BRYN CELYNNOG
Comprehensive School
Nurturing Success

TEACHING
&
LEARNING
POLICY

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BRYN CELYNNOG COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

PHILOSOPHY

Teaching and learning are the core purpose of what we do. High quality learning, teaching and subsequently achievement are what we want for every student within the school. The more that we have a shared understanding of what constitutes effective teaching and learning, the greater our success will be. Good teaching and learning should be underpinned by the following key aspects:

- Students should be challenged in their lessons;
- Students and staff should display and seek always to develop a growth mindset, whereby:
    - It is understood that there are no limits to our potential
    - That the concept of "natural ability" is less important than:
        - Having a growth mindset
        - The power of practice
        - The attitude that there are no ceilings to our potential in all areas
- Student outcomes at all levels should be at least in line with, and ideally above, their targets.

PRINCIPLES

- The basics of teaching and learning – consistent expectations are our most powerful tool to ensuring a climate for learning in all classrooms.

- Lesson structure – clearly structured lessons promote learning.

- Differentiation – our classes are made up of individual learners with a variety of needs; teaching and learning should take account of students from different cohorts and with varied abilities.

- Assessment – assessment gives students clear guidance about the standard of their work and how they can improve.

- Blended learning – all subjects should use *Microsoft Teams* as a platform with which to support students in their learning. Further details on this are contained within the Blended Learning Policy.

PRACTICE

The basics – how to create a climate of learning

- Entry into the classroom should be orderly. Teachers should greet students as they enter, observing current social distancing guidelines. Students should sanitize their hands on entry. Students should get themselves ready for the lesson from the outset, getting out equipment and journals and placing bags on the floor.
- Staff should teach the lesson from within the identified teacher area at the front of the class (this is identified by the use of tape on the floor). Staff must wear a face covering/visor whenever they leave this area.

- The register should be taken within the first 10 minutes of the lesson.

- All teaching groups should have a seating plan. This should be designed in order to aid classroom management and to enable teachers to support and challenge their students. It should also be completed on Classcharts and must be accurate and be kept up to date for track and trace purposes.

- The ethos of challenge, hard work and the power of practice must be promoted by all staff in all lessons.

- It is the responsibility of staff to model the behaviour that they want students to adopt.
    - Staff should be assertive and respectful;
    - Staff should try to focus on praising the behaviour that they want to see

- Establish routines for the handing out of books etc. at the beginning of the lesson

- Staff must pick up on any behavioural issues. Staff should be proactive in managing behaviour within the classroom. Providing challenging lessons underpinned by high expectations is the key to successful behaviour management. Staff should use the school discipline policy (Discipline for Learning) to support them in this.

- Dismiss students in an orderly manner (table by table, row by row etc.). All students should sanitise their hands when exiting the room.
- Reinforce these classroom routines whenever necessary, and always at the start of each new half-term. It really is time well-invested.

Lesson structure

Teachers at Bryn Celynnog should always strive to produce lessons that meet most of the following criteria. These can be used as a "checklist" for lesson preparation – they typify the type of lesson experience that we try to develop at Bryn Celynnog. For some types of lesson they may not always all be applicable. The key is that staff should think carefully of the **challenging outcomes** *that they want to achieve, and to* **design lessons that enable all students to achieve those outcomes.**

1. **Lessons should be conducted at pace, with a range of challenging activities.**
   o Pace and enthusiasm ensure that students will be enthused and engaged.

   o A suitable range of activities should be included in the lesson. These will often move from lower-order to higher-order skills, in order to enable progression to occur.

   o All students should be challenged to push the boundaries of their learning – staff need to display a growth-mindset in their planning, encouraging students to strive to achieve beyond their target grades.

   o The language used should encourage students to achieve.

   o There must be challenging activities that are suitable for students of all ability levels within the class. Differentiation of some form must be present.

2. **Lessons may have some form of initial activity** to reflect on previous learning, to develop literacy or numeracy, to practise existing skills, or to introduce the new learning to be addressed during the lesson. This is not compulsory but is often advisable, enabling learning to occur from the outset.
   o A starter or initial activity can act as a "hook" to capture interest from the outset.

   o It can enable students to see the learning links with the previous lesson – to see where today's activities fit into their learning journey.

   o The initial input can take any form, so long as it imparts initial information from which further investigation or activities can derive, or could take the form of a question. As such, it should occur within the context of a topic or scheme of lessons.

3. **Lessons should demonstrate clear development of knowledge, skills, understanding, practical ability and so on, or any combination thereof.**
   o Clear progression must be evident in the planning and execution of the lesson, leading to outcomes at least in line with expectations.

- One way to achieve this is to have a number of activities, each developing skills, knowledge, understanding or practical ability – these should be of increasing challenge, enabling progress to be seen from the starting point to the end.

- This requires some way of gauging where students are at the start of the lesson, so as to demonstrate that tangible progress has been made relative to the starting point (that is; as a result of the lesson, have students made progress in their learning at least in line with their ability, as demonstrated by outcomes?)

- Mini-plenaries can be used at regular intervals to consolidate learning.

4. **Students should be told in advance what they are doing, why they are doing it and where the lesson is leading.**
   - At all stages of the lesson students should be aware of what they are doing and why they are doing it. This helps students to see the logic of what they are doing, and therefore to engage in the lesson.

   - The journey to be undertaken during the lesson (and why it is being undertaken) should be clarified from an early part of the lesson – this builds anticipation and a sense of engagement. This requires more than just reading through the objectives.

   - Transition points should be used **overtly** to guide students through their learning experience.

5. **Modelling should be used whenever possible to clarify processes and approaches for the students**
   - Show students what success looks like – this then gives them something to aspire to, and the tools to achieve with.

   - Modelling can be written, verbal, literacy/numeracy based, process based, and so on.

   - We often assume that all students can perform tasks that we may find quite basic – often they cannot. Spending just 30 seconds modelling key processes (such as identifying key words or structuring sentences) can lead to a significant improvement in outcomes. Demonstrate practical activities whenever possible.

6. **Lessons should respond to the needs of the students as they become apparent during the lesson – the best lessons are fluid, not limited by an un-reflexive (and unreflective) lesson plan ("think on your feet"; "play what's in front of you")**
   - Over-planning can act to stifle progress and innovation.

- o Staff need to be flexible enough to react to what is in front of them. You need to be able to address the ever-changing needs of the class.

- o You have permission to do whatever is best to secure progression and standards, whether on your lesson plan or not. Don't be afraid to deviate from your plan!

7. **Some form of assessment should be present in each lesson, in order to gauge the extent of progress and, if appropriate, to identify next steps.**
   - o If formal assessment is occurring, students should be provided with levelled success criteria/ markschemes and the like **in advance**, in order to target their answers.

   - o Assessment does not have to be written. It can take many other forms (e.g. oral/presentations, etc.)

   - o Do not just give students the success criteria – explain and ideally model how to use them by applying the criteria to an existing written (or verbal) answer.

   - o Peer and self-assessment are powerful tools, especially when combined with targets for future improvement.

8. **Lessons may have some form of closing activity in order to consolidate or to reflect upon learning, or to set the scene for the next lesson.**
   - o The key here is to leave the students with a clear understanding of the progress they have made and, ideally, to leave them hungry for the next lesson.

   - o This should lead to some element of reflection or consolidation of skills.

9. **The content of the lesson should be posted on Microsoft Teams, with links to suitable resources (as appropriate). Specific work should be set for students that are self-isolating.**

Differentiation

Differentiation takes into account the needs of all learners and plans to ensure that all learners are set challenging goals and make expected progress.

We recognise that:

• Different students have different needs, related to influences both within and beyond the classroom. Awareness of the needs of specific groups will enhance the provision for individuals

• Teachers will be aware of the needs of specific groups such as SEN, FSM (free school meals), and CLA (Looked After children), and will provide the appropriate support

Differentiation can take many forms and can often be grouped into differentiation by process (how students learn), and /or differentiation by content (what students learn). Differentiation by process includes:

• Providing a range of alternative tasks

• Deliberate grouping of students according to tasks (e.g. grouping all of the most able students together to work on a particularly challenging task; mixed ability grouping for peer teaching etc)

• Assigning roles to individual students (e.g. leader, scribe, questioner, spokesperson etc)

• Support provided by a TA

• Varying degrees of challenge within teacher questioning and response.

Differentiation by content includes:

• The qualification/tier students are studying for

• Developing and adapting resources to both support and extend students, taking into account all students' needs.

Often differentiation will take the form of differentiation by outcome. This is often the case in summative assessments and in public examinations.

Intervention strategies are used, based on data, to address the needs of all students. This will often take the form of "close the gap" (CTG) marking that occurs to improve a targeted area of an assessment. Interventions can also occur following the analysis of tracking data in order to address the needs of students who are underperforming relative to target, who are on target, or who are exceeding their identified target. In this way all students can be challenged to improve by the development of challenge for all and of "growth mindsets."

Formative Assessment

The aim of formative assessment is to give students clear guidance about how to improve their work and how they have been successful. Formative assessment allows the learner to reflect and then put in place strategies to improve. Formative assessment works best when students are engaged in an ongoing dialogue about their progress. Students should be actively involved in the assessment process, giving them ownership of their learning and encouraging independent learning. The principles of formative assessment are:

- Formative feedback should encourage and support the individual needs of students in a constructive way and allow students to take ownership of their learning.
- Students should be given opportunities to act upon assessment.
- Sharing understanding of assessment criteria allows students to know what they need to do to be successful and hence make more progress.

- Effective and meaningful assessment records allow teachers to monitor the progress of individuals over time and intervene where there is underachievement.
- High expectations, a growth mindset and the use of aspirational targets ensures that underachievement is acted upon by staff.

At Bryn Celynnog the main type of formative assessment is "close the gap" (CTG) marking.

Formative marking and "close the gap" (CTG) approaches

- Formative marking is marking that is designed to improve student attainment. It should enable teachers and learners to judge where they are at present, and what they need to do to improve. Formative marking will usually be conducted against clear success criteria (for example levelled success criteria or GCSE mark schemes). It will often include elements of providing modelled examples of successful responses, self-assessment, peer-assessment, and CTG activities designed to enable students to respond immediately to advice given by the teacher to improve. This enables immediate improvement to be made following an assessment.

- All subjects will complete a minimum of three formative assessments per academic year.

- Success criteria for these assessments will be explicit and will in all cases be shared with students in advance.

- Each formatively-assessed piece of work must have EITHER "what went well" (WWW) and "even better if" (EBI) comments OR must contain "close the gap" conventions with relevant and pertinent questions posed at the end. In both cases, time will be allowed in a future lesson, or at home, for responses to be formulated. A combination of the two is allowed, as are student completion of WWW/EBI comments. It is up to Departments to apply the formative marking criteria that best suit the needs of their particular assessments and students.

- Dedicated improvement and reflection time must be provided to enable students to respond to the marking comments/ to improve/ to redraft/ to "close the gap" as appropriate. This has to occur during the lesson(s) following marking

<u>PERFORMANCE</u>

The policy will be reviewed annually in the light of national and local guidance.