

### Rationale/Principle

Outstanding Teaching and Learning is at the heart of what we value at Berwick Academy. We know that we have been successful if our students are successful. Not only in narrow academic terms, but also in terms of their actions and positive influence within their community.

### Introduction

This policy outlines the key principles that guide the planning and delivery of teaching and learning experiences at Berwick Academy. The policy guides teachers in delivering outstanding lessons regularly. The recommendations are a realistic expectation for teachers' work. We believe in the creativity and professionalism of our staff. As such, this policy is a guide rather than a reference book.

Each area described is a key element of an outstanding lesson, or a work sample. It is expected that within each department, there is a lesson plan for every lesson. The resources for the standard lesson should be available on the Learning Environment (VLE), or other file sharing tool, along with any supporting resources. This standard lesson can then be adapted to meet the specific needs of each class.

### Guidelines

The essence of outstanding teaching and learning to ensure excellent progress can be distilled into 5 key areas;

- Learning Objectives and Lesson Outcomes
- Challenge and Pace in Learning
- Engagement in Learning
- Purposeful and Productive Learning
- Assessment for Learning and Assessment to Support Learning

At Berwick Academy, all teachers plan learning that meets these needs. A more detailed explanation of how is given below.

### Learning Objectives and Lesson Outcomes

Learning objectives and Lesson Outcomes should be based on a balanced understanding of what the students have achieved before and what they can achieve during the lesson. Account should also be taken of their future learning needs and direction. Teachers should take into account both subject specific and whole curriculum learning needs and requirements.

Objectives and outcomes should develop knowledge, understanding, skills and values which meet the needs of the syllabus followed. In addition, they should be a vehicle for the longer term understanding and appreciation of life beyond school. These objectives should reinforce and extend the learning of all students in the class.

### Key points for teachers;

1. The planning of learning must start from a decision on key learning objectives and expected learning outcomes. Ideas for learning activities and the use of resources should follow, not precede, this initial decision.
2. The active use of teachers' subject knowledge and pedagogy to deliver this is essential in the planning of learning. Teachers should understand how students learn in a particular subject, and make decisions about what is important. Planning involves understanding the learning steps involved and the potential barriers. It is essential that this is shared with our students - the learning process, and measures of student progress are made explicit in every lesson. Objectives and outcomes should make cross-curricular links and seek to remove misconceptions.
3. When planning learning, teachers should reflect on students' prior attainment and frame objectives and outcomes that link with those learning needs. Lesson plans should indicate how learning is being personalized for identified cohorts.
4. In the planning of learning, it may be necessary to differentiate expected learning outcomes for different groups of student over the course of the lesson, unit of work or key stage. We encourage all students to strive for the most challenging objectives. Outcomes should, where possible, link directly to grades or levels being worked towards.

5. Students should have opportunity in lessons to celebrate learning. By revisiting objectives and outcomes at the end of a lesson, our students should leave our classrooms with a feeling of achievement and progress. They should know what level/grade they are working at, and what they need to do to improve further.
6. Learning objectives/outcomes should be shared with students in an accessible way. Writing them on a board is only one, albeit highly effective, way of doing this.

### **Challenge and Pace in Learning**

Challenge and pace is necessary for progress in learning. To be outstanding, our students must be able to explain why they are doing an activity, what to do to improve and feel confident enough to take risks in learning. They must work with sufficient independence for the progress to be made permanent.

Teachers have the key task, to assess accurately, the most appropriate level of challenge, pace and support for the different groups of learners within a class. It is a good sign if students experience temporary, cognitive confusion in which their pre-existing understanding conflicts with new ideas. Teachers have the task of mediating cognitive conflict so the learners are able to achieve cognitive resolution.

Increasing challenge and pace involves adjusting the quality not necessarily the quantity of learning experiences. For learning to be challenging students should experience higher order thinking opportunities. That is; applying, analyzing, transforming, synthesizing, creating or evaluating in addition to recalling and comprehending.

### **Key points for teachers**

1. When planning lessons, teachers need to develop a good balance between consolidation and extension. Opportunities for higher order thinking should be built into all lessons.
2. Teachers should plan lesson time to optimize the pace of learning, understanding that pace can be too fast as well as too slow. Where teachers feel there is a lot of content to cover, effective use of homework time should free lesson time to discuss topics more deeply.
3. Outstanding teachers question, model and explain to increase student understanding. Lesson activities should balance teaching input and opportunities for students to work independently and collaboratively.
4. Low challenge lessons are unacceptable. These include setting repetitive mundane tasks, unnecessary routines; the providing of too much support for learners, indiscriminate praise and acceptance of work that is not good enough.
5. A quiet lesson is not necessarily a challenging one. Students regularly need quiet periods of reflection and concentration. Extended periods of silence completing simple tasks are counter-productive.
6. Challenge is generated by the teacher's use of language. It is crucial that a teacher communicates their belief that a student can make progress. This 'can do' attitude should permeate all words and actions. Teachers should emphasise the importance of developing independent thinking, achieved through taking 'learning risks'.
7. Our classrooms must be free of destructive language. Any criticism must be constructive and actionable. Challenging objectives will be achieved through experimentation, and valuing the learning process as much as the outcome.
8. Students value a positive approach to assessment. This is achieved by a language for learning. That is, comparing targets with current levels of performance and progress. Aspirational targets should be encouraged.
9. An important strategy for meeting challenging targets is scaffolding and chunking tasks into manageable stages.
10. By sharing timings for each activity with a class, the pace of a lesson can be maintained.

### **Engagement in Learning**

In outstanding lessons students;

- consistently demonstrate a genuine motivation to learn

- understand what they are learning and why
- are on task and attentive
- show interest in the content
- participate enthusiastically both independently and collaboratively
- ask and answer questions
- take care and pride when producing work

Proactive planning and teaching maximises engagement in learning.

### **Key points for teachers**

1. Exciting and enthusiastic teacher input is vital to inspire engagement. Use of ICT-based presentations should aim to capture interest and engagement, and not become one-way information delivery systems.
2. Short, pacy, relevant and challenging starter activities help create and sustain student engagement.
3. Teacher explanation should be carefully planned. Purposeful analogy, contemporary references and demonstrations should deepen and strengthen understanding.
4. Inclusive questioning methods are essential. The use of a 'no-hands up' policy and adequate thinking time before response are essential. Conferring, discussion and refining answers should be promoted.
5. Teachers should create a classroom in which students are enthusiastic about taking risk in their learning. Praise should be given for individual contributions and mistakes should be seen as excellent learning opportunities.
6. There should be an appropriate balance within one, and sequences of, lessons of independent and collaborative learning.
7. Over time, teaching strategies should encourage students to apply variety and choice regarding how to undertake learning activities. This may include learning to learn strategies, preferred learning styles and the use of ideas of multiple intelligences to empower students.
8. Learning objectives should stress the relevance of the lesson to whole-life skills, and local issues at a local, national or global level.

### **Purposeful and Productive Learning**

Outstanding lessons involve stretch and support. Within every class higher attaining students are stretched through extension, acceleration and enrichment. Lower attaining students are supported by frameworks that build capacity to work independently. These structures should be removed over time. Stretch and challenge can be built into differentiated learning objectives. This sensitive match between activities, resources and ability should ensure that all students leave the class with a sense of achievement. Learning is reflected upon and students are shown how skills can be transferred to future lessons and across the curriculum.

### **Key points for teachers**

1. Lesson objectives must reflect prior attainment. All lesson objectives for a unit of work cannot be written at once. Objectives should match the stage in the learning journey.
2. Differentiation strategies should be effective but manageable. Differentiation by task, resource, and outcome are all encouraged, as long as students are given the ability to achieve their potential. This may need individual interventions with selected students.
3. Plenary activities should be used to make learning points explicit and enable students and teachers to judge how much progress has been made in a lesson.
4. Thinking about thinking (metacognition) is important for achieving and sustaining effective learning. This is the purposeful design of opportunities for students to reflect on and refine both what and how they have learned.
5. Lessons should provide teachers with ample opportunity to judge achievement of students celebrate this and make an informed judgement of the next learning steps for individuals and groups.

6. Effective learning must involve developing cross-curricular skills and objectives. All teachers must be concerned with improving functional skills (literacy, numeracy and ICT), Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning, Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills and other relevant links.

### **Assessment for Learning**

Assessment for learning must inform lesson planning, and the direction of each lesson, in order to meet the needs of our students. This involves self-, peer and teacher assessment and encourages an independent, reflective learner. Feedback enables students to know and understand what they have done well and why, and what to improve and how. Students are aware of their current level of attainment and what they must do to improve in each subject.

### **Key points for teachers**

1. Marking of work is a key opportunity to evaluate understanding and progress. This informs lesson planning.
2. Use of oral whole class feedback is as important as individual feedback in order to ensure excellent progress.
3. Students must be given an opportunity to respond and react to teacher feedback. Tasks must give learners chance to refine their approach.
4. Self- and peer assessment can involve short focused tasks. These can be included in any lesson. Ideas such as traffic lighting, thumbs in the air, and focus sheets can be used. Plenary activities should involve learners giving individual responses to the question 'what have you learnt and what can you still work on?' Revisiting learning objectives is an ideal way of integrating self-assessment into any lesson.
5. Higher forms of assessment rely on an ability to reflect deeply on the process of learning as well as the content. These frequent metacognitive activities build up the capacity to transfer learning between contexts.
6. Effective teachers are constantly evaluating and assessing throughout lessons. They probe understanding, and seek misconceptions. By de-constructing students' responses to a question, they model metacognition. This empowers our learners to be more self-aware.

### **Additional Support**

At Berwick Academy we ensure that teaching and learning is constantly discussed and strengthened. This is achieved through;

- Regular lesson observations, with observation feedback forms that echo the BA7 message
- Regular references to new ideas in staff briefing and newsletters
- The establishment of a teaching and learning team in school
- Ensuring teaching and learning is a specific item on faculty meeting agendas
- Regular CPD focused on the key elements outlined above
- External CPD & liaison with other external agencies (e.g. Universities and LAs) that is fed back to all relevant staff
- The use of targeted PHSCE lessons to develop a learn to learn approach promoting study skills, PLTS and SEAL elements
- Use of coaching mechanisms to ensure that we develop a rich language for learning through teacher to teacher dialogue
- Reference to all other policy documents that impact on quality of teaching and learning. This is specifically, assessment and promoting good behaviour policies.

### **Conclusion**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Statement of Aims of the School, Policies for Curriculum, Gifted and Talented and Assessment. It is the responsibility of all teaching and support staff to ensure that this policy is fully implemented.