

TEACHING & LEARNING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

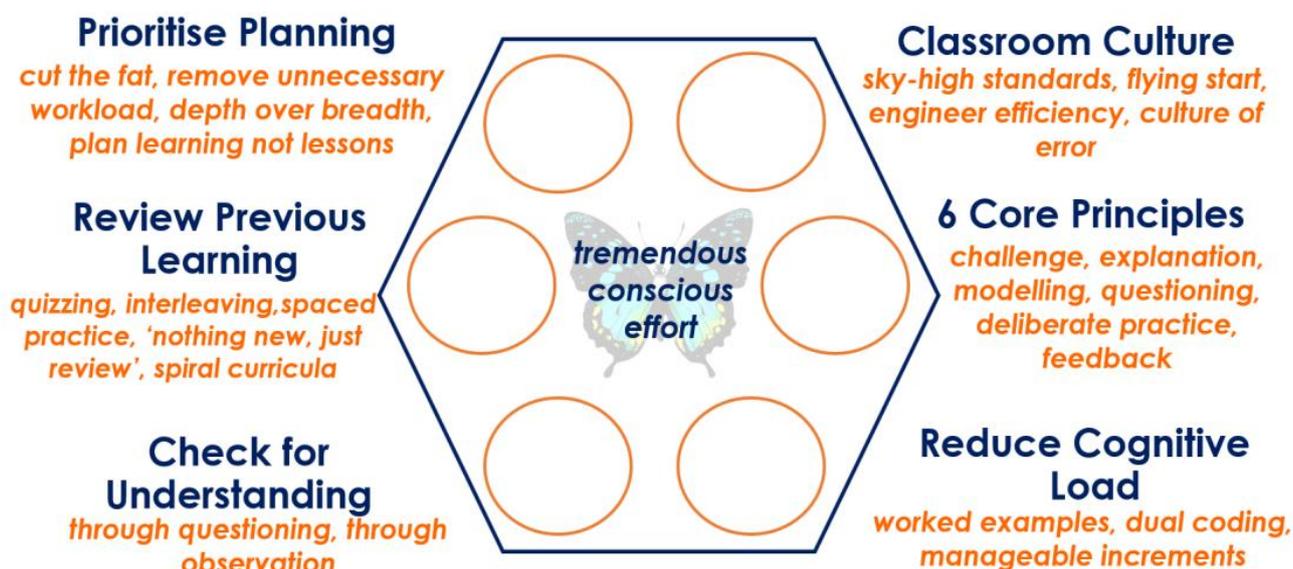
Teaching and learning is the core focus of the school. This policy is the product of consultation with the Brine Leas Teaching and Learning group, educational research, Ofsted's descriptors for outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment and the DfE's Teachers' Standards (2013).

In crafting a Learning Policy that both describes and informs our principles of instruction, Brine Leas has drawn extensively on influential, leading-edge educational research and cognitive science. The most efficacious principles are codified in the 'Streamlined Classroom'.

In order to effectively deliver excellent learning, teachers must have both excellent subject knowledge and enjoy working with young people.

The Streamlined Classroom

responsive teaching → mastery → overlearning → automaticity



1. THE STREAMLINED CLASSROOM

The Streamlined Classroom is the 'front cover' of all that we expect from teaching at Brine Leas. It incorporates evidence-informed principles of instruction but also recognises that effective teaching is more than pedagogy alone, and thus places emphasis on a positive classroom climate.

Research is pulled from a variety of sources but the origin of much is Barak Rosenshine's seminal *Principles of Instruction*¹.

Teachers should use collaborative time to 'translate' whole-school CPD to subject-specific interpretations. The Streamlined Classroom provides the basis for the Performance Management observation framework.

All teachers are provided with a 'knowledge organiser' of The Streamlined Classroom, to act as a stepping-stone between the document above and information stored in the shared area.

2. REMOVING UNNECESSARY WORKLOAD

A key element of the Brine Leas teaching and learning model is to teach responsively and prioritise the planning of lessons. Therefore, leaders at Brine Leas aim to remove unnecessary workload to allow responsive planning of lessons to be prioritised. Teachers should consider learning return on time invested (see section 6).

3. SCHEMES OF WORK

From a teaching and learning perspective, it is essential that schemes of work provide crystal-clear information on the specific objective of learning: exactly *what* do children need to learn? These learning objectives must adhere to the T&L core principle of **challenge** by setting one high bar for all students. Teachers can then use a range of teaching strategies to improve learning. Learning objectives should focus on learning, not tasks to be completed by students.

Schemes of work should provide detail of curriculum content and how it will be delivered (ie. curriculum intent and implementation). Timescales for each unit must be clear, as must assessment opportunities (ie. the impact of curriculum). Departments are expected to have up-to-date schemes of work in place to plan curriculum delivery and student progress effectively. Schemes of work are subject to constant review and should be considered 'live' documents. They should not stifle creativity or individuality.

Schemes of work should be completed in detail and be clear enough for new staff to follow. A simpler version or overview should be available for students in examination classes. This version should be evident in students' exercise books or folders. Departments are able to present schemes of work in the way most suited to their specific content and style of teaching. There is no set pro-forma that must be used. To reduce teacher workload departments should have clear methods of sharing resources and planning.

4. PLANNING

Teachers should plan learning, not lessons. As such, the traditional 3-part lesson is not a requirement at Brine Leas School and planning a series of lessons should be driven by learning objectives as opposed to planned activities or resources.

Learning objectives should pinpoint intended learning with precision and these objectives should be communicated to students (written or verbal) in such a way that they are clear to the novice. Teachers should beware the 'curse of the expert'. We shouldn't assume that our idea of what success looks like is shared by our students. As novices, it is likely that our students have a rudimentary, low-resolution grasp of where they are going, whereas teachers can see it in high definition thanks to our knowledge and experience. Outcomes need to be well-articulated or modelled so that students can visualise the destination. Having painted a vivid picture of what success looks like, teachers then need to refer back to it frequently in their teaching. Students should not use valuable learning time copying objectives in to their notes.

Teachers should be on time to lessons in order to maximise learning time. Lessons should start with a 'Do Now' activity, which serves the dual purpose of establishing a purposeful learning atmosphere from the first moment, and providing an opportunity to re-activate prior learning. Re-activating prior learning in itself serves a dual purpose: either as a basis on which to tether the new learning, or by providing retrieval practice to support the long-term memory through overlearning. Frequent checks on understanding should take place to provide evidence as to whether the teacher can move on with the lesson, or needs to re-teach aspects of content covered. Teachers should bear in mind that even when content has been understood, this does not mean that it has been learnt. Learning is a long-term process and should not be confused with performance.

Planning should be prioritised by teachers. Subject Planning and Development Sessions are calendared 8 times throughout the year. These must be ring-fenced for joint planning. In addition, the vast majority of INSET time is preserved for departments, who are encouraged to use the time for joint planning purposes. Wherever possible, planning and resources should be collaborative or at least shared freely between team members. Teachers should not make resources that someone else has already made, when simple adaptations to an existing resource will achieve the same high-quality teaching. To this end departments should have clear methods of sharing resources and planning between members of their team.

5. ADAPTING TEACHING TO RESPOND TO THE STRENGTHS AND NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS

Teachers are required to have high expectations of all students, and to set one high bar for all. Within these parameters, we will have realistic expectations of individual outcomes. Teachers must keep in mind the 'Pygmalion Effect'²: higher expectations leads to an increase in performance; we teach children more effectively when we believe they are clever. It is a requirement that teachers adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all students. This is likely to be through questioning (cold-calling intelligently; supporting with the smallest viable hint; developing to push for more detail), adapting models, adapting practice questions or adapting feedback. There is no expectation for students to have adapted versions of worksheets or other high-effort, low-impact techniques. A pre-requisite of effective and efficient adaptation of teaching, is a solid understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each student.

Should a teaching assistant (TA) be present in the lessons, regular communication between teacher and TA is required to ensure optimal support for students.

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hTghEXKNj7g>

6. ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

Feedback, which requires effective formative assessment is essential. Following the identification of a 'learning gap' (something the student cannot yet do or does not yet know), the resulting feedback should be aimed at closing this gap. Students must receive feedback on a regular basis (at least once per 2 lessons). This may be verbal or written, whole-class or individual.

Individual subjects should specify their own assessment and feedback plans, following the **key principles of feedback**. Teachers must adhere to the requirements of the relevant subject-specific assessment and feedback plan.

6.1 Key Principles of Feedback

Feedback should:

*** Be specific, accurate and crystal-clear to students.**

*** Look forwards, not backwards** ('feedforward'). *Feedback should aim to improve the students' work next time because the major purpose of feedback is to improve the student, not the work. For example, giving detailed feedback after a summative test is not usually productive, as the unit of study has concluded and there is little the learner can do to alter the result. Teachers should endeavour to give feedback regularly **during** the learning process, prior to the end of unit of study, in order to modify planning accordingly and thus better improve student attainment. Instead of a commentary on what students have done **before**, teachers may simply issue new questions informed by our reading of student work. The most effective feedback to students will signpost the next steps in their learning journey.*

*** Inform teachers' planning to secure and further students' learning.** *An integral part of the Brine Leas teaching model is to teach responsively. As such, teachers should regularly check on learning in order to know what the students know, and to uncover misconceptions. This will inform teachers' next steps. Teachers should be able to gather assessment 'data' that enables them to adjust their teaching both within and across a sequence of lessons.*

*** Place the responsibility on the student to forge their next steps.** *The most important thing about feedback is what students do with it. Students must act on feedback for it to be of benefit. However, this need not be with a contrived 'action' following a 'target'. Feedback should cause thinking and be more work for the student than the teacher. Feedback could easily be 'on the basis of what I'm seeing, you need more practice answering questions like this'. Thus, students may not even realise that feedback has taken place but will nevertheless be working hard to improve their outcomes. Evidence of feedback is incidental to the process*

*** Allow students to feel pride.** *Teachers should always be encouraging and supportive, but it is also important to remember that achievement has a much larger effect on student self-concept than praise. Teachers should foster a*

positive and respectful climate, establish a culture of error and teach challenging content well. Students will then benefit from the pride felt by doing something intrinsically difficult, by themselves.

It should be remembered that feedback is mainly feedback for the teacher about what to do next: “what do I need to do in response to what I’ve seen?”. Essentially, feedback is a misnomer and should be re-named ‘feedforward’. Feedback is part of Brine Leas’ wider assessment process, which aims to provide appropriate challenge to students, in order to foster excellent progress over time.

6.2 Removing Unnecessary Workload in Assessment and Feedback³

Given that students often make the same mistakes, or develop the same misconceptions, whole-class feedback is promoted as an efficient means to provide timely, effective feedback.

Whole-class feedback may also release time to spend with those students who would actually benefit from a one-to-one approach to feedback. Feedback is not synonymous with written marking and it is accepted that written comments will rarely be the most commonly used tool in the feedback toolkit.

6.3 The Practice of Feedback

Feedback to students may occur at several points during the learning cycle:

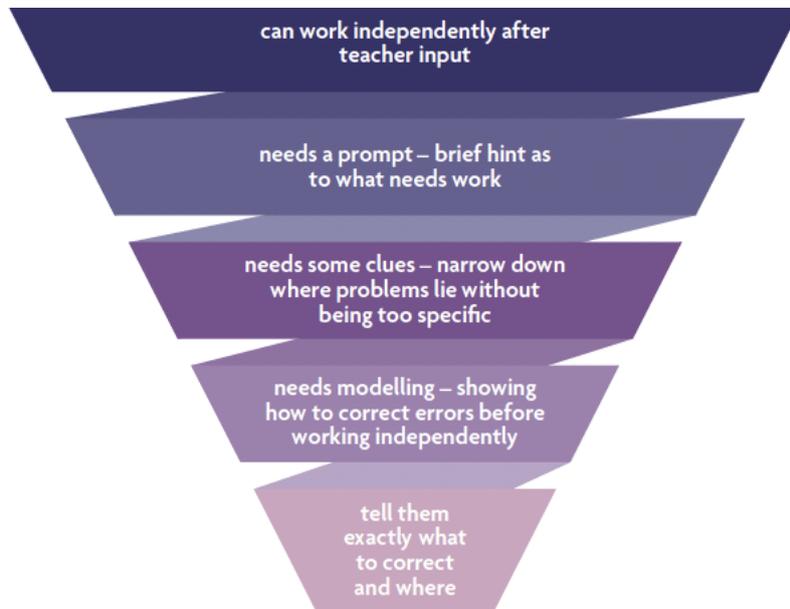
1. Immediate feedback: during a lesson, as taught.
2. Summary feedback: in the next lesson.
3. Next lesson feedforward: further teaching, to enable pupils to identify and improve areas identified by the teacher after a prior lesson
4. Summative feedback: tasks planned to provide teachers with evidence of students’ secure mastery

The above broad categories of feedback may be observable in a number of ways. Observers should recognise that feedback may not leave a convenient accountability trail for adult eyes.

Feedback will ultimately guide the student towards the end goal of independence. Thus, feedback can be seen as a continuum and as such is an effective means of adapting teaching to meet the needs of all learners. The diagram⁴ on the following page illustrates this:

³ The Department for Education’s (DfE) research into teacher workload has highlighted marking as being a key contributory factor to excessive workload. The DfE’s Expert Group and the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) recommends that effective feedback should be meaningful, manageable and motivating. A significant number of the Teachers’ Standards rely on teachers implementing and using effective assessment and feedback practices.

⁴ Clare Sealy, St Matthias School



6.4 Justifying assessment practice and using it to best effect

When planning and implementing a form of assessment, departments and individual teachers need to ask themselves the following questions in order to both justify the particular mode of assessment and its usefulness in helping students to progress:

1. What will this assessment tell me about students' knowledge and understanding of this topic, concept or skill?
2. How will I communicate the information I gain from this assessment to students most effectively to allow them to understand and act on what they need to do to improve?
3. How will I ensure students understand the purpose and outcome of this assessment and can apply it to their own learning?
4. How will I ensure my approach to this assessment is accessible/ appropriate for students of all abilities?
5. How will I use the information that I gain from this assessment to inform my planning for future lessons? How could I improve, adapt or target my teaching as a result?
6. What follow up action should I take to now secure gaps in knowledge and understanding, to dispel misconceptions or to support progression where learning is insecure?
7. Is it necessary to record the information gained from this assessment? If so, how can this be done most efficiently?

7. USING INFORMATION ON STUDENTS

At Brine Leas, outstanding relationships between staff and students are expected as this is integral to who we are as a community. Teachers endeavour to know the students in their care as individuals, and understand they are teaching the whole person. We teach the person first, and the subject second. Thus, we strive to support and challenge all students appropriately.

Each student is supported to reach their full potential; particular attention is given to monitoring all students in the 'groups' identified on the school's MIS (Bromcom): Able, Talented, SEND or disadvantaged students. Teachers are expected to know which monitoring groups the students in their classes belong to.

Teachers must consider provision for students in 'groups' as part of their lesson planning and also their classroom management, such as seating plans. Teachers should also be familiar with the information stored in the 'red flag' documents. This information is initially gathered as part of the transition process and will be updated during a student's time in school.

8. GDPR AND PLANNERS / MARKBOOKS

The school's preferred method of mark-book is electronic and this should be password protected. If using a paper-based mark-book, staff must ensure compliance with the mark-book guidelines:

- Information in mark-books should not allow another reader to gather personal details of children. Therefore, full names should not be used but first initial and surname is acceptable.
- Similarly, 'codes' to identify groups of students should be such that the group is not obvious to other readers. For example, 'John Smith - SEN' is not acceptable, but 'J. Smith ● ' is acceptable, providing that the key to the codes isn't easily located (ie. ● = SEN at the top of each markbook page is not acceptable).
- Finally, no documents should be kept inside planners / mark-books that contain personal details, such as student, staff or parent contact details.

9. HOMEWORK

Homework (secondary) ranks 4th out of the 35 teaching strategies evaluated by the EEF in their toolkit⁵. Homework serves a range of purposes, such as retrieval, revision, research or application. Homework also develops excellent study habits in students. In addition, the additional burden placed on the long-term memories of students by the new exam specifications, means that homework is essential to slow down the rate of forgetting. We do need students to be studying at home, but we also need them to be children. Our homework policy aims to strike that balance.

Homework at Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9)		
Core:	English, Maths, Science, Languages	2 per fortnight
Non-core:	History, Geography, RE	1 per fortnight
	Technology, Art, PE, Music, Drama, ICT	Homework set occasionally if needed

- Key Stages 4 & 5 (Years 10-13) will have homework set at least weekly, for examination subjects.

⁵ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit>

- Homework will be set with realistic timescales (homework should not normally be due in the following day).
- Homework will be uploaded on to My Child At School (via Bromcom), to facilitate parental support.
- Homework is likely to take more time to complete, as students progress through the school. There are no 'set' rules for how long homework should take.
- Holiday homework will not be set. It is possible that a homework may span a school holiday, but students must have enough school-day evenings before or after the holidays, to be able to complete it. It is likely that this will have to be relaxed as students approach external exams, and will realistically use their school holidays for independent revision which may be guided by the teacher.

Types of homework

- a. Home Learning Projects are set to years 7-9. These are set for one or two subjects per half-term and generally replace the 'standard' homework for the half-term. When exams are calendared, the project will be amended to allow revision as priority.
- b. Reading underpins learning in its entirety. Research such as "*Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of future success of a child*"⁶ and "*[Literacy] has a significant relationship with a person's happiness and success*"⁷ confirm the importance of reading. As such, reading is considered a valid homework.
- c. Learning as homework has benefits:
 - Students always know what they need to do; the homework doesn't change.
 - Parents know what to expect and can directly support their child, without needing subject specialism.
 - Students can't 'get stuck'. There are no new concepts (the keywords are initially just a memory task).
 - They need few resources.
 - Learning homework removes unnecessary workload for teachers.
 - All homework set is of the same high quality.
 - All homework feeds into important knowledge and skills they need for their journey through the curriculum.

If homework that is not submitted on time, teachers should ascertain the reason and issue a consequence if appropriate.

10. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

As a Teaching and Learning community, we have a collective responsibility to our students to ensure excellence at every level. Our Quality Assurance systems support our vision relating to the classroom experience of our students. The Performance Management Policy details the quality assurance systems and the support mechanisms available to teachers. This also allows for early intervention and early support for teaching staff to take place should a problem be identified.

⁶ OECD, 2002

⁷ NLT, 2008

11. EXPECTATIONS OF EXERCISE BOOKS / FOLDERS

Teachers should ensure that student exercise books or folders are of a standard which facilitates independent study / revision. As such, curriculum overviews, assessment criteria, marking codes (where relevant) and any other useful resources should be evident and referred to during teaching.

Books and folders should be well presented, free from doodles and include work which reflects students' best efforts. Work should be dated.

12. BRITISH VALUES

Our teachers should also promote British values through teaching and learning. The Department for Education recognises the following as British values:

- Democracy
- Individual liberty
- The rule of law
- Mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and for those without faith

Teachers are expected to be proactive in furthering students' understanding of British values through the content and delivery of the curriculum.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Performance Management policy
- Outstanding Learning Behaviour criteria
- Department for Education Teachers' Standards
- Feedback and Assessment plan for each curriculum area

POLICY REVIEW

If there are any questions on this policy, please email teachingandlearning@brineleas.co.uk. We welcome pedagogical dialogue.

This policy will be reviewed regularly in accordance with the school's standard policy review cycle.

Prepared/Written by: E Bentley	Date: November 2018
Approved by LGB Students' Sub-Committee: November 2018	Review Date: November 2020
Previous Version Prepared by: E Bentley	Date: January 2017

Ofsted's grade descriptors for the Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (outstanding)

- * Teachers demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They use questioning highly effectively and demonstrate understanding of the ways pupils think about subject content. They identify pupils' common misconceptions and act to ensure they are corrected.
- * Teachers plan lessons very effectively, making maximum use of lesson time and coordinating lesson resources well. They manage pupils' behaviour highly effectively with clear rules that are consistently enforced.
- * Teachers provide adequate time for practice to embed the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills securely. They introduce subject content progressively and constantly demand more of pupils. Teachers identify and support any pupil who is falling behind, and enable almost all to catch up.
- * Teachers check pupils' understanding systematically and effectively in lessons, offering clearly directed and timely support.
- * Teachers provide pupils with incisive feedback, in line with the school's assessment policy, about what pupils can do to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. The pupils use this feedback effectively.
- * Teachers set challenging homework, in line with the school's policy and as appropriate for the age and stage of pupils, that consolidates learning, deepens understanding and prepares pupils very well for work to come.
- * Teachers embed reading, writing and communication and, where appropriate, mathematics exceptionally well across the curriculum, equipping all pupils with the necessary skills to make progress. For younger children in particular, phonics teaching is highly effective in enabling them to tackle unfamiliar words.
- * Teachers are determined that pupils achieve well. They encourage pupils to try hard, recognise their efforts and ensure that pupils take pride in all aspects of their work. Teachers have consistently high expectations of all pupils' attitudes to learning.
- * Pupils love the challenge of learning and are resilient to failure. They are curious, interested learners who seek out and use new information to develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills. They thrive in lessons and also regularly take up opportunities to learn through extra-curricular activities.
- * Pupils are eager to know how to improve their learning. They capitalise on opportunities to use feedback, written or oral, to improve.
- * Parents are provided with clear and timely information on how well their child is progressing and how well their child is doing in relation to the standards expected. Parents are given guidance about how to support their child to improve.
- * Teachers are quick to challenge stereotypes and the use of derogatory language in lessons and around the school. Resources and teaching strategies reflect and value the diversity of pupils' experiences and provide pupils with a comprehensive understanding of people and communities beyond their immediate experience.