

Brine Leas School

An Academy

TEACHING & LEARNING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Teaching and Learning is the core focus of the school. Good teaching which promotes learning, progress and enjoyment is the key to raising standards. As such we aim to ensure that every student has access to a high quality education which will allow them to achieve their full learning potential. We recognise that to achieve this aim we must pay as much attention to professional learning as we do to the processes of student learning, as the two go hand in hand. Targets are set for both learning and teaching standards (performance management) and the two should be inter-related. It is vital that this is done within a framework of a sound and appropriate curriculum (see Curriculum policy). Pupils, also, have to be empowered with core learning skills

Assessment is the means of informing a teacher as to what has been learnt and to inform future, more effective teaching. Thus assessment, evaluation and target setting are all necessary for high and improving standards of teaching and learning.

TEACHING & LEARNING

- Students should be taught how to learn and how to reflect on their learning
- Learning objectives must be shared and reviewed
- Clear structured lessons promote learning
- Teachers must create and maintain a purposeful learning environment
- Achievement must be recognised and rewarded
- Underachievement must be challenged, not processed

LEARNING & TEACHING

Learning & teaching are interactive. We seek to develop a school culture in which teachers are also inquisitive learners, constantly evaluating and developing their professional practice and being fully supported to do so. It is only right that teachers echo the aspirations that we have for all of our students.

Teaching

Teachers should strive to deliver consistently 'good' and 'outstanding' lessons by:

- Continuously refreshing subject knowledge, understanding the courses they are delivering and using current teaching and learning initiatives so that their expertise can be shared confidently with students in order to enthuse them, challenge and secure their progress.
- Ensuring that they use prior attainment and other data to be aware of the capabilities and specific learning needs of all students in their classes so that they plan lessons, differentiate activities and deploy support appropriately so that all students can access
- The curriculum, make good progress and be challenged regardless of their ability.

- Planning structured and well-paced lessons which employ a wide variety of interesting and imaginary activities and resources, including the use of new technology where appropriate, in order to sustain student engagement, concentration, motivation and application.
- Setting clear and appropriately challenging learning objectives. Using the triple impact marking policy (TAP).
- Effectively checking students' understanding using a wide variety of formative assessment techniques, anticipating where they may need to intervene and doing so with a striking and significant impact on the quality of learning. Underachievement must be challenged.
- Facilitating students to take responsibility for their own learning, providing opportunities for them to work both independently and collaboratively with peers.
- Establishing a positive and productive climate for learning in which the students demonstrate good attitudes to their work and have mutual respect for both teachers and peers alike.
- There should be regular communication between teachers and TAs about how teaching can be structured to support students. TAs will often have in depth knowledge of the student being supported.
- Managing incidents of indiscipline calmly, consistently applying BLS Positive Schooling. Code of Behaviour using sanctions and rewards where appropriate, providing praise and positive reinforcement to foster self-esteem, motivation and confidence.
- Providing learners with regular detailed feedback, both orally and through marking, so that they know how well they have done and are aware of what they need to do next to sustain good progress.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We aim to support colleagues to achieve these aims by:

- Providing quality school-based training focusing annually on a specific aspect of teaching and learning but at the same time ensuring that personalised professional development pathways are also available in order to enable all staff to successfully complete their appraisal targets.
- Organising opportunities for colleagues to work collaboratively to share good practice, both within our own school and where appropriate with staff in other local schools (CHG).
- Allowing colleagues to attend external training which is specifically linked to their appraisal targets or Subject Improvement Priorities.
- Encouraging colleagues to utilise peer observation or video technology to evaluate the teaching and learning in their classroom.
- Providing coaching and mentoring where appropriate.
- Encouraging the teaching & learning group to keep abreast of current teaching and learning initiatives and cutting edge research; trial new ideas in the classroom, evaluate their impact and disseminate their findings to colleagues.
- Working with CHG 'chain' partner schools in order to share good practice and CPD programmes .

QUALITY ASSURANCE

BLS has devised a robust monitoring schedule:

- Subject Team Leaders meet regularly.
- Subject Team Leaders conduct a paired lesson observation with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to assure consistency and accuracy of judgement.

- Teachers and Teaching Assistants will be formally observed at least once per year.
- Other 'drop ins' will be conducted by other senior staff as part of the quality assurance system.
- All teachers will have the opportunity to observe another colleague as part of the triad initiative.
- Lesson observations will be audited and targeted support will be given to recommend specific colleagues / departments for.
- Subject Team Leaders are encouraged to include the department in the quality assurance process.
- Subject areas will conduct a work scrutiny analysis regularly at least once per term.
- Surveys will be conducted with Student Voice regularly.
- External reviews of all subjects areas are regularly commissioned.
- Data from assessments (both internal and external), work scrutiny will inform where intervention is required.

In order to ensure high quality teaching and learning the Senior Leadership Team and Subject Team Leaders aim to work in collaboration to constantly review our provision and practice so that we are able to assure the highest quality of standards and to drive forward improvement.

LEARNING

It must be made explicit to students what they need to do to be successful in their learning. This could include:

- discussions with students about their learning
- explanation (by teacher, between students, by students to whole group)
- scaffolding (writing frames, sentence starters)
- modelling (sharing students' work, working through examples, guided writing and sharing planning, demonstrations)
- developing effective study skills (e.g. revision techniques, recording notes, summarising)

Learning objectives must be shared and reviewed

If students are to take responsibility for their own learning, they need to know what they are expected to learn and how they can achieve it. Teachers must make the learning objectives explicit to all students.

THE STRUCTURE OF LESSONS

Clearly structured lessons promote learning

There is no single best method of teaching and learning in a lesson. However, we would expect that:-

- i. Lessons must have a clear start.
- ii. The setting of homework should normally take place in the first part of the lesson. Setting homework at the end of the lesson discriminates against students with learning difficulties. (Homework is also accessible online for the information of students and parents)
- iii. Lessons must have a clear finish which will include a review of learning objectives (see above) but may, also, include quick fire questioning to correct misapprehensions and a preview of the next lesson.

- iv. Lessons should have pace and be such that students will look forward to them and engage positively.

Activities should be varied, purposeful and appropriate to meet the needs of all students. Students learn in different ways. Recognising this and planning for it provides stimulus and is inclusive:-

- i. A range of teacher lead and student centred activities should be used.
- ii. Teachers must use a range of teaching strategies to take account the learning needs of all students
- iii. Students must have the opportunity to work in a variety of ways, such as individually, in pairs, small groups, whole class situations.
- iv. Differentiation should be used appropriately

UNDERACHIEVEMENT MUST BE CHALLENGED

All students are capable of achievement and underachievement. Identifying and challenging underachievement is the responsibility of all teachers. The aim of a teacher is to initiate change, not to process underachievement. High expectations are not enough on their own; action is needed to ensure they are met.

i. Identification

- Teachers must familiarise themselves with relevant data as it becomes available and use this to inform expectations and monitor progress
- Relevant data must be shared with students
- Teachers must address barriers to learning which may prevent students from achieving, such as disruptive, passive behaviour or lack of confidence
- Teachers must be aware of other issues that may be affecting students, such as SEN and EAL
- Teachers must be aware of SEN, EAL, PP, GT needs as well as any social and emotional influences that may affect learning
- Regular department discussions must focus on promoting achievement and result in actions that challenge underachievement.

ii. Challenge

Subject teachers must:

- talk to students about their learning in order to establish reasons for any underachievement.
- use appropriate sanctions when work or behaviour fails to meet an acceptable standard
- monitor and track the progress of individuals and groups of students against relevant data and intervene.
- Teachers must ensure a purposeful learning environment
- Employ teaching assistants and additional teaching support appropriately to target children's needs.

The way in which teachers manage the classroom will have a significant effect on students' learning. Students learn and progress in a structured and stimulating environment.

- Punctuality is essential for staff and students
- Students must enter and leave the classroom in an orderly way at the instruction of the teacher

- Teachers must dismiss students in time for their next lesson
- The seating of students is important and must be at the direction of the teacher. Strategic seating can challenge underachievement and promote learning. Teachers must have a seating plan for every class. (Brine Leas School promotes a gender seating policy)
- Lessons must last the full duration and students must not be dismissed early
- Teachers must ensure that classrooms are left clean and tidy. If furniture is moved, it should be returned to its original position. Graffiti and other damage must be reported immediately and the appropriate sanctions used
- Teachers are responsible for managing stimulating displays which should be changed regularly

Heads of Department must:

- Ensure Schemes of Work and assessment tasks are appropriate, rigorous and sufficiently challenging. The implementation of Schemes of Work must be monitored. Schemes of Work and assessment tasks must be reviewed and amended as appropriate. Schemes of Work should be detailed in order to provide suggested lesson plans to ensure equal access to the curriculum for all students
- Regularly lead the department in levelling work against age/ability related expectations
- Monitor and track the progress of individuals and groups of students against relevant data including national data.
- Use appropriate actions to support students and staff in challenging underachievement
- Ensure that teaching assistants and additional teaching support is appropriately targeted at children's needs.

THE INDEPENDENT LEARNER

Although we value both independent and co-operative learning, pupils must become independent learners if we are to achieve one of our major aims. Research suggests that children become independent learners and learn more effectively when they:-

- Develop self-discipline and thereby are able to make choices and decisions.
- Develop confidence in all areas of curriculum.
- Ask and answer questions, giving precise instructions, information, and giving and receiving clear or simple explanations, developing reasoning skills, and making predictions.
- Are willing to accept challenges and to try new things.
- Select and use equipment and other resources appropriately, confidently and responsibly.
- Present ideas, experiences, and understanding in the form of displays, publications or newsletters - these are excellent ways to aid parental liaison.
- Read and write ideas for different observers, e.g. parents, friends, teachers and other adults.
- Use different types of media to present information, e.g. written work, word processing, DTP, and pictorial work.
- Evaluate information from a variety of books, CD ROMs, etc., in order to learn how information can be organised and presented. This then encourages pupils to produce better quality work on their own, or when working with other pupils.
- Evaluate and reviewing a piece of work in discussion with other children and the teacher.
- Justify their opinions with reasoned arguments.

It is the responsibility of subject teachers to help students to become independent learners. Students should be encouraged to find information out, and solve problems for themselves. Students should be empowered with the skills to become independent learners.

ASSESSMENT

- Assessment should be formative and used to inform learning
- 'Assessment for Learning' strategies should be used for all students
- Homework must be planned, clear and meaningful

Effective assessment and marking of work are fundamental to successful learning and teaching. All assessment information should be used formatively.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Formative comment should:

- Highlight achievement.
- Be diagnostic.
- Indicate how improvement can be achieved usually consisting of one or two targets.
- Be personal by using the student's first name.
- Encourage and support the student in a constructive way.

BLS recognises the importance of different forms of feedback to promote learning. At BLS each Head of Department has identified key pieces of work which should be marked according to our TAP marking policy and it has always been our policy to use all of the following methods of marking:

Acknowledgement Marking (flick and tick).....this checks that work is completed and obvious mistakes are corrected.

Quality Marking (Triple Impact Marking) TAP. This is used on key pieces of work and it acknowledges that awarding grades/ levels alone does not raise standards.

Peer Marking and Self Assessment: this informs the student of the learning progress (formative).

Verbal feedback: this is used more in some subjects than others e.g. D and T because of the nature of the subject

Cross Year Assessment Tasks

- i. There must be a minimum of one cross year assessment task per term in every subject area and could be:
 - an extended piece of written work
 - an investigation/project
 - a practical task
 - an oral or aural activity
 - a mid topic test
 - an end of unit test
 - end of Key Stage test
 - the end of year examination

- ii. The results of these tasks should be recorded.

Cross Year Assessment – Achievement Grades

- i. At KS3 it is the responsibility of individual departments to ensure that the full range of levels is used for every cross year assessment task.
- ii. At KS4 grades should be awarded according to examination board criteria
- iii. Each department must have a clear rationale regarding the awarding of grades within each subject area across the entire year group
- iv. These grades should be collated and recorded centrally following any necessary departmental moderation

Assessment of Class work and Homework

- i. It is essential that staff record grades for all assessments, class work and homework in their mark books as this will allow individual progress to be monitored, but it is not always necessary to share this information with the students
- ii. With past examination questions/papers, grades/levels can be given, even if the task is not a cross year assessment task. The relevant assessment criteria and grade/level boundaries should be used when assessing these tasks.
- iii. When the teacher is marking work, class work and homework will be marked and returned promptly. The depth of marking should relate to the nature of the task sets.

PRESENTATION

Teachers must ensure that work is presented to the highest possible standard at all times, excluding rough and draft work. (See presentation policy)

- i. Teachers must not allow students to deface books, folders and planners.
- ii. Students should be encouraged to draft work and make their final presentation as neat as possible.
- iii. All written work should have titles underlined, a date and an indication whether work is class or homework (see presentation policy).

HOMEWORK

Learning takes place inside and outside the classroom. To support students, homework must be planned, meaningful, clear and set regularly. Homework at Brine Leas School is available online (VLE) and/or written in planners for the convenience of students and parents.

- i. Homework must be set according to the homework timetable. This enables students to plan their time effectively. Teachers must emphasise this when referring to homework online.
- ii. A variety of homework tasks can be set, such as:
 - questions
 - research
 - thinking
 - reading
 - extended writing
 - past papers
 - notes
 - learning/revision
- iii. Homework tasks must be planned.
- iv. Students must be clear about the purpose of the homework and how it will be assessed.
- v. Students must be given clear written instructions of the homework task, deadline and how to complete the work.

INCLUSION

- Every teacher has a responsibility to meet the educational needs of **all** students
- SEN/EAL etc information must be recorded and used by teachers to inform learning and teaching
- Every teacher is responsible for promoting Literacy, Numeracy and ICT.

Every student at Brine Leas School has a right to receive the highest quality education. It is our responsibility to ensure that their educational needs are met. Ensuring inclusion involves setting suitable differentiated learning challenges, responding to students' diverse learning needs and working to overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment. Different groups of students have specific needs which the school supports in a number of ways:

SEN

The SEN department will support staff in meeting the needs of students. This will include providing information, guidance on appropriate teaching strategies and the adaptation and provision of teaching resources. There should be regular communication between teachers and TAs about how teaching can be structured to support students. TAs will often have in depth knowledge of the student being supported.

GIFTED AND TALENTED

Each department is responsible for ensuring the needs of Gifted and Talented students are met. At Brine Leas School an Assistant Headteacher ensures that provisions for Gifted and Talented students are in place for Gifted and Talented students.

ICT, LITERACY AND NUMERACY

ICT, Literacy and Numeracy skills underpin learning across the curriculum. These must be addressed in all groups, in all subject areas.

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