



SARACENS

HIGH SCHOOL

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

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Principal: Dr. M. Stevens

Saracens High School

Corner Mead NW9 4AS

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Rationale

The school's core purpose is to ensure a high quality learning experience for all pupils and the quality of teaching is the most important factor which contributes to this. We believe that children learn best when there is consistency and continuity in our approach. The purpose of this policy is to set out the school's expectations and the responsibilities of different staff in contributing to an outstanding learning experience. We believe that all pupils, whatever their ability, should receive high quality teaching and learning throughout the curriculum so they can achieve their maximum potential.

Aims

The school aims to:

- Set in place a clear understanding of good and outstanding teaching and learning
- Provide a common framework for the planning and delivery of highly successful learning
- Improve the effectiveness of our teaching by focusing on how pupils learn
- Provide a clear professional development framework by cross-referencing to 'The Professional Standards for Teachers'
- Ensure robust and effective assessment drives the creation and delivery of learning
- Set into place effective monitoring and evaluation procedures

Effective teaching and learning

Learning will be most effective when:

- the environment is secure, stable and stimulating;
- pupils' self-esteem is high;
- pupils understand the purpose of the learning and see relevance to their own experience;
- pupils understand the ways in which learning takes place;
- the learning builds on prior knowledge and understanding;
- success criteria are explicit and models are provided;
- the learning is active and collaborative;
- pupil questioning, reflection, and discussion are encouraged;
- independent learning and thinking are facilitated and encouraged;
- there are opportunities for creativity and utilising different learning styles;
- pupils can self-assess, know what they need to do to improve, and are able to set appropriate targets;
- pupils have opportunities to transfer skills, knowledge and understanding to other contexts.

For effective learning to take place, the school expects staff to ensure that the following take place. They are to:

- maintain outstanding knowledge and understanding of the subject they are teaching;
- plan lessons which are directly linked to the schemes of learning and, where applicable, the examination syllabus;

- provide secure assessment for learning strategies;
- plan and deliver lessons that meet the needs of the all pupils (this includes all ability bands, gender, SEND, Pupil Premium, and most able pupils);
- ensure good relationships are established through creating a positive learning environment and through understanding the needs and abilities of each pupil;
- employ a range of teaching activities to ensure a stimulating pace and inspiring challenge (and therefore progress);
- ensure expectations which are high, but attainable, for all pupils;
- involve effective use of higher order questioning to probe pupils' knowledge and understanding and to challenge their thinking (speculative);
- use Assessment for Learning and progress to help pupils to reflect on what they already know, reinforce the learning being developed, and to consolidate learning against the outcomes
- ensure cross-curricular links are established where possible;
- take every opportunity to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills;
- take every opportunity to reinforce the pupils' character development by making explicit reference to 'character' qualities and attributes, and school's values (discipline, hard work, honesty, humility)
- ensure displays are up to date and support the ethos and culture of learning.

For engaging and effective learning to take place, the school expects pupils to:

- Arrive to lessons punctually with the expected equipment for learning;
- Listen attentively to the ideas and views of all members of the classroom;
- Be responsible and organised;
- Be willing to make mistakes and learn from those mistakes;
- Be willing to experiment and to take risks;
- Take an active role in lessons;
- Challenge themselves to learn in a variety of ways;
- Use digital technologies responsibly;
- Seek to create positive working relationships with teaching staff;
- Be open to considering and researching ideas, cultures, and ways of thinking which they have not previously encountered.

Monitoring of teaching and learning

The key procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are analysis of: subject area data for all teaching groups, subject area monitoring, examination results, learning walks, lesson observations, parent and pupil surveys, and learning audits. The key responsibilities for staff are as follows:

Curriculum Area and Subject Leaders

Curriculum Area and Subject Leaders are responsible for the effective teaching of their subjects, the evaluation of the quality of teaching and the monitoring pupils' progress. Each subject leader achieves this by:

- championing teaching and learning in their subject area;
- ensuring teaching and learning is an item on the agenda at all team meetings;
- evaluating the teaching of their subject and the planning of lessons;
- ensuring curriculum coverage, continuity, and progress for all pupils;
- ensuring that subject area procedures for assessing, marking, recording and reporting on pupil progress are implemented consistently and are in line with subject and whole school policy;

- analysing and interpreting data on pupils' performance against school expectations and other comparative data;
- monitoring pupils' work and progress by regular sampling of classwork and home learning through book looks as well as assessment data.

Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership team is responsible for the overall quality of teaching and learning across the school. This is achieved by:

- strategic planning of teaching and learning priorities in conjunction with subject leaders;
- supporting individual subjects through line management meetings;
- ensuring that the school development plan places a high priority on teaching and learning and that structures are put in place to support these priorities;
- monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across the school through activities such as lesson observations, learning walks, and learning audits.

Lesson Observations and learning walks

A climate of mutual classroom observation is fostered, and all colleagues are encouraged to observe other teachers and share good practice as often as possible. In the spirit of our values honesty and humility, all members of staff recognise that we are still learners ourselves, and all strive to improve our teaching.

All teaching staff will have three developmental observations each year, at least one of which will be by a member of the Leadership Team. One of the two other observations will be by the line manager, as part of the performance review process. The nature of the third observation will be determined during the academic year, and may be conducted by a member of the leadership team, or may be a peer observation. Peer observations are an opportunity for staff to focus on an area of development in their teaching and observe a colleague identified as an outstanding practitioner in that area. This could be all or part of a lesson, with an opportunity for peer planning, post the developmental observation in support of the observer presenting practice of a similar standard. Actions for further development to be logged and addressed, with agreed peer support.

All full lesson observations are arranged in advance. A variety of lessons should be selected for observation. Oral feedback should be given for all observations within 24 hours, with written feedback to follow within 48 hours. There is opportunity for the member of staff observed to make verbal and written comments about the observation and feedback; the feedback itself should be conducted as a 'coaching conversation', rather than an imposed judgement. Arrangements are in place for colleagues to be offered professional development support where areas for improvement are agreed.

Once the observation has taken place, a copy of the observation sheet should be passed to the Senior Leadership Team member responsible for Teaching and Learning so that the data can be recorded and used for evaluation at individual, subject, and whole school level.

All members of staff are encouraged to take part in learning walks. Senior and middle leaders are expected to conduct regular learning walks within their areas, and may be joined by other colleagues as they see fit to support development. Oral or written feedback should be provided to the teacher as soon as possible. Information will be recorded and used to support the development of the teacher and to improve the quality of teaching and learning as a whole.

Sampling Pupil Work

As a minimum, pupil work should be sampled every half term by the Subject Leader.

At least five books per class should be selected by reviewed collectively – agreeing standards in the following areas:

- Presentation and quality of work;
- Content – the scheme of learning is followed in sufficient depth;
- Home learning is completed;
- Quality of marking, assessment, and feedback;
- Challenge of work being set appropriate to ability;
- Extent at which independent learning is being developed;
- Opportunities for character development and reinforcement of the school's values are being taken;
- Development of pupils' literacy and writing skills.

Appendix 1

A Framework for High Quality Lessons

Sharing learning objectives with pupils

- Share learning objectives and outcomes where appropriate, to enhance pupils' engagement with and understanding of them during the lesson in language that pupils can understand
- Use learning objectives as the basis for questioning throughout the lesson, and feedback during plenaries
- Evaluate this feedback in relation to the achievement of the learning objectives to inform the next stages of planning

Helping pupils to know and recognise the standards they are aiming for

- Draw upon pupils' prior knowledge
- Show exemplars of pupils' learning that have met the criteria, with explanations why
- Provide pupils with clear success criteria and relate it to the learning objectives
- Model for pupils what the success criteria should look like. For example, exemplify good writing
- Actively engage pupils in a discussion about their learning and ways to further extend their understanding of a given topic or skill
- Share examples that demonstrate pupils' pride in their work

Involving pupils in peer and self-assessment

- Provide opportunities during the lesson for pupils to talk about what they have learned, and what they have found difficult, using the learning objectives/success criteria as a platform for discussion to help evaluate progress
- Provide opportunities for pupils to learn/discuss together, focusing on how to improve

Provide opportunities for pupils to explain the steps in their thinking

- Provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning, using success criteria that pupils understand and for them to respond within informed commentary as to how they and/or their peers will improve
- Identify with pupils the next steps in learning and set informed targets

Providing feedback

- Emphasise the value of oral feedback, as well as written feedback in line with the marking policy
- Engage pupils in a discussion about their progress and how to further extend their understanding of a given topic or skill
- Ensure that feedback is constructive, rather than simply positive, by identifying what the pupil has done well, what needs to be done to improve, scaffold and questions for the pupil to construct how they will improve
- Set meaningful targets
- Ensure feedback is used to support target setting and focus for improvement
- Ensure pupils respond to the feedback and evidence their corrections, redrafted learning and where they feel they made progress from the feedback

Promoting confidence that every pupil can achieve

- Create a climate where pupils taking risks and failing is accepted by all as part of the learning process
- Provide opportunities to identify small steps to enable pupils to see their progress, thus building confidence and self-esteem
- Encourage pupils to explain and share their thinking and reasoning within a secure classroom ethos

Providing opportunities for reviewing and reflecting

- Choose appropriate tasks to provide quality assessment information (emphasis on process, not just the 'correct answer')
- Provide time during the lesson for pupils to reflect on what they have learned and understood, and to identify where they are still having difficulties and what they need to do to overcome these
- Engage reflection of the learning via a well-planned plenary
- Provide time for pupils to redraft/correct work and to evidence where they have and need to make progress

Extending learning through home learning

Home learning is an integral part of the learning process. Research reported by the Education Endowment Foundation suggests that it adds, on average, five months of progress while in secondary school. It must be set regularly so that pupils habitually review and reflect on what they have learnt in school. The idea that home learning is integral to learning and preparation for the next lesson is a part of the learning culture and ethos of the school. Home learning is to be communicated with parents through the online communication system, .

The purpose of home learning is to:

- Reinforce the work covered in class;
- Extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding;

- Practise a skill learnt in class;
- Respond to the feedback provided and correct/re-draft and improve learning;
- Allow the pupil to prepare for an activity in the next lesson (flipped learning).