



QUINTON HOUSE SCHOOL

Teaching and Learning Policy

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Teaching and Learning Policy - Introduction

This Teaching and Learning policy lays the foundations for the whole curriculum, both formal and informal and, along with our Behaviour Policy, forms the context in which all other policy statements should be read. It is written for the benefit of all members of the school community to ensure that all are aware of the fundamental principles underpinning our work.

Quinton House School expects pupils to have:

- A commitment to their own learning.
- A commitment to working alone, in pairs and in larger groups.
- A courteous and co-operative conduct towards others.
- A respect for all forms of resources.
- A willingness to seek and accept guidance or help.

Aims

- To provide a personalised learning experience for every pupil that takes full account of their individual needs, interests and aspirations.
- To focus upon continual raising standards of teaching and learning in the school to inspire and motivate pupils and staff.
- To improve levels of achievement and attainment as a consequence.
- To identify and share good practice in learning and teaching across all curriculum areas.
- To develop our range of learning and teaching styles to create an exciting and creative learning culture.
- To enable pupils to be independent and confident learners.
- To achieve stronger partnerships with parents and other stakeholders.
- To make links with the learning that pupils do outside the classroom.
- To provide guidelines for teaching and learning and establish clear criteria for best practice and consistency.

Principles

1. Building upon prior learning is an essential principle. Our curriculum and practice will reflect pupils' primary school experience.
2. Teachers should have available baseline data (available on the shared area), GCSE grades, Exceptional Potential (EP), target levels and grades, as well as any relevant SEN information, so that expectations made on pupils are challenging and appropriate.

3. All teaching will take place in the context of a high quality, differentiated scheme of work, linked to an assessment schedule and recognising the variety of learning styles. Curriculum teams will work collaboratively and with the aim to continuously improve planning.
4. Planning will also reflect the details outlined in the document: Teaching and planning checklist, located in the teaching and learning folder on the academic shared area.
5. Reinforcement of learning is an essential component of planning. We recognise that one 'bite' may not be enough.
6. We recognise that modelling is an essential part of teachers' pedagogy, but also that teachers and classroom assistants are themselves models of clear communication, respectful behaviour and the values of the school. Most importantly, teachers are models as learners themselves.
7. Excellent teaching achieves a synthesis of a number of skills and begins to breakdown rather arbitrary boundaries between subjects. We recognise that every lesson involves the literacy development of pupils; also of ICT and numeracy. Planning and delivery will also cultivate thinking skills. We are working towards personalised learning programmes built upon the skills and interests of the individual; we recognise the role that differentiation plays in this.
8. As educators we place value upon the presentation of work and believe that pupils should take pride in this.
9. We recognise the crucial importance of emotional intelligence in the classroom and of positive relationships between teachers and pupils.
10. The role of homework is to reinforce or extend the learning of the lesson; it sometimes prepares for the next lesson.
11. We value opportunities for pupils to speculate, investigate and make mistakes. This may involve risk-taking in teaching to provide varied and unusual experiences for pupils.
12. We place great emphasis upon partnerships in the classroom between teachers and those who support them, such as LSAs. Effective communication is a prerequisite in the partnership.

Expectations

All teachers must:

1. Plan lessons to take account of the different learning needs of the pupils, using prior attainment data and assessment for learning information.
2. Display the intended learning intentions as a WALT throughout the lesson, communicate them clearly to the class in language that they understand and refer to them as the lesson progresses to develop understanding and reinforce learning.
3. Differentiate the intended learning intentions where appropriate using the framework, 'By the end of the lesson all must, most should and some could'.
4. Ensure that the learning intentions are not tasks but outline what the pupils are expected to learn in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding.

5. Mark work regularly (in detail every 4 lessons) with constructive comments that tell the pupils what they need to do to improve their work and reach their targets. Pupils should also be given regular opportunities to respond to this feedback.
6. Aim to involve the pupils actively in their learning through using intelligent questioning techniques and a range of ways of working.
7. Differentiate activities to meet the different abilities of the class, drawing on the full range of available methods.
8. Keep whole class, teacher directed learning to a minimum and rarely ask pupils to undertake mundane tasks such as copying or dictation.
9. Use the plenary to encourage the pupils to reflect on their learning. Crucially, the plenary should also enable the teacher to assess how the pupils have progressed during the lesson, to inform their planning.

Guidelines: Assessment for learning (AFL)

Teaching and Learning at Quinton House School is based on the principles of Assessment for Learning, with the aim of ensuring that pupils are actively involved in their learning.

Therefore, teachers will plan and deliver lessons around the key elements of AFL:

1- Intension-led lessons

- Share learning intensions with pupils in the form of intended learning intentions, in a language that pupils can understand.
- Use these intended learning intentions as the basis for questioning during the lesson.
- Evaluate feedback from pupils in relation to achievement of the intended learning intentions to inform the next stages of planning.
- Use plenaries to show learners what they have learnt and what the next steps will be.

2- Oral and Written feedback

- Value oral as well as written feedback.
- Ensure feedback is clear, positive and constructive. Identify what the pupil has done well, what needs to be done to improve and how to do it.
- Ensure that the pupils know their target and understand what they need to do to achieve it.

3- Peer and self-assessment

- Identify within the scheme of work suitable places where peer and self-assessment will be used formally.
- Give pupils clear opportunities to talk about what they have learned and what they found difficult, using the intended learning outcomes as a focus.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to discuss together how to improve.
- Ask pupils to explain how they arrived at their answer.
- Provide reflection time for pupils.
- Involve pupils in identifying the next steps in their learning.

4- Questioning and Dialogue

- Use questioning techniques that promote higher order thinking skills.
- Provide a secure environment where pupils feel confident enough to try out an answer.
- Identify small steps to enable pupils to see their progress, thus building confidence and self-esteem.
- Encourage pupils to explain their thinking and reasoning.

Guidelines: Assessment of learning

Summative assessment involves making judgements about the overall learning that has taken place and it is best when it is an integral part of the learning process. Schemes of work will identify the opportunities for Summative Assessment, so that this is consistent within each curriculum team and is an aid to standardisation. Assessment of learning will also take account of the following key aspects:

1- Target setting

- Share with pupils their grades/levels and set realistic targets.
- Give pupils regular feedback on where they are with their targets.
- Use pupil friendly language when setting levels and targets.

2- Providing Exemplification

- Give pupils clear success criteria then relate them to the intended learning intentions.
- Use “next steps” comment marking to identify for pupils what they need to do to improve.

- Have examples of work at each level/grade to clarify the criteria and show pupils what they need to do.
- Ensure there are clear expectations about the presentation of work.
- Provide displays of pupils' work, which shows the various stages of development through to the finished product.

3- Formative use of summative assessment

- Use prior achievement to plan for the different needs of pupils.
- Select appropriate summative tasks to provide quality assessment information.
- Provide time for pupils to reflect upon what they have learned and understood and to identify where they still have difficulties.
- Adjust planning, evaluate effectiveness of tasks as a result of assessment.

Guidelines: Marking

The marking of pupils' work is essential in motivating them and helping them to make progress. A variety of marking methods will be used to do this including self and peer marking.

All teachers will mark work in detail every 4 lessons with constructive comments that identify the strengths and weaknesses and tell the pupils what they need to do to improve their work and reach their targets. Pupils preparing for examinations will require more regular feedback giving more detailed guidance on how to improve their work.

(For further details consult the Assessment policy)

Guidelines: Planning lessons

Schemes of Work will outline the learning intentions for units of work and individual teachers will plan their lessons from the scheme of work. Learning intentions should refer to knowledge, skills and understanding. What we do as teachers makes a big difference to the quality of learning. We must continually reflect on teaching and the impact it has on pupils' learning and progress. All teachers must reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and plan their professional development needs accordingly. The following documents will support planning and should be used alongside other planning tools:

- Teaching and planning checklist
- The Quinton House School lesson plan
- The Quinton House School observation form

Characteristics of a successful lesson

Features that are evident in a successful lesson include:

1. A Purposeful start

- The lesson begins promptly.
- The teacher greets pupils at the door.
- A pre-starter activity is ready for pupils to engage with whilst waiting for other pupils to arrive.
- Use of a seating plan where appropriate.

2. Shared Learning intentions

- The expected learning is broken down into the 3 focus areas of knowledge, understanding and skills.
- The intentions are shared in language the pupils understand.
- The intentions are expressed as differentiated Intended learning intentions that make the expected learning clear for pupils of different abilities using the framework: 'By the end of this lesson:

All must...

Most should...

Some could...

3. Engaging and Appropriate Learning Activities

- The teacher knows his/her subject well and communicates an enthusiasm for the subject.
- The lesson is well planned so that the activities link clearly to the learning intentions.
- Where appropriate the lesson begins with a starter activity that engages pupils' interest and/or links with prior learning.
- Activities are designed to include an element of choice where appropriate.
- Activities give opportunities for pupils to 'lead learning'.
- Mini-plenaries are used during the lesson to maintain a focus on achieving the intended learning outcomes.
- The pupils use well chosen, stimulating resources and judicious use is made of worksheets.
- Teacher talk to the whole class is appropriate and generates progress.

- ICT is used as a learning tool and not just for presentation purposes.
- Additional class support is well used.

4. Pace, Variety and Challenge

- Activities are timed to ensure that the lesson has pace, whilst ensuring that pupils finish tasks.
- Activities include a good mix of individual, pair, small group and whole class work.
- The lesson is differentiated to provide work that is appropriately challenging for pupils of all abilities; where appropriate, differentiation is by task and/or resource and not just by outcome.
- IEP targets are taken into account for individual pupils.
- The Lesson is planned to include a variety of learning styles that take into account VAK; Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic learners.

5. Assessment for Learning Techniques embedded into practice

- The success criteria are clearly explained and exemplar work is used to reinforce them – where appropriate this is linked to national criteria or examination requirements.
- Work is marked regularly with constructive comments that identify the 'next steps' for each pupil.
- Pupils receive regular feedback on their progress in relation to their target level/grade.
- Peer and self-assessment techniques encourage independence and deepen understanding of progress.
- The teacher uses Intelligent Questioning techniques to develop thinking, eg. Insisting on a 'no hands up rule' using open questions and building in 'waiting time'.

6. High expectations and standards

- Skilful behaviour management, using positive language, praise and reward, leads to good behaviour.
- Pupils are expected to present their work well and to take pride in it.
- The classroom/learning environment is inviting and well organised to give a positive learning message; walls are used to display stimulating learning resources alongside well-presented pupils' work.
- Classroom routines are clearly understood and the lesson starts and finishes in a quiet, calm and orderly way.

7. Good relationships

- The teacher is friendly, uses the pupils' names and speaks to every child during the course of the lesson.
- The teacher conveys to the pupils that they are interested in what they think not whether they are right or wrong all the time.
- Praise is used widely and real achievements celebrated warmly.
- Pupils respect their teacher and feel safe, supported and positive.
- Pupils enjoy what they are doing.

8. Pupils all make good progress and most make outstanding progress

- A Plenary is used to recap and reinforce learning; 'What have we learned today?'
- The Plenary refers to the intended learning intentions and helps pupils to see the 'Big Picture'.
- The Plenary enables the teacher to assess learning and informs their planning.

9. Learning Environment

At Quinton House School we believe that the learning environment we create for our pupils is incredibly important. The environment communicates the values we promote and the attitudes to learning we wish to develop.

We recognise and understand that the classroom is one of the most important tools for teaching and should be carefully planned and developed. At Quinton House School, time is made to create a stimulating, interactive classroom that promotes the very highest achievement from all. It is an on-going part of an effective teacher's practice.

Issues to consider

Classroom needs to be well organised, clean and tidy

- Furniture needs to be arranged so that all pupils can see the board.
- Classroom equipment needs to be stored appropriately.
- Storage needs to be labelled clearly.
- Resources are stored neatly and are accessible for pupils where appropriate.
- There are clear pathways around the classroom so that pupils can move easily.

Display

- Prepare display boards for core areas and topic focus.
- Displays should be neat, tidy and well maintained.
- Create surface displays that encourage interaction – books, questions etc.
- Displays for the most part should be a celebration of pupils' work and pupils' learning should outweigh teacher's display pieces.

- Displays should have a purpose. The breadth of the curriculum should be evident with pupils' learning from the subjects and other areas on display.
- Display will include pupils' learning, the learning process, context labels and where relevant, pupils' voice.
- The area around the whiteboard should be used as an on-going learning wall; neat, tidy and supportive of on-going learning.

Junior School Classrooms only

Book areas are vital in our efforts to engage pupils in rich learning experiences and show the value we place on literature and books.

Book areas need:

- To be arranged on a number of levels to create interest.
- To have books that are classified and easy to retrieve.
- Some books standing and open for browsing.
- Posters and book fronts displayed attractively.
- A range of questions and prompts, inviting pupils to read.

Consider:

- Having an author focus or top ten books on display is always a good way of engaging readers.
- Having a poetry display or non-fiction section reminds pupils of the range of books on offer.
- Having some things hanging e.g. questions, word mobiles and posters.

Maintaining the learning environment (Full school)

It is important that your classroom remains a tidy, stimulating environment throughout the year. Pupils should feel proud of their classrooms and should also take responsibility for maintaining them.

This is achieved by:

- Adding to and changing displays (full change each term).
- Ensuring work is not peeling off the display boards.
- Tidying book areas daily.
- Replacing labels if they become tatty.
- Keeping exercise books neat and tidy – no scribbling on or bending of front covers.
- Displaying good quality pupils' learning of all abilities.
- Ensuring there are no piles of papers laying around in the classroom.
- Surfaces to have surface displays where possible.

'Enjoy your planning and the pupils will enjoy your lessons'

