

**OAKWOOD SCHOOL**

**LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY**

**THE OAKWOOD WAY**

# THE OAKWOOD WAY

## Learning and Teaching: Why we exist as a school

### Introduction

This is the most important of all school policies. It reminds us that learning is at the heart of the school and that our focus is on the needs of our students. The policy, which has been developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders – teachers, governors, parents and, not least, students – will be revised each year to incorporate newly learned good practice.

### Key Learning Principles

- All students have the right to:
  - develop the skills needed for life-long learning;
  - a safe and stimulating learning environment;
  - positive, equal treatment and mutual respect;
  - have their progress regularly monitored and be supported to develop the strategies to extend their learning;
  - understand *why*.
- There are no limits to our learning and achievement.
- We will achieve high reliability through:
  - consistent organisation;
  - consistent behaviour for learning;
  - consistent accountability;
  - consistent professionalism.

These are the keys to an effective learner-teacher partnership.

- Our job is to create opportunities for learning and to support our students in achieving their best. Expectations alone are not enough.

When talking to students about their learning I use the following prompts:

- Think of a lesson/opportunity/activity where your learning is outstanding.
- What would it feel like if your learning was like that in every lesson?

In transforming our school we need to ensure that every lesson counts.

Sue Child,  
Headteacher.

September 2008.

## 1. Students will learn how to learn how to reflect and how to apply their learning.

Learning and teaching are interactive. It is important that we teach students how to “learn to learn” in order to become independent learners and develop skills for life long learning.

### Share learning objectives and outcomes

If students are to take responsibility for their own learning, they need to know what they are expected to learn, how they can achieve it and how they can demonstrate what they have learnt.

Providing objectives allows students to engage with the process of learning and, where appropriate, use differentiated learning objectives.

- i. Teachers must make the learning objectives explicit to all students. This will usually happen at the beginning of the lesson but could happen at other stages. This can be done in a variety of ways:
  - written or projected onto the board
  - orally
  - written by students in their books
  - printed on handouts
  - other appropriate manner.
- ii. These objectives must be revisited throughout and at the end of the lesson. This can be done in a variety of ways:
  - students review their learning against the lesson objectives
  - teacher questions with differentiation by questioning
  - students record two key points (individually or in pairs) that they have learned and one issue for further investigation or something that they do not understand
  - students recap what has been learned
  - other appropriate manner.
- iii. The learning outcomes – how the students demonstrate that they have acquired the knowledge, skills and understanding that is the focus of the lesson - are best if:
  - they are introduced with clear criteria for success so that students know what they are aiming for
  - they are expressed in specific terms. So, for example, “Write a paragraph that uses at least 4 different connectives” is more helpful than “ Write a paragraph that shows that you now how to use connectives”
  - they are varied over time. They could include: writing to a specific criteria; demonstrating a skill to peers who could assess the skill level; an artefact; a conversation or explanation that demonstrates understanding.

### Ensure that students know their learning style (VAKT)

Students may have a preferred learning style, be it visual, auditory, kinaesthetic or tactile. If they are to have ownership of their learning, they need not only to know what their preferred style is, but also have opportunities to access a variety of other styles. (Research suggests that deep learning is more likely if students access understanding via a channel that is not their preferred style.)

All teachers should:

- ensure that students are aware of the different learning styles
- have an opportunity to reflect on their preferences (VAKT questionnaire)
- provide a range of activities that appeal to visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and tactile learners
- challenge students to move beyond their comfort zone
- ensure students know their learning style.

### Use Assessment for Learning strategies to encourage students to learn how to learn

The aim of formative assessment is to give students clear guidance about how to improve their work. Students must be told of the assessment criteria for both class work and homework tasks.

- i. All key assessments must receive formative comments. This will usually be in writing. When formative feedback is given verbally by the teacher, it may be appropriate for it to be recorded by students in exercise books or files.
- ii. Opportunities must be given for students to act upon the guidance. This could be done through class work or homework, for example,
  - a starter or plenary activity
  - discussion with the student
  - a peer assessment activity
  - peer teaching
  - re-drafting pieces of work.
- iii. A formative comment should be made using the Oakwood Stamp worded "What went well..." and "Even better if...."and should:
  - be concise and accessible for students
  - highlight achievement
  - be diagnostic
  - indicate how improvement can be achieved, usually consisting of one or two targets
  - encourage and support the student in a constructive way
  - encourage students to take ownership of their learning.
- iv. Peer and/or self assessment should take place at least once a term in every subject area. The aim of self assessment is to enable students to be actively involved in the assessment process and give them ownership of their learning.
- v. Assessment should support the literacy strategy by following the "Quality of Written Communication" mark scheme as displayed in all classrooms and the Literacy Policy.
- vi. Through parents' meetings and reporting, teachers will provide parents and carers with timely accurate and constructive feedback on students, attainment, progress and areas for development.

## **Set SMART targets and help students to understand how to achieve them**

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

- discussion with students about their progress in learning against targets which are recorded in their organiser
- explanation (by teacher, between students, by students to whole group)
- scaffolding (writing frames, sentence starters)
- modelling (sharing students' work, working through examples, guided writing, sharing planning and demonstrations)
- developing effective study skills (e.g. revision techniques, recording notes, summarising) to help students to achieve
- setting targets with students that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bonded.

## **2. Teachers will meet the needs of all learners, and challenge under-achievement.**

All students are capable of achievement and under-achievement. Identifying and challenging under-achievement is the responsibility of all teachers. High expectations are not enough on their own, teachers must ensure they are met.

## **Teachers must know the learning needs of all students**

Teachers must build on prior knowledge and of those they teach to assess their learning needs. Different groups of students have specific needs which must be supported in a number of ways.

- i) Information on students with SEN, EAL, G and T, IEPs, targets, medical and behavioural issues is available in shared documents and must be entered in planners or electronic mark books.
- ii) Relevant assessment data, including end of key stage targets, is available on SIMs and should be used for regular monitoring of students' progress.
- iii) Teachers must identify students who are under-achieving and put plans in place in order to improve achievement. These plans must be shared with the students and reported to the line manager.
- iii) TAs are assigned to support the diverse needs of students. Teachers must plan for and direct TAs in the most effective way to ensure that learning can be structured to support identified students.

## **All staff must be responsible for ensuring that students attend all lessons**

All teachers must ensure that all students receive the full entitlement of their lessons. Teachers must follow up student absence and take appropriate action to maximise student achievement.

## **Rigorous planning**

Teachers must engage with the learning needs of all students by applying varied and appropriate learning opportunities in their planning.

- i) Teachers should plan engaging and motivating lessons informed by high expectations of learners and designed to raise levels of attainment.
- ii) Teachers should plan for progression, designing effective learning sequences within lessons and across series of lessons informed by secure subject knowledge.
- iii) Planning must meet the needs of all learners, this may include: differentiated and adapted resources to support and extend students, personalised learning opportunities, support of Teaching Assistants. Differentiation can be achieved in a variety of ways including:
  - differentiation by outcome
  - differentiation by task
  - differentiation by questioning
  - developing and adapting resources to support and extend students
  - use of groupings
  - by learning style (VAKT).
- iv) Homework and learning beyond lessons should be set weekly according to the homework timetable. It must be planned and assessed to sustain learners' progress and consolidate their learning.
  - homework tasks must be planned and must not be "finish off work"
  - setting homework at the end of the lesson should be avoided
  - all homework must be assessed and students should be clear about the purpose of the task and how it will be assessed
  - homework and deadlines must be recorded in the student organiser and in the teacher's planner.

## **Develop the transferable skills (literacy, numeracy, ICT skills) of the students**

Teachers should:

- know how to use key skills and design opportunities for learners to develop appropriate literacy, numeracy and ICT and thinking and learning skills
- use tutor time for meaningful activities which may promote numeracy and literacy or mentoring to support academic progress
- use opportunities provided by the current curriculum to devise cross-curricular activities and schemes of work and promote independent learning.

## **Ensure that lessons have good pace and challenge**

Lessons should be well organised, with an appropriate range of teaching strategies including VAKT and resources to challenge learners and ensure sustained progress.

Teachers should provide:

- a range of teacher led and student centred activities providing the opportunity to work in a variety of ways such as individually, in pairs, groups or whole class situations
- episodic lessons with a clear start and finish, plenaries and mini plenaries
- timed activities to ensure engagement and pace
- co-operative and competitive learning styles.

### 3. Together we will create a positive climate for learning

The ways in which all adults in the Oakwood community manage the students throughout the school will have a significant effect on their learning and behaviour. Students will learn and progress in a stimulating and structured environment, where standards are consistently applied and maintained.

**Praise, encourage and frequently reward students for positive contributions, effort or achievement and establish trust and mutual respect in the classroom**

Student achievement must be recognised and celebrated. Students must know how to interact with others in a positive and constructive climate

- students must understand why we are doing what we are doing
- all adults should take every learning opportunity to promote the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL)
- teachers must strive towards a higher ratio of praise / improvement ratio : constructive criticism
- teachers must use positive language to promote good behaviour and learning expectations
- all instructions displayed around the school will use positive language
- House points (stickers and stamps) will be used to reward students who get it right in the classroom and around the school. Teachers will award House Points to every student who has SCORE'd in their lesson (Settled, Co-operated, Organised themselves, been Respectful, brought Equipment).

**Establish clear classroom rules and routines and implement the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy fairly and consistently**

Teachers must use a range of behaviour management strategies to promote the self-control and independence of the learners.

Teachers must manage learners' behaviour constructively by consistently following the Oakwood Behaviour for Learning policy.

**Create a positive, stimulating and safe physical learning environment**

Students will learn and progress in a structured and stimulating environment.

- teachers will establish a purposeful and safe environment which complies with the Every Child Matters requirements. Namely, safety, health, enjoy and achieve, economic wellbeing and positive contribution
- teachers will meet, greet and seat students at the beginning of each lesson
- tutors will comply with their legal obligation to take accurate and timely attendance registers
- students will be registered using the electronic registration system for every lesson within 15 minutes of the start
- teachers may identify and use opportunities to extend learning both inside and outside the classroom
- class displays will celebrate achievement and support and enhance learning and teaching.

**Inspire, motivate, enjoy and take risks in learning and teaching**

A "no blame culture" will exist to encourage teachers to experiment and reflect on their pedagogy.

- teachers must be supported and encouraged to provide a learning environment that is inspirational
- students will receive explicit training to help facilitate the social and academic development of their peers, for example, by presentations, student led lessons and peer assessment
- teachers should employ a wide variety of resources and teaching strategies to minimise dependence upon text books
- teachers will be encouraged to undertake regular, voluntary cross-curricular observations and develop as reflective practitioners
- Continual Professional Development opportunities will promote inspired practise, e.g. school visits, HLP collaboration, job shadowing, observation, twilight sessions, reading, staff library, Teachers' T.V. accredited courses.

