.

In most lessons where rapid and sustained progress is being made, it should be possible to see most of the seven essentials, but there might be one or two not evident depending on the nature of the lesson.

Whilst the definitions are designed to be succinct, the descriptions are extensive so that a clear and consistent understanding can be arrived at. Not everything in the descriptions would be expected in a lesson.

This work builds on and develops the *Forest Hill Learning Tree*, which focused on the underlying principles of teaching and learning.



# ***Seven Essential Aspects of Excellent Teaching and Learning***

## **Confident, engaged and independent learners**

### **Definition:**

Confident, engaged and independent learners are learners who are resilient and do not give up when something seems too hard. These learners use metacognitive skills to help them learn and have other skills which allow them access to the curriculum, for example information literacy and the ability to learn from each other during well-structured team work.

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### ***What this looks like:***

- Active learning strategies such as collaborative learning, student led learning and structured discussion activities are evident.
- Team work features heavily (as appropriate).
- Ability to work in different groupings.
- Activities and approaches which encourage and develop thinking skills are effectively used.
- Students are inquisitive and ask questions.
- Students are prepared to 'have a go' and do not give up because something seems too hard.
- Students have a sense of their strengths and weaknesses and take chances to understand their next step.
- Students have highly effective revision skills (this is developed through KS3 and consolidated in KS4).
- Providing opportunities for learners to work independently.
- Students are organised in their learning and homework.
- Students have good presentation skills.
- Students take responsibility for moving themselves on (push themselves or move on to the next task).
- There is an element of choice in the work set.



***What this does not look like:***

- Passive students who do not engage
- Off task behaviour
- Students who are constantly spoon fed (there will be times when students need to be given subject specific information).
- Students unable to discuss their thoughts
- Students who are not given opportunities to explore their ideas with others
- Lessons dominated by individual students or groups of students

## AfL and next steps

### **Definition:**

Assessment for Learning is the process of actively looking for evidence so that learners and teachers can see where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.

### ***What this looks like:***

- Effective written feedback with specific advice for improvements based on a set of clear criteria
- Effective questioning
- Peer-assessment opportunities linked to criteria (where appropriate)
- Self-assessment opportunities linked to criteria
- Oral feedback from the teacher based on clear criteria
- More effective use of all available data (CAT's, Baseline, Teacher assessment, Standardised testing).

### **Effective AfL is also:**

- Teachers providing students with manageable chunks to facilitate learning
- Teachers providing improvement advice
- Teachers setting appropriate and differentiated homework
- Students responding to the advice given
- Re-drafting work to show improvements (DIT).
- Students setting their own advice EBI/WWW etc.
- Students being aware of their targets and how to improve these

### ***What this does not look like:***

- Absence of clear and challenging criteria
- Passive students not reflecting on learning
- Fast paced content leading to surface learning rather than deep learning
- Lack of advice given for next steps and improvements
- Useful teacher comments in response to written work with no student response

## Clear Learning objectives, success criteria & planning for progress

### Definition: Learning Objectives using Bloom's Taxonomy

Learning objectives are the fundamental starting point for any lesson, focusing the teacher and learner on the learning intentions. These will shape the activities that take place to ensure that the learning objectives are met. Success criteria describe the way in which will demonstrate that they have met the learning objectives. Planning for progress is about designing and delivering activities that ensure that students are able to achieve the learning objective.

#### ***What this looks like:***

- Learning objectives are shared effectively with students and referred back to regularly.
- Effective success criteria linked to the LO so that students know how to achieve in the lesson.
- Mini-plenaries and plenary linked to the learning objectives.
- Mid and long-term planning include learning objectives that clearly develop skills, knowledge and understanding.

#### Evaluation (Judgements made using learning)

Can I..... judge, evaluate, give arguments for and against, criticise, give contrasting opinion, justify, support, defend, attack, appraise, weigh-up, assess

#### Synthesis (Uses learning combined in a new way)

Can I..... summarise, generalise, organise, design, create, construct, plan, combine, argue, discuss, derive, relate, integrate, conclude, connect

#### Analysis (Examines and breaks down learning)

Can I..... compare and contrast, breakdown, differentiate between, analyse, examine, interpret, investigate, explain why

#### Application (Using learning in a new way)

Can I..... use, apply, construct, modify, change, solve, predict, demonstrate, instruct, compute, use, perform, implement, employ

#### Comprehension (Understanding of previous learning)

Can I..... explain, describe reasons for, identify causes of, illustrate, translate, interpret, discuss, indicate, represent, formulate, classify, comprehend, sort

Knowledge (Memory of previous learning)

Can I..... state, record, list, identify, recall, recognise, select, reproduce, find, name, locate, define, tell, label, locate

***What this does not look like:***

- Putting learning objectives on the board and not explaining these.
- Putting learning objectives on the board and not making any reference to these during the lesson.
- Students not being aware of what they are learning.
- Lack of success criteria to break up the process of achieving the learning objectives.
- SOW that does not build on prior learning.

## Behaviour for learning & classroom routines

### **Definition:**

Students demonstrating behaviours that allow them to be fully engaged with their own learning and the learning of others.

### ***What this looks like:***

- Students take an active part in lessons and are fully engaged in the learning, so they routinely complete work, ask questions and ensure that they understand.
- Students listen well to each other and the teacher and can discuss ideas in a constructive and supportive manner.
- A safe atmosphere for students to take risks in their learning.
- Students can be leaders of learning and take responsibility for their own learning.
- Students take responsibility for moving themselves on and are prepared to take risks in their learning.
- Expectations are clear.
- Clear classroom routines in place.
- There is a quiet learning atmosphere but not usually a silent one unless an activity requires this as students can self-regulate.
- The Forest Hill Classroom routines are in place and being adhered to consistently.
- Praise and rewards are used effectively.

***What this does not look like:***

- Completely passive students, sitting in silent rows with no engagement.
- No seating plan (although some subjects do not use these).
- A lack of classroom control.
- Some or more students off task and not following instructions.
- Irrelevant chat.
- Inconsistency from the teacher.
- No stretch and challenge.

## Quality questioning

### **Definition:**

Questioning which is designed to extend and deepen knowledge, understanding and skills. Questioning is a multi-faceted tool that is central to teaching and learning in its own right. Questioning supports differentiation and AfL and should be used in a planned way which involves **all** students.

### ***What this looks like:***

- Planned questioning that takes Bloom's Taxonomy into account and facilitates higher order thinking.
- No hands up approach, in the main.
- All students are given the opportunity to respond to questioning.
- Open questions that tease out a response and stimulate discussion.
- Questioning links to L.O.
- Peer to peer discussion time.
- Thinking time is built in.
- Peer to peer questioning.
- Use of a range of questioning techniques such as pair and share, PPPBB

### ***What this does not look like:***

- A classroom dominated by a few individuals because the same students are constantly allowed to respond to questions.
- Only a hands approach or a hands up approach the overwhelming majority of the time.
- Questioning which is teacher to student and back again without involving other students.
- Too easy or too hard.
- Unstructured questioning.
- Some students being passive.
- Questions which are simplistic in nature and do not allow students to justify their thoughts.

## Talk for learning

### **Definition:**

The planned use of a range of student activities that incorporate discourse as a vital part of the learning process. These would include structured activities that promote communication skills, help to develop ideas by causing cognitive conflict and the use of talk as a bridge to writing.

### ***What this looks like:***

- Students developing their thinking skills by using activities that promote thinking skills such as hexagons, decision making activities, etc.
- Students presenting ideas that they have worked on as a team and supporting each other as part of the process
- Student role play e.g. enquiry board into nuclear power
- Students developing metacognition by being encouraged to explain their thinking processes
- Correct use of key terminology
- Teacher using correct English and modelling talk for learning.
- Students are prompted to use correct English, the correct terminology and to speak in full sentences.
- Structured talk prior to writing activities e.g. 'Turn to your partner, person A explains - the person B check that they have included the key words on the board.'
- Talk for learning with particular reference to numeracy.

### ***What this does not look like:***

- Too much off-task talk.
- The class or groups dominated by a few individuals.
- Too much teacher talk, so not enough time for students to talk.
- The teacher fills the gap without allowing for thinking time.
- Students simply helping each other being counted as a talk for learning activity (useful as this is).



## Differentiation, Challenge and Personalisation

### **Definition:**

Effective differentiation is an extremely powerful tool using a range of strategies to maximise progress and attainment by ensuring that learning is tailor made for every student.

### ***What this looks like:***

- Top down differentiation and scaffolding up – planning for the most able then working from there.
- Differentiation by task, targeted questioning, group, choice, resource, support, gradation etc.
- Real-life scenarios for learning that the students can relate to.
- Students self-selecting learning.
- Meeting the needs of all ability ranges in the classroom and planning specifically for students who have Special Educational Needs.
- Modelling and use of exemplars to guide the students through the learning.
- Really knowing your students – what they can/cannot access – and planning for this.
- Using more able students as subject ambassadors.
- Students as self-managers – taking a lead in their own learning.
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### ***What this does not look like:***

- Extension tasks which do not further learning.
- Same work for all students (unless this is necessary).
- Work set that is simply too easy.
- Uninteresting activities for students to complete.
- Planning not taking into account baseline data or prior knowledge.
- A variety of different tasks to simply keep the students busy, rather than extend their learning.

# Forest Hill Lesson Expectations

What we need to see	How will we know this is happening?
Teachers must be ready to start the lesson at the first pips and standing in the corridor/doorway, ready to meet and greet students and engage positively with them.	At the beginning and ends of lessons and at change over all teachers are visible. Corridor behaviour will be calm because of the presence of adults.
Have a 'Do Now' which students can get on with immediately.	<b>7E – Behaviour for learning and classroom routines</b> We will see students settling quickly and automatically getting on with the 'Do Now' task.
Teachers must take the register accurately and mark any students arriving during or after the second pips as late.	<b>7E – Behaviour for learning and classroom routines</b> All registers will be taken within 10 minutes.
Share clear challenging learning objectives, that have measurable outcomes	<b>7E – Clear learning objectives, success criteria &amp; planning for progress</b> All students will understand the purpose of the lesson. All students will be able to express what is expected of them. We will be visible on lesson slides.
Share the relevant parts of the PLCs for all year groups.	<b>7E – Clear learning objectives, success criteria &amp; planning for progress</b> All students will be able to understand the context of the lesson. We will see the PLC being referred to, on one of the lesson slides.
Plan and deliver stimulating activities that demonstrate a range of the 7Es.	<b>7E – Differentiation challenge and personalisation</b> <b>7E – AfL and next steps</b> <b>7E – Confident, engaged and independent learners</b> <b>7E – Talk for learning</b> <b>7E – Quality questioning</b> <b>7E – Behaviour for learning and classroom routines</b>
Students need to be challenged and active rather than passive and teacher talk limited.	<b>7E – Differentiation challenge and personalisation</b> <b>7E – Talk for learning</b>  Teacher talk will be minimised Students will be actively engaged in their learning so rapid progress will be evident. There will be meaningful student talk focused on the learning.
Teachers must provide regular feedback based on success criteria.	<b>7E – AfL and next steps</b> <b>7E – Clear learning objectives, success criteria &amp; planning for progress</b> Books will contain written teacher feedback and student response in green pen. Books will contain a range of other green pen work including corrections and peer assessment. At regular points in the lesson, the teacher will check understanding. If asked 'What are you good at?' and 'What do you need to do to improve?' students will be able to answer.
Teachers must set homework in accordance with school policy and record it.	<b>7E – Differentiation challenge and personalisation</b> <b>7E – Confident, engaged and independent learners</b> Homework logs will show that homework has been set.

Teachers dismiss boys in an orderly fashion and not before the pips. Boys must remain seated until dismissed by the teacher. They must <b>NOT</b> put their coats on.	Students will leave classrooms calmly. No students will be in the corridors before the pips go.
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## Guidance on Differentiation

### **Differentiation: Teachers Make the Difference**

#### **Introduction**

At Forest Hill School we believe that differentiation is an integral part of high quality, effective teaching. It is a way of **thinking** about teaching and learning and should not be regarded as merely a set of strategies. At Forest Hill we believe that a successfully differentiated classroom needs to be based on the following key principles:

#### **On-going feedback and assessment**

##### **High quality curriculum**

##### **Student potential**

##### **Top down differentiation and scaffolding up**

##### **Flexible learning environment**

#### **On-going feedback and assessment**

Without the teacher being aware of whether or not a student understands the knowledge and skills being taught, it is impossible to effectively intervene to either address misconceptions or move the student on to more challenging work. Consequently, teachers should always plan activities and tasks that can demonstrate whether learning is taking place or not. Strategies that give teachers an immediate understanding of where students are, as well as strategies that take more time, such as providing feedback, are the first step to effective differentiation. Sometimes this can be no more than showing a student how to complete a problem or re-explaining a concept that they have not understood. Overtime, it is essential to develop our knowledge of student performance, effort and achievement through a wide range of formative assessment strategies. This day to day working knowledge of our student's progress towards the key learning goals should in turn inform our teaching and differentiation strategies. Assessment is used to improve students' performance not only audit it.

#### **High quality curriculum**

High quality schemes of work aid differentiation because they are clear about the learning objectives that need to be achieved and outline a clear approach to achieving these. To this end they should identify possible misconceptions and how they can be addressed. Schemes of work should specifically outline how students can be challenged and stretched, for example by suggesting approaches to high order questioning or providing resources that provide challenge.

#### **Student potential**

All staff should constantly affirm an ethos that recognises effort and inspires students to strive for their very best. We recognise that both cognitive and emotional intelligence is not fixed but changes and can improve. Central to effective differentiation is the recognition of our learners as individuals with a wide variety of needs. We have a duty to connect with individuals and strive to develop our teaching to accommodate differences. Students display a wide range of needs that go beyond the academic.

## Top down differentiation and scaffolding up

Ensuring that the most able are catered should be the starting point when planning lessons. Top down differentiation and scaffolding up means that there will always be work suitable for the most able and will avoid teaching to the middle and extension tasks that do not enhance learning. The teacher then needs to plan the scaffolding which allows others students to meet the learning objectives. This approach avoids lowering expectations and leads to better progress.

## Flexible learning environment

Students need a positive learning environment. As teachers we change our groupings to reflect our understanding of the students' different needs in different topics. Not all grouping should be by ability. Teachers should explore a range of group sizes and experiment with the rationale behind the groupings.

Student engagement is a pre-requisite to effective learning and teachers need to ensure that they are providing a range of different learning opportunities to capture student interest and allow effective access to the curriculum. We should aim to include experiences to engage all learners. In order to motivate individual students to learn, there needs to be a clear understanding of the student's ability, aptitude, skills and knowledge.

## Examples of effective approaches to differentiation

Approach	Description
Response to need	Following feedback, for example by questioning or observation, the teacher changes their approach for either the whole group or particular members of the group. For example, the majority of students could be set a task whilst the teacher provides further input for a small group of students.
Meeting specific needs	Individual need can be met by teachers for example, providing more attention to pupils with particular needs. For example, they might always check again that particular students are clear about what they need to do and might help them get started.
Groupings	A range of different groupings can aid differentiation. For example, sitting a less able student with two more able students can provide more support for that student.
Different tasks	Students can be put into different groups and set different tasks. For example, different maths problems could be set with more able students leaving out easier problems. Teacher explanation and questioning could be alternately directed at the different groups.
Questioning	Planning higher order questions that provide stretch and challenge for students.
Collaborative learning	Students work in groups and take on different roles which are suited to their ability. Reciprocal reading is one example of an approach that uses this.
Student led learning	Students can be used to teach other students topics, thus strengthening their own understanding but providing other students with individualised input.