



HIGHDOWN SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

LEARNING & TEACHING POLICY

Aspiration – Respect – Excellence

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

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LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policy/policies:

- Curriculum Policy
- BYoD Policy
- Literacy across the Curriculum Policy
- Numeracy across the Curriculum Policy

Purpose of the Policy

The aim and purpose of this policy is to communicate a shared vision of our understanding of what constitutes outstanding learning and teaching provision in the context of Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre. It is intended as a guide for ensuring high quality learning experiences are planned and delivered to support raising student achievement and school improvement.

Planning

The academy has adopted the 'The Highdown Approach *Lean Lesson Plan*' as the basis for its official planning tool. The emphasis is on planning for learning. This may be adapted by departments to meet their specific planning needs, for example in Science - adding a resource and/or health and safety space on the planning sheet.

The planning tool focuses on how the lesson will fit into the wider learning journey, what the learning intentions are for the current lesson and what the key concept(s) or skill(s) are that students are developing and how. The proforma invites colleagues to consider the prior learning to be reviewed to both consolidate existing knowledge (increasing both storage and retrieval strength) and to reduce cognitive load as students apply this prior learning in a new or related context. The planning tool requires colleagues to consider the ways in which they will explain and model concepts, create opportunities to practise this knowledge/these skills and how learning will be scaffolded to cater for different starting points. Underpinning successful explanation, modelling and practice is the teacher's subject knowledge, including their anticipation of, and response to, common errors and misconceptions. The planning tool asks teachers to consider these in advance to inform their explanation, modelling and practice phases of the lesson. The tool also requires colleagues to plan for how they will check understanding during the lesson and consider potential responses to close gaps in understanding.

Curriculum areas will also use a consistent planning format for units/schemes of learning, which support student progression over time and link directly to elements of the Lean Lesson Plan. Lesson Observation and Learning Walk feedback through Progress Teaching work together to ensure clarity of message and impact.

Teaching

The Classroom Climate

Every teacher at Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre uses the 'The Highdown Approach: Routines and relationships' to create an effective climate for learning in their classrooms. At the start of the year, class teachers should spend time teaching/training students on appropriate habits for learning to establish a class ethos of being 'Ready to Learn' and to clearly outline expectations in terms of behaviour for learning. Class teachers should create a culture in which learning starts immediately on arrival in the lesson e.g. through a Do Now/starter activity. Class teachers should plan and promote students' independence and resilience in learning in all lessons, through giving









opportunities for students to attempt to get themselves unstuck by trying different strategies before asking the class teacher (or LSA, where relevant) for support and guidance.

The register should be taken on Class Charts as soon as possible in the lesson, without distracting students from their learning. Students should be allocated a seat in the classroom, with these details uploaded on to Class Charts. The expectation is that students remain in lessons for anything other than exceptional circumstances and, when students do leave the room, they are given the staff member's blue pass and this is recorded in Class Charts.

Learning Activities

The Academy aims to deliver highly effective lessons to all students to guarantee progress over time. To ensure this, we have developed 'The Highdown Approach'; a set of principles that are guided by research and current evidence on quality first teaching. These are the principles underpinning teaching where students often exceed expectations and make outstanding progress. The Highdown Approach is not a prescriptive 'shopping list' of expectations in a lesson. It is a set of guiding principles to inform quality first teaching over time and which recognises the subject-specific implementation required to have the desired impact on student outcomes. All colleagues will have access to a wide range of Professional Learning opportunities at individual, departmental and whole school level to enable them to enact The Highdown Approach and to therefore be as effective as possible in the classroom.



	Routines & Relationships  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and consistent • High expectations • Narrating the positives • Celebrating success: effort and outcomes • Depersonalised language- "Here at Highdown, we..." • Use of school systems, inc. Classcharts 	Recall & Review  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily /weekly / monthly and more! • Low-stakes quizzing • Maximise potential of our LTM • Metacognition & self-regulation 	Explanation & Modelling  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoom in, zoom out • Range of media & dual coding • Live modelling • Exemplars • Worked examples • Explicit vocab, oracy and literacy development
Challenge for All + Scaffolding  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach to the top • Scaffold up • Subject expertise and passion • Ethic of excellence • Mastery • Individual needs (e.g. SEND, PP...)- removing barriers to learning • Role of LSAs 	Practice (from guided to independent)  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I do / we do / you do • Faded examples • Remove scaffolding over time • High level of practice • Obtain high success rate • Interleaving • Desirable difficulties • Variety to secure engagement and develop K/U/S 	Questioning & Checking for Understanding  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted, 'hands-down', strategic • Think/pair/share • Check and respond • Elicit, extend and challenge • Teacher circulation • Variety of approaches- questioning, MWBs, quizzes, online diagnostic tools... 	Responsive teaching & Feedback  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common errors and misconceptions • 'Follow the students, not the plan...' • Diagnostic feedback- WWW/EBI • Timely & manageable with impact- MRI and DIRT • Self/peer/verbal/written • Use of PLCs

Challenge for all with scaffolding

In any given group, there will be a range of different starting points, including in sets. Our curriculum is designed to have high expectations of all learners, not placing a ceiling on their potential achievements; however, our curriculum also recognises that learners with different starting points will require different forms of scaffolding to help them reach these challenging learning goals. The need to scaffold learning is just as acute at post-16 and teachers must adopt appropriate strategies to enable all post-16 students to make the transition from GCSE work to their post-16 courses. Scaffolding can take many forms, including: support from the teacher/LSA; questioning technique; explicit teaching of tier 2/3 vocabulary, sentence starters; graphic organisers; explanation and modelling strategies; exemplars, worked examples and backwards fading; prompts; success criteria; among others. Additional planning/resourcing may be needed for students with a visual impairment or other specific learning need to ensure they can access the curriculum fully.

Effective challenge and scaffolding are based on class teachers making good use of student assessment information- for example: in-class questioning, prior attainment, aptitude, targets and current attainment- to inform their planning. The Data Team and Assistant Heads will ensure that student data is available and shared with staff.

Learning Support Assistants and other adults in the classroom will have a positive impact on learning when a clear partnership between class teacher and themselves is established. If supported by another adult, class teachers should have an open dialogue with them before, during and after each lesson, wherever possible. Class teachers should share lesson plans and/or schemes of learning, discuss foci and assess student progress with them. All adults in a room must be aware of their role and are responsible for the progress made by students.

All students should have access to work and activities that will challenge them and enable them to make progress each lesson and through home learning. Class teachers should ensure that all activities enable students to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills and should be referenced within departmental schemes of learning.

Assessment

Effective assessment is central to the development and success of students and involves far more than the generation of attainment levels at Key Stage 3 or grades at Key Stage 4 and post-16. At Highdown School we believe assessment should help teachers and students to understand areas of strength, gaps in knowledge and areas for improvement. Crucially, effective assessment informs teaching and enables practitioners to be responsive and adaptive.

Why do we assess?

- To promote learning by identifying strengths and areas for improvement/development.
- To motivate students by identifying and celebrating strengths and success.
- To engage students in their learning by promoting self-evaluation and self-reflection.
- To identify gaps in knowledge, understanding and skills to inform responsive and adaptive teaching.
- To monitor the progress of students from their starting points, identify any underachievement and to inform appropriate intervention.
- To prepare students for external assessment and awards/qualifications.
- To provide stakeholders with information about student progress and attainment.
- To inform the evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching strategies and the curriculum by teachers, leaders, and governors.

When do we assess?

Assessment takes place on a range of timescales:

- **Ongoing assessment** takes place during every lesson, with teachers and additional adults routinely checking for understanding through a variety of methods, including recall and review activities throughout lessons, targeted questioning, specific tasks/activities, digital platforms, and home learning.
- **Periodic assessment** will take place according to individual department's schemes of learning, with unit/topic/skills-based assessments taking place at the most appropriate time to check against specific assessment objectives.
- **Summative assessment**, for example examinations (or PPEs in KS4 and post-16), which help to measure progress over time and identify gaps in knowledge and skill, as well as assess the effectiveness of revision and recall strategies.

All students will have a baseline assessment of aptitude (MidYIS test) in the first term of Year 7 and most curriculum areas will devise and set their own subject-specific baseline assessment. Together with Key Stage 2 data and Reading Age information, these will provide important information which informs curriculum planning and planning for learning and teaching.

How do we assess?

We use assessments that measure learning over time in formal assessment or PPE windows, as well as regular low stakes assessment (including questioning, monitoring of class work and home learning) that continually informs and develops learning. Both are used to improve students' knowledge and application of knowledge; they help us to track their progress through our curriculum and importantly, to identify areas of strength and areas for development.

Effective Assessment as Learning is characterised by:

- Being an integral part of the learning process and not just 'ticking boxes'.
- Sharing learning intentions and success criteria, which allow students to see where they are and what they need to master next.
- Students being encouraged to assess their own progress against outcomes and success criteria [self-

- assessment] and develop autonomy in their learning (metacognition)
- Students being given opportunities for peer-assessment. This is most effective where clear success criteria are used for reference.
- Class teachers using targeted, hands-down questioning ('cold-calling') to check for understanding, to identify errors and misconceptions and respond accordingly, amending the lesson plan as required ('follow the students, not the plan...')
- Class teachers planning and asking open-ended questions that encourage student analysis, synthesis and evaluation to elicit thinking and extend learning.
- Students being given time to reflect and review their learning (through meaningful MRIs and DIRT).

Reading

The ability to read fluently is a fundamental aspect in aiding in students' learning. Mentors will read aloud to their mentor groups twice a week in Years 7-10, following the texts on the Highdown Canon. Within curriculum lessons, opportunities should be taken for teachers to read aloud in their classrooms, with key tier 2/3 vocabulary being explicitly taught in the lesson. Years 7 and 8 will also have an Accelerated Reader lesson once a fortnight.

Digital Learning

Teachers will use available technology to support learning and teaching. Students who have laptops will use the technology to enhance, extend and enrich learning, this may include work on assessment, research, creation of work or collaboration of learning amongst other strategies for learning.

Home Learning

Home learning is an integral part of the students' learning. Home learning activities should be planned in advance, should be scaffolded to meet the needs of all learners and should include a range of tasks/approaches. Home learning should be relevant and engaging. Home learning tasks should not be used solely 'To finish...' class work. All home learning should be published on Class Charts/Microsoft Teams.

Home learning should be used for:

- promoting independent learning and time management skills
- consolidation, reinforcement and application of learning
- extending and developing learning
- developing research and investigative skills
- facilitating teacher assessment of understanding and learning
- preparing for the following lesson, for example *flipped learning*

Home learning helps to generate a culture of high expectations and is most effective when it is:

- matched to the ability and aptitude of learners
- accessible yet challenging
- relevant, interesting/inspiring and engaging
- specific and precise
- well-planned in advance
- owned by the students through a choice of activities, presentation or processes, e.g. Takeaway Homework
- valued by all stakeholders

Home learning tasks should not be used solely 'To finish...' class work

Home learning activities should be set according to the whole school home learning timetable. Years 7-9 should expect approximately 30 minutes of home learning per subject a week. Years 10-11 should expect approximately 45-60 minutes of home learning per subject a week. Sixth Form should expect 4 or more hours of independent learning per subject a week.

Extended home learning activities, for example project work, should be broken down into structured and measurable chunks to ensure students maintain momentum and make at least expected progress. This will also enable feedback on progress [see Assessment and Feedback Policy].

Home learning tasks may occasionally be set by other subject areas or the pastoral teams to help prepare students for life after Highdown. For example, students should expect a careers home learning task every term. This might involve creating a CV or reflecting on an encounter with an employer.

Highdown School provides opportunities for students to work on home learning activities through curriculum clubs, whole-school Excellence Club and in The Hive.

All home learning will be set by the class teacher through the online Class Charts tool for years 7 to 11. This enables both students and parents to track what home learning has been set, when it is due in and if it has been completed or not. Any resources required must also be uploaded and available on this portal, where possible, rather than printing/photocopying class sets. As students progress through the school they should take more responsibility themselves for managing their time and home learning. However, we encourage all parents and carers to keep up to date with what is set and engage in conversation about learning. Sixth Form students will have home learning set using Microsoft Teams Assignments. For students who do not have access to the Internet at home or on mobile devices, they should make use of the large number of computer facilities available at Highdown School during lunchtime or after school home learning clubs, including Excellence Club to access the tasks and resources. Additionally, class teachers will be made aware of which students do not have access to the Internet at home following a survey at the beginning of the academic year and will take this into account when setting home learning. For example, they may provide hard copies of resources for students.

Non-completion of home learning activities must be followed up by consistently applying the agreed consequences and protocols within the academy. This will be through the use of the centralised consequence system on ClassCharts. It is important to stress with students that the greatest consequence is their lost opportunity for learning.

Feedback

Feedback is one of Highdown's evidence informed principles of best practice, and forms part of our Highdown Approach to Quality First Teaching.

The Education Endowment Foundation summarises feedback in the following way:

- "Feedback is information given to the learner about the learner's performance relative to learning goals or outcomes. It should aim to (and be capable of producing) improvement in students' learning.
- Feedback redirects or refocuses the learner's actions to achieve a goal, by aligning effort and activity with an outcome. It can be about the output or outcome of the task the process of the task the student's management of their learning or self-regulation, or about them as individuals (which tends to be the least effective)"

All feedback mechanisms used at Highdown should be considerate of the following guiding principles:

- Effective feedback tends to focus on the task, subject and self-regulation strategies: it provides specific information on how to improve.
- Feedback should be timely and can be effective immediately after and some time after learning.
- Feedback can come from a variety of sources.
- Different feedback methods can be effective, and feedback should not be limited exclusively to written marking.
- It's important to give feedback when things are correct – not just when they are incorrect.
- Feedback should allow students to focus improvement on a narrow area of their work/skill e.g. 2-3 target areas.
- Feedback should increase the extent to which students are owners of their own learning and enable action to be taken.
- A feedback loop should identify gaps which are closed through responsive teaching.

Students at Highdown will have a 'diet of feedback' with teachers selecting the most appropriate form of feedback at the most appropriate time for the most appropriate task.

The diet of feedback:

- May take different forms (written or verbal, individual or whole class).
- May come from different sources (teacher, self, peer or digital).
- Can be done at different times (within or between lessons or deliberately delayed/interleaved).
- Will differ depending on the subject and context of what is being practised.
- Will have different foci (feedback on a task/product, a process, or students' self-regulation).
- May be withdrawn gradually (on product or process) and focus more on self-regulation once students are sufficiently proficient to become independent.
- Where appropriate, may contain an examination grade.

Written feedback

Written feedback may take many forms and should not be expected to be in the form of extensive prose at the end of each piece of work. For example, written feedback may take the form of specific questions through a piece of work aimed at closing gaps or extending the answer. Furthermore, written feedback may be provided through a checklist/tick list identifying key strengths and specific areas to improve. Class work will not be marked through written feedback. It is expected that regular summative assessments will receive meaningful written feedback to support learning and progress.

Similarly, coded feedback may be provided whereby a code is written on the work which relates to specific area(s) for improvement shared by the class teacher. Written feedback may also be focused on a very specific aspect/focus within a piece of work rather than on the work overall.

Verbal feedback

Verbal feedback is as valuable as written feedback. It is, therefore, important that students respond to this to improve their work. This may be in response to monitoring a class set of books or it may be given during the lesson. Verbal feedback may be provided as 'live marking' during the lesson as the teacher circulates and assesses progress in students' work or as 'whole class feedback'.

Whole class feedback

Whole class feedback is where a class teacher reads all students' work and then summarises common strengths and areas for improvement which are then shared with the whole class. This format also encourages teachers to share examples of excellent work and in real-time model how other examples could become excellent. This form of feedback also encourages metacognition as students will need to use the whole class feedback to reflect on their own performance.

Self and peer assessment

This form of feedback encourages students to compare their own or someone else's work to a set of success criteria or a mark-scheme. This should enable students to, overtime, develop their fluency with success criteria, and in examination years, their understanding of assessment objectives. Through peer-feedback, students also get to see a variety of ways to achieve the success criteria.

Digital feedback

Several online platforms used in school are 'self-marking' and allow students to receive immediate and more frequent feedback, depending on students' usage of the platform. Some platforms will provide a summative result to identify gaps in knowledge and monitor performance over time, and others will build up a profile of strength and weakness and signpost to additional input to attempt to plug gaps, as well as suggest additional questions based on the misconceptions. In many cases, teachers will have back-end access to the data collected by these platforms and can use this to inform their responsive teaching.

Feedback on extended tasks/projects

Extended tasks/projects should, where possible, be broken down into 'chunks' which allow the opportunity for regular monitoring and feedback (of any type), which will help students understand how they are progressing and address any areas for improvement/development. By breaking the extended project/task down in this way, students will have the opportunity to build improvements into their final outcomes.

The fundamental purpose of feedback, like any process we teach, is that students can do something increasingly well without us. Effective feedback builds self-regulation and self-efficacy, therefore repeated and revisited feedback loops should encourage student metacognition, to plan, monitor and evaluate their own work, so they can close their own gaps in the future.

Over time, students will learn that it is the process of self-regulation that leads to progress. This requires careful teacher explanation, modelling, and review, which involves the students. Teachers' time is therefore best deployed when planning these opportunities and then fading feedback over time.

Supporting literacy

To support all students to improve their literacy, including developing vocabulary (tier 2/3), any SPaG errors will be highlighted in the feedback students receive. Students will be encouraged to act on and correct any errors identified, and a common 'literacy checklist' will be used to support students with this process.

Monitoring and evaluating the policy

Class teachers are responsible for applying this policy in their planning of learning and their daily classroom practice. Staff are encouraged to attend JPL sessions and use the Coaching for Excellence programme when they identify areas for improvement in their own practice. It is every class teacher's responsibility to ensure that students receive an appropriate diet of feedback to support their learning and progress, with written feedback being provided for at least regular summative assessments.

Curriculum Leaders will monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching in their department through lesson observations, learning walks, curriculum sampling and the use of Class Charts/Teams. It is their responsibility to take action to ensure the policy is adhered to. Where there are concerns about quality of learning and teaching, Curriculum Leaders should support their colleagues through informal mentoring or referring them to the Coaching for Excellence programme.

Senior Leaders will monitor and evaluate that the policy, and ensure that it is adhered to, in a variety of ways, including through lesson observations, learning walks, curriculum sampling, student interviews, the use of Class Charts/Teams and through seeking parental views. Senior Leaders will decide on an annual Academy Focus for staff after analysing trends in this data.

Governors will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the policy through feedback from Senior Leaders and through observations, for example during Governor Learning Walk Weeks, and through the Headteacher's Report.

All evaluation of feedback will be framed around these three key questions:

1. Do students know, remember, understand, or can do more because of the feedback?
2. Is this sustained, so mistakes, errors and misconceptions reduce over time, rather than repeat?
3. Is this, in part, because students are more able to self-regulate feedback, by spotting and correcting mistakes and errors independently?

Quality Assurance will engage teachers in a professional dialogue which encourages open reflection on how their feedback has been used to improve, rather than prove progress.