

# **ANNEXE TO TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY: PRACTICE at PLYMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

## **When can learning happen?**

**Learning is a lifelong experience. Learning can occur any place and any time: school, home and the community, and new technologies expand the potential further. Learning within school takes place within three contexts:**

- **Lessons** – delivery of a programmed scheme of learning to enable students to meet their learning goals.
- **Routines** – regular routines in school eg assembly, registration, break time, moving around the school, access to the library, homework, and many others.
- **Events** – House festivals, performances, sporting occasions, field studies, work experience etc. They are most effective when students have the opportunity both to learn curriculum content and develop qualities and personal characteristics.

For education to move forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century all learning must be valued. We are working towards creating a new relationship between what happens in formal education and what happens in the home, the workplace, and the community thereby breaking down the artificial barrier between learning at school and elsewhere. School acts as the facilitator to help students access learning in a range of contexts.

## **Learning to Learn**

**No longer taught as a discrete lesson, but through discussion about their learning teachers must make explicit to students what they need to do to be successful. This can be achieved in a variety of ways:**

- make reference to our 4Rs – resilience, resourcefulness, responsibility, reflectiveness and provide opportunity for students to explore these skills
- explanation (by teacher, between students, by students to whole group)
- scaffolding (writing frames, sentence starters, structures for answers)
- modelling (sharing students' work, working through examples, guided writing and sharing planning, demonstrations)
- developing effective study skills (e.g. revision techniques, recording notes, mind maps, bubble maps, circle maps, summarising) tailored to specific subjects and continually reinforced across subjects
- developing thinking skills
- positive attitudes ('Wellbeing' is a Strategic Aim in SIP 14-15)

## **Planning of lessons**

The purpose of teaching and learning is to enable the students to progress and improve. It is essential that all lessons should be carefully planned in advance with a clear focus on progression both within one lesson and over a series of lessons. This is best achieved when:

- objectives and activities are devised to facilitate the clear development of knowledge and skills for all students.
- the needs of all pupils are planned for
- planning includes ways to assess progress both within one lesson and across a series of lessons.

## **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. This is a two-step approach – students are told not only the purpose of the learning (the objectives) but also what the teacher expects in terms of outcomes from the tasks.**

- i. Teachers must make the learning **objectives** (usually based on the skill or knowledge to be developed) and the expected **outcomes** (the task set to develop the skill) explicit to all students and explain them. This will usually happen at the beginning of the lesson but could happen at other stages in the lesson. This can be achieved in a variety of ways:
  - written / projected onto the board and orally
  - written by students in their books
  - printed on handouts
- ii. These objectives and the learning outcomes must be revisited at some point in the lesson: either at the end of episodes, or at the end of the lesson, and over a module of work. This can be achieved in a variety of ways:
  - students review their learning against the lesson objectives
  - teacher questions
  - students record two key points (individually or in pairs)
  - teacher recaps
  - examples of sundry plenary activities are available in book form in the staff room and electronically in the Teaching and Learning folder in the Staff Shared area.

## **The structure of lessons**

**Clearly structured lessons which promote learning can be achieved in a variety of ways:**

- Starters:
  - ✓ Lessons must have a clear start;
  - ✓ Lessons could begin with whole-class interactive involvement.
  - ✓ Starters accommodate a range of ability levels.
  - ✓ The style of starter activity is varied to “engage, enthuse and motivate”. However by

- ✓ KS5 students prefer the same routine and review of past learning.
  - ✓ There is a distinction between the starter and the introduction (sharing of objectives and outcomes).
  - ✓ Revisit learning from the previous lesson.
- Homework:
  - ✓ Homework should be set at an appropriate time during the lesson but sufficient time must be left before the bell ending the lesson.
- Episodes:
  - ✓ Lessons may be divided into clear 'episodes', each with a clear outcome.
  - ✓ The choice of pedagogic approach (teaching model) depends on the nature of the learning objective.
  - ✓ Teaching models: e.g. direct, inductive and enquiry are understood and employed appropriately.
  - ✓ Within each pedagogic approach teachers draw on a range of strategies to maximise learning e.g. direct interactive teaching approach, modelling, questioning, explaining.
  - ✓ To embed or assess learning teachers select from a wide range of techniques e.g. card sorts, concept mapping, group work.
  - ✓ Episodes are sequenced to make logical sense and enable students to sustain concentration.
  - ✓ Episodes can also be used to continuously assess the progress of all students and may mean the teacher has to adapt the lesson in response to the students' understanding
- Plenaries:
  - ✓ Lessons must have a clear ending 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.
  - ✓ Plenaries are a consistent part of classroom practice.
  - ✓ Mini plenaries may be used during the lesson to review learning and progress within an episode.
  - ✓ Sufficient time must be allowed for the plenary to take place and students must be involved fully in the plenary.

### **Activities are 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.** A range of teacher- led and student-centred activities must be used.

- i. Students have opportunities to teach others what they have learnt to reinforce their own learning.
- ii. Teachers use a range of teaching strategies to take account of learning needs of all students. Teachers are aware of, plan for and use activities that link with, for example, Gardiner's multiple intelligences, preferred learning styles, VAK, emotional intelligence, brain-based learning, Accelerated Learning Cycle. (Information on these can be found on the Staff Shared area).
- iii. Students have opportunities to work in a variety of ways, such as individually, in pairs, small groups, whole class situations.
- iv. Students are provided with challenge for example through appropriate tasks and teaching techniques for age and ability, pace, questioning strategies, practical problem solving activities, accelerated learning.

- v. Differentiation is essential if all students are to access learning. This can be achieved in a variety of ways:
- differentiation by outcome
  - differentiation by task
  - developing and adapting resources to both support and extend students taking into account all students' needs
  - the use of student groupings within and across classes (setting and banding etc)
  - the use of Lead Learners

### **Achievement must be recognised, rewarded and celebrated**

**Praise and rewards need to be consistent and kept up through the year and across Year groups.** Student achievement can be celebrated in a number of ways:

- verbal praise
- using the school reward system tailored to the age of the students
- using a department's reward system
- letters of commendation to parents/carers
- displaying students' work (on display boards, on plasma screens)

### **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 enable a student to make progress, not to process underachievement. High expectations are not enough on their own: action is needed to ensure they are met.** The following expectations ensure this is achieved:

- i. Identification
- teachers familiarise themselves with relevant data as it becomes available (for example, FFT, small group data, minimum/target grades etc) and use this to inform expectations and monitor progress
  - students feel able to talk about underachievement (without being made to feel they are at fault) and helped with strategies
  - teachers address barriers to learning which may prevent students from achieving, such as disruptive, passive behaviour or lack of confidence
  - teachers are aware of other issues that may be affecting learning, such as SEN and EAL
  - teachers are aware of small groups needs as well as any social and emotional influences that may affect learning.
  - Teachers should keep a record of their actions/interventions to contribute to progress tracking (TAC) meetings which they should attend if possible

ii. Challenge

**Subject teachers:**

- share and discuss relevant data with students and their Head of Department
- talk to students about their learning in order to establish reasons for any underachievement, set targets (usually negotiated), review targets and recognise progress.
- use appropriate sanctions when work or behaviour fails to meet an acceptable standard (see Behaviour Management procedures)

**Heads of Department:**

- lead regular department discussions to focus on promoting achievement which results in actions that challenge underachievement
- ensure schemes of learning and assessment tasks are appropriate, rigorous and sufficiently challenging, monitor the implementation of schemes of learning and review and amend schemes of learning and assessment tasks as appropriate
- regularly lead the department in assessing work against age related expectations
- monitor and track the progress of individuals and groups of students against relevant data. Heads of Department must liaise with Key Stage Co-ordinators and line managers
- use appropriate actions/interventions to support students and staff in challenging underachievement

**Teachers must ensure a purposeful learning environment**

**Students learn and progress in a structured and stimulating environment. Teachers are responsible for managing the climate for learning taking into account the needs of different subjects and Key Stages.** The following are essential in managing the learning environment appropriately:

- teachers are responsible for managing the learning environment appropriately considering such things as safety, stimulating displays changed regularly, posters with tips for improvement, lighting and music.
- punctuality which is essential for staff and students.
- students enter and leave the classroom in an orderly way (single file and quietly) at the instruction of a member of staff. There will be occasions when students are trusted to enter a room without the teacher dependent on e.g. the type of room, age of students.
- teachers maintain a positive attitude with the students and when possible meeting and greeting them at the door.
- students prepare for learning by bringing to the lesson relevant equipment, pencil case, Planner, Exercise books, homework which they get out ready at the start of a lesson.

- students make sure bags and coats are placed out of the way.
- the register taken as soon as possible. However taking the register should not get in the way of learning starting promptly. The register should be left until the activity is underway or students are given a task while the register is taken.
- the seating of students is important and at the direction of the teacher. Strategic seating can challenge underachievement and promote learning.
- teachers end the lesson positively and giving praise / rewards for good work through the lesson.
- lessons last the full duration and students must not be dismissed early
- teachers dismiss students in time for their next lesson
- teachers ensure that classrooms are left clean and tidy. If furniture is moved, it should be returned to its original position. Should any graffiti and other damage occur it must be reported immediately and the appropriate sanctions used.

## **Homework**

**Learning takes place inside and outside the classroom. To support students, homework must be planned, meaningful, clear, and set regularly.**

- i. Homework must be set according to the homework timetable. This enables students to plan their time effectively. (Homework timetables are issued to all students at the beginning of the year and are printed in the Year Book)
- ii. A variety of homework tasks can be set, such as:
  - questions
  - research
  - reading
  - extended writing
  - past papers
  - notes
  - learning/revision

- iii. **All homework must be acknowledged.** This can be done in a variety of ways, such as:
- marked by the teacher
  - peer / self-assessment
  - orally
  - by testing
- iv. Homework tasks must be planned, explained by the teacher and be appropriate to the learning experience.
- v. Students must be clear about the purpose of the homework and how it will be assessed.
- vi. Students must be given clear instructions of the homework task, deadline and how to complete the work, with homework recorded in the Student Planner.
- vii. It is the responsibility of the teacher and teaching assistants to check that students record their homework in the Student Planner
- viii. Student Planners are monitored regularly by Tutors and Key Stage Co-ordinators to ensure that homework is recorded.
- ix. Senior Leadership Team, Key Stage Co-ordinators, Heads of Department monitor standards of homework, setting of homework and marking of homework
- x. Parents/carers have a part to play in homework. School relies on their support in making sure students complete their homework. It is their responsibility to check and sign the Student Planner. Parents can help by encouraging students to bring home library books and read widely, to watch worthwhile programmes on television and, where possible, by providing activities, visits, talk and other opportunities to stimulate their children's interests.
- xi. For students failing to complete homework, sanctions as stated in the School Discipline Policy are applied.
- xii. Teachers have a responsibility to take care of work when it is handed in to them and to demonstrate that the work is important.

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

- The quality of teaching is the major factor that makes a difference to students' achievements.
- The monitoring and review process is the mechanism by which the school identifies the strengths and weaknesses that set the agenda for improvement. In this respect all teachers are leaders of learning and are vital in setting that agenda.
- It is an expectation that every teacher:
  - examines and reflects on their own practice against agreed criteria;
  - is able to monitor and reflect effectively with other colleagues through the process which includes classroom observation.
- The following are the set of practices which we use collaboratively to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning:

- Jointly review achievement data to analyse trends and make comparisons in order to set appropriate targets:
  - RaiseOnline
  - LEA data
  - Fischer Family Trust data
  - Isynoptic date – Grammar School Comparison
- Track individuals by gender, ability, prior attainment, subject, Key stage, SEN, EAL, GAT
- Observe lessons and evaluate against set criteria
- Work sample and review quality of marking against assessment criteria
- Analyse schemes of learning / planning for the quality and range of curriculum delivery
- Interview and survey students with reference to their learning experiences and their attitudes to learning
- Discuss with and / or survey teachers, parents and governors.

## Professional Development (PD)

**Plymouth High School is a learning organisation and it is expected that everybody is engaged in the understanding and development of effective practice. By talking continuously and precisely about their teaching practice they build up a shared language adequate to the complexity of teaching. Staff at Plymouth High School recognise it is a school:**

- where members of staff are able and willing to scrutinise their practice, make this practice available to others and where everybody tries to improve against their previous best.
- where members of staff plan, design, evaluate and prepare teaching materials together.
- which is developing a collaborative teaching culture where it is the right of every teacher to observe teaching and be observed, (a collaborative activity distinct from the appraisal process), so that teachers teach each other and reflect on practice together.
- which supports this developmental work through providing opportunities to staff such as:
  - ✓ Coaching and mentoring
  - ✓ External training courses
  - ✓ Internal training sessions
  - ✓ Support to take further qualifications e.g. PGCert, Masters degree.
  - ✓ Action research projects

**School policies** that link to the Learning and Teaching Policy should be referred to for details on:

- ✓ Marking and Assessment;
- ✓ Inclusion;
- ✓ Curriculum;
- ✓ Learning to Learn

- ✓ Special Educational Needs;
- ✓ Gifted and Talented Students
- ✓ Literacy;
- ✓ Numeracy;
- ✓ Information and Communications Technology;
- ✓ Information Literacy Skills
- ✓ Discipline;
- ✓ Reporting to Parents.

Revised T&L team  
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