



The John Fisher School

Teaching and Learning Policy (including Capability)

Responsible: Governors' SLAW Committee

Next Review Date: June 2022

*Nurturing young Catholic gentlemen
Aspiring for Academic, Cultural & Sporting Excellence*

“The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be ignited.”

Learning is a lifelong process that is not restricted to the classroom. Staff and students bring a range of cultures and experiences that can be drawn upon to enrich and stimulate the school environment. The focus of this policy is the learning that takes place in the classroom. However, such learning will take place within the ethos of the school as a whole.

Why do we need a policy?

- ☒ Our core purpose is to encourage learning
- ☒ Learning can take many forms
- ☒ Our teachers are our lead learners
- ☒ JFS will not improve without a whole school focus on learning in the classroom
- ☒ Our vision for JFS is for every boy to receive a high quality education
- ☒ National agendas – personalising learning, appropriate pathways are based in learning

What are the Core Principles?

1. Our boys learn effectively when they are challenged to think, to enquire and to have high expectations of their potential
2. The characteristics of effective learning are boys showing the confidence to explore their own thinking and adapt information to suit a purpose
3. Conditions required for learning to take place are to be found in a supportive, calm and challenging environment where students and teachers are encouraged to take risks
4. Learning is most effective when students and teachers are moving just beyond their comfort zone and work together to explore and analyse.
5. Learning will happen most effectively when boys are inspired and motivated by stimulating teaching and stimulating resources.
6. Learning happens best when we can inspire intellectual curiosity.

What is Deeper Learning?

Academic Research by the likes of Guy Claxton has focused on the concept of Deeper Learning. This is vital if we are to achieve a model of lifelong learning and sustainable progress in our exam outcomes. ***Deeper learning requires the following: longer term activity, collaborative learning, pupils making sense of something, use of technologies, development time spent at home/out of class, lots of tutor contact, pupils making connections across subjects.***

Our planning for PLTS across the curriculum recognises this, but so too must Departments and teachers in their planning for learning.

1 AIM

To raise achievement by promoting an enthusiasm for learning through effective teaching. Students and staff will have high expectations of each other.

STAFF WILL:

- ☐ Understand that individuals may vary in learning style and preference
- ☐ Be aware of the individuals in their classrooms, their abilities, attainment and interests
- ☐ Be able to use a variety of teaching styles
- ☐ Be reflective and plan for improvement, taking into account prior attainment
- ☐ Apply the school rules consistently

PUPILS WILL:

- ☐ Be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning
- ☐ Have opportunities to explore a range of learning styles and become aware of personal preferences
- ☐ Develop understanding and tolerance of the strengths and weaknesses of others
- ☐ Follow the school code of conduct and classroom rules

2 POLICY INTO PRACTICE

The following points need to be addressed before planning lessons or unit plans:

- ☐ PRIOR ATTAINMENT: What levels have individuals reached within your subject and in other subjects?
- ☐ LEARNING STYLES: Do the tasks set suit the range of learning styles?
- ☐ GIFTED AND TALENTED: Is the work/questioning sufficiently challenging for the More Able Students (MASPs)?
- ☐ EAL: Is the work accessible?
- ☐ SEND: Is the work appropriate? Liaise with the SENDCo and if appropriate the attached LSA.
- ☐ TEACHING TECHNIQUES: Is there sufficient variety to maintain learning, motivation?
- ☐ LITERACY/NUMERACY/ICT/PSHE: How are you able to address any of these strands within your planning? Can you create opportunities to develop these areas?
- ☐ PLTS: Are there opportunities to improve skill levels?

3 CLASSROOM ROUTINE

The Steer Report into Behaviour states:

(Principles and Practice – What Works in Schools: Practitioners' Group 2005)

“All schools should:

- *ensure all staff follow the learning and teaching policy and behaviour code and apply agreed procedures*
- *use commonly agreed classroom management and behaviour strategies*
- *ensure that all teachers operate a classroom seating plan.”*

This means that at JFS, it is essential that we adhere to the following procedure.

- Class must line up in an orderly manner
- Teacher to greet the class – set the tone. There has been a great deal written about the Teacher's Stance. It is your classroom.

- Use a seating plan
- Boys to stand behind desks and get equipment set out – in particular, journals
- Register the class in SIMs. This should be done within the first 10 minutes of the lesson.
- Set the lesson objective and as much as possible, set the homework. This will give you time to check the task is written properly in journals, especially for the SEND pupils.

The following structure is not mandatory but can be a useful structure for an effective lesson:

- Starter : The Engagement Phase (Phase 1)
- The Teaching Phase (Phase 2)
- The Learning Phase (Phase 3)
- The Plenary Phase (Phase 4)
- At the end of the lesson:
 - Class to stand behind desks
 - Dismiss class on time

Learning is easiest when new ideas are fitted into concepts, which are already understood and relate to an individual's culture and frames of reference. Students need to be engaged and actively involved in their own learning. Learning is not a passive activity.

Using the latest Ofsted guidance there is no approved format of lesson structure and we encourage teachers to be creative and flexible in their approach. At JFS, we believe that lessons should be planned carefully. The four phase lesson structure is a useful structure to ensure effective progress and learning. Mini-plenaries are most effective, and may well lead to lesson phases being adapted:

1. The Engagement Phase.

Activating prior knowledge through a Starter Activity that may link to prior learning and/or stimulate enquiry. Students arrive in a range of states of focus, emotion, attitudes, moods, experience...and a Starter is essential to set out the lesson. At this stage the Lesson Objective must be made clear. We recommend that this is presented for display at the start of the lesson.

2. The Teaching Phase

This is our bread and butter, where new knowledge and new learning is introduced. But we must be aware of the distinction between teaching and learning. Our planning for Phase 2 should be based around the Key question "What do I want my students to learn?" We may naturally want to perform and impart our wisdom, but whilst there is no replacement for the excellent teacher, students' learning is our core purpose.

3. The Learning Phase

All individuals do not learn in the same way. Neither do they have one fixed method of learning all the time. Most people use a variety of styles but may have preferences or a style which suits them best. Teachers at the JFS must take this into account in the planning and delivery of Phase 3. There is a body of research into learning styles, and it is clear that we cannot determine a student by a preferred style. In general terms we should be planning for variety. The three main types can be summarised as follows:

- **VISUAL LEARNERS** – *learn best by seeing and watching: Demonstrations, Pictures and symbols, Video, Diagrams, Charts, colours*
- **KINAESTHETIC LEARNERS** – *learn through physical and practical activities where they can move and touch: Drama and role-play, Experimental activities, Sequencing / sorting, Using practical equipment.*
- **AUDITORY LEARNERS** – *Like to hear stories and explanations, perhaps repeated on an individual basis: Story Telling, Role Play, Summarising, Explanations, Music, Rhyme/Acronyms.*

The brain works best when it is trying to make sense of something. Learning tasks should encourage enquiry, and collaborative learning.

4. The Plenary Phase

Our brains can quickly forget. We are aware that a planned Plenary will give all students the chance to consolidate the key points of learning. It is vital that time is created for this essential and simple task.

4 PLANNING

Planning for curriculum delivery should be based on a three-stage model:

i. Curriculum Map An overview across a Key Stage

ii. Unit Plan An outline of each unit, explaining learning intentions, resources and differentiation

iii. Lesson Plan There is no requirement to provide written lesson plans during an observation as there should be clear evidence that the activities/phases have been planned to allow appropriate progress for all students.

We must consider the skills that we are trying to develop across each section of planning. The content, whilst crucial, is also a vehicle for skill delivery. Do we want our students in this lesson/scheme to be developing their collaborative skills, their research skills, their ability to assess, etc. When we plan our learning, we must ask "What skill am I seeking to develop here?" not simply "What content am I trying to cover today?"

5 RECORD KEEPING

Accurate and up-to-date record keeping is vital. This will enable staff to keep records of individual and class progress and will inform planning for future lessons. Staff should use their planner to record the following:-

- ☑ Lesson content
- ☑ Record of individual pupil progress, homework, classwork and coursework
- ☑ Prior attainment SATs, Mock SATs, exam grades, test performances and other progress data

Staff should keep an accurate and up-to-date knowledge of SEN/MAS/Medical needs details and plan for appropriate strategies.

Teacher planners should be reviewed by Subject Leaders and Line Managers as part of their monitoring role. These opportunities will be identified in the academic calendar. Records must also be handed over whenever there is a change of teacher.

6 STUDENT GROUPINGS

Students should be arranged in teaching groups in a way that promotes the most effective learning for all.

The school has established the principle of grouping according to ability, especially at KS3. At KS3, Maths and Science are set together, and English takes the lead in grouping students for a range of "Humanities" subjects in Years 8 and 9. Where subjects are set, the criteria for composition of each set must be made clear to students and their families. These would normally be performance in end of unit tests, assessments, mock SATs and other school exams. Regular review of the make-up of sets must take place allowing pupils to move up or down as necessary.

Students should also be grouped within each lesson to maximise their learning. The use of seating plans in group work, for example, is very effective.

7 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITY (SEND)

Teachers are informed of the individual needs of students through the school register of special needs and also the EAL register. A number of pupils have Individual Education Plans (IEP). Department and individual teachers are required to take this information and strategies into account when planning and delivering the curriculum. Internal memos and bulletins inform staff of amendments to SEND issues.

Teachers are responsible for referring to SIMs in order to access student information including IEPs, advisory notes, etc.

8 HOMEWORK

Homework is to be set and marked in line with the agreed school policy to allow students to reinforce, consolidate and extend their knowledge and understanding. Teachers must consider the type of tasks they set, rather than merely asking students to complete classwork.

Research, extension work, revision, background reading and preparing presentations are some examples of homework that will provide variety and challenge.

Teachers must ensure that all homework set is in compliance with their department scheme of work/programme of study. This will be monitored through book scrutiny by the Subject Leaders and/or Key Stage Coordinators.

Teachers will ensure that all homework is entered in the 'Show My Homework' programme on the school's website. This allows students to access homework and associated resources while at home and encouraged them to organise their time effectively. In addition, parents/carers are encouraged to monitor their son(s) homework on a regular basis through this programme.

9 BOYS' LEARNING

In general terms we have to be aware that boys and girls can learn differently. Boys benefit from a sharply focused, brief introduction to a topic or lesson to make the work relevant. They tend to see tasks as things to be completed and then move on to the next activity. They are less willing than girls to go over their work to improve and refine it. Boys can enjoy an element of healthy competition. As an example, if you ask for reasons why something happens, boys will often stop at one. Therefore set a target of 5 reasons. Teachers need to be aware of the debate on boys' underachievement and structure lessons to take this into account in their planning.

10 SUPPORT

Raising achievement is a key focus at the John Fisher School. Staff inset is structured around this. Sources to help staff use more effective teaching methods include:

- ☐ Inset training from external courses
- ☐ Department based inset, eg sharing good practice at Department meetings
- ☐ School-based training
- ☐ Peer observation system

11 REWARDS and SANCTIONS

Students respond best when praised for good effort and work. Staff must make use of the reward system to praise, encourage and motivate their pupils.

- ☐ Verbal comments eg "Well Done", "Thank you"
- ☐ Written comment in Journal
- ☐ Letter home
- ☐ Phone call home
- ☐ Sending student and / or their work to the Headteacher, Director of Learning, Subject Leader or Form Tutor

Staff need to refer to the B4L Policy and system for sanctions. It is vital that B4L strategies are followed consistently and that these sanctions are applied fairly and decisively. Learning takes place when boys feel safe and when the classroom management is sufficient to encourage and enforce good behaviour.

12 PEER OBSERVATION

This is designed to support staff by sharing good practice between colleagues and may involve working together in planning a lesson or unit and lesson observation and feedback. It is intended to be supportive and to assist staff increase their expertise within the classroom. Senior Staff / Line Managers can be available for class substitution to allow peer observation. If a teacher is going to try out a new technique, the presence of a “critical friend” can ensure that a) the activity takes place, b) it is assessed, c) it is reviewed.

We have a great deal of expertise within the school and we should be keen to share this. Teachers can use PPA time to set out their own programme of Peer Observations with colleagues.

13 DISPLAY

Lively and interesting displays of work have an important impact on the school and the classroom environment. Well-displayed work demonstrates to students, teachers, parents/carers and visitors the value that is placed on student’s work. A display can act as a stimulus to classroom activities, illustrate the processes of investigating and experimenting as well as celebrating the outcomes of the student’s project.

Displays are best when they show the process of learning, as well as the end product. A display recognising the stages behind learning, leading up to the final piece of work are both more stimulating and more illuminating.

Displays, which include the original source material, as well as the work, which has developed from it, can give a true sense of time and progression and illustrate the value of investigation. A display that is informative will need the explanation in the form of labelling and text.

Students should be involved in the display. Their contribution to the selection of work and its explanation give opportunities for talking about their work and the work of others. It also allows students to express preferences and make comparisons, thus aiding language development

14 THE ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT IN LEARNING

Departments have a key role in the implementation of the Learning policy. Teachers function effectively with the resources and support of a department behind them. It is also the role of the department to ensure consistency in the curriculum, offered to students across each year and key stage, fulfilling the objectives of the National Curriculum

Departments are required to set up efficient systems for recording data, so they can monitor and evaluate departmental progress. Staff will need to make use of whole school reporting systems to track individuals. Departmental schemes of work, exemplar portfolios and individual tracking data should be accessible to all Departmental members so that continuity can be maintained as staff and teaching groups change over time.

Departmental time should be given to the review of learning, including individual students at every Departmental meeting. Student progress needs to be a standing item on every Departmental meeting agenda. Where necessary positive comments or cause for concern can be passed on to pastoral or special needs staff. Part of the role of a line manager will be to monitor the implementation of the teaching for learning policy within a Department.

15 MORE ABLE PUPILS

A number of students at JFS are considered to be More Able. Staff should be aware of these students. The needs of these students need to be addresses when planning lessons.

TOP TIPS for providing for MAPs

1. Actively promote the use of dictionaries by having them readily available and visible
2. Initiate competitions students can enter
3. Promote independent learning by encouraging the use of library and project work
4. Have a list of extra books students may wish to obtain from the library
5. Have extension work on the board *before* the start of the lesson
6. Ask open ended questions
7. Use challenging texts
8. Provide a chance for students to assess their own strengths and weaknesses
9. Set up extension classes
10. Use school and dept data systems to identify progress regularly.