THORNHILL ACADEMY

Quality of Education Policy

2023/2024

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Consilium
Academies
Enriching Lives, Inspiring Ambitions

Introduction and purpose

As an institution committed to providing high quality education, Thornhill Academy follows the 2014 National Curriculum in England curriculum. We believe that a strong foundation in education is vital for our students' future success, and it is our goal to ensure that every student receives an excellent education that prepares them for further study or the world of work.

Our classroom ethos

The curriculum at Thornhill Academy has been designed to ensure that every child is challenged. We are committed to teaching our children the best of what has been thought and said.

Our aim is to ensure that children develop their intellectual abilities by accessing a range of subjects, delivered by an expert in that field. In addition to this, we have a bespoke co-curricular offer in which children can further their gifts and talents. We expect all children to participate in at least one co-curricular activity.

We have a firm belief that all our students are capable of excellence. We understand that excellence is a habit which must be practiced every day. Therefore, we insist that the work our children complete requires thought and effort. We also insist that it is presented to the highest standard.

We expect students to adhere to our high expectations, so everyone can learn effectively and so everyone's potential can be fulfilled.

SOLAR

Our teaching method follows the SOLAR framework.

Our policy is centered around five key components: Starter, Objectives, Learn, Apply, and Review. Through the consistent application of these components, we aim to engage and motivate our students, facilitate deep understanding, and encourage the application of knowledge in real-life situations.

Starter

At Thornhill Academy, we believe in the importance of engaging students immediately with a retrieval starter. This involves activating their prior knowledge and recalling key pieces of learning from earlier in the curriculum. By starting the lesson with a brief review, we help students make connections between their previous learning and the current lesson objectives. This approach not only reinforces prior knowledge but also prepares students for the new material they are about to encounter, enhancing their understanding and retention of the subject matter.

Objectives

Sharing the objectives is crucial in motivating and making the lesson relevant to our students. We make it a priority to clearly communicate why it is important for them to know and master specific skills or pieces of knowledge. By making the objectives explicit, students understand the purpose and relevance of the lesson, fostering their inherent curiosity and willingness to learn. We firmly believe that when our students understand the "why" behind their studies, they become more engaged and motivated to achieve.

Learn

The "Learn" component of our policy focuses on teaching the necessary concepts for student progress. We employ various instructional strategies, with an emphasis on modelling, to demonstrate the thought process and path to success. Through modelling, we show students how to approach and tackle challenges, cultivating their problem-solving skills and critical thinking abilities. Regular checks are conducted to ensure that learners have developed the desired level of understanding, allowing us to address any misconceptions or gaps in knowledge promptly.

Apply

The "Apply" component encourages learners to use the newly acquired knowledge and apply it to relevant activities, assessment questions, or real-life situations. This phase facilitates the deepening of understanding and reinforces the relevance of the taught skills or knowledge. Applying what they have learned allows students to see the practical and real-world applications of their studies, which not only boosts their motivation but also develops their ability to transfer knowledge to new contexts.

Review

Reviewing and reflecting upon the lesson outcomes is an essential part of our teaching approach at Thornhill Academy. Effective plenaries play a pivotal role in solidifying learning, aiding recall, and allowing students to demonstrate their progress.

Student demographics in the classroom

Our students with SEND access the same standard of education and are supported to achieve our ambitious end points by their classroom teachers where necessary through methods such as modelling, scaffolding and chunking. The same is true for students who have English as an additional language.

Assessment

Assessment for learning plays a crucial role in our approach. We believe that gathering data in the classroom and adapting our teaching accordingly is essential. To achieve this, we make use of various strategies, such as the use of mini whiteboards, which allow for immediate feedback and adjustment. Additionally, we incorporate a "purple for progress" task every five lessons. This extended starter activity helps inform our teaching by identifying common misconceptions among our students. We respond to this data by planning appropriate activities to address them.

Marking is an important aspect of our assessment process. We use a green highlighter to indicate excellent work and a pink highlighter to highlight areas where misconceptions may be present. Following marking, all students participate in a POW (Perfecting Our Work) Call to action. This allows students to reflect on their learning and make improvements based on the feedback they receive. To address common misconceptions across the classroom, we may also use coded feedback, which enables targeted intervention and support.

Our teachers aim to reduce their workload by focusing on meaningful written comments. When necessary, teachers write comments that prompt actions from the students. These comments are composed as questions, encouraging students to engage critically with their work and take ownership of their learning.

To ensure consistency and identify key assessment tasks, we use purple stickers to show our common departmental assessments. These stickers help us track important milestones in our students' progress. Additionally, we assess the presentation of work in students' books at this point, emphasising the importance of neatness and organisation by using PROUD.

Our approach to maintaining high standards extends to the presentation of students' work. We follow the PROUD principle - Pen, rule off, Oops (mistakes are neatly crossed out), Underline the date and title, and Draw diagrams in pencil. This consistent approach encourages students to take pride in their work and fosters a sense of professionalism.

Summative assessment plays a vital role in our curriculum. We calendar regular assessments, which report a percentage to provide a clear indication of students' progress. This percentage also allows for comparison with peers who started at a similar point, ensuring fairness, and evaluating individual growth.

Literacy in the classroom

One key aspect of our literacy curriculum is the emphasis on reading. Through the use of reciprocal reading techniques, students are encouraged to actively engage with the disciplinary text, promoting greater understanding and critical thinking skills.

In addition to reading, we place great importance on the correct usage of spoken vocabulary. Our students are encouraged to use appropriate and precise language in their everyday communication. This not only enhances their speaking and listening skills but also supports their development as confident and articulate individuals.

We recognise the significance of explicit teaching of key vocabulary, and we implement the SOLO approach. Key vocabulary is highlighted in orange to draw attention to its importance. This method allows students to develop a strong command of language and enhances their ability to express themselves effectively.

Our books are marked using the following literacy codes:

C - Capital letters needed
P - Punctuation incorrect
SP - Spelling mistake
V - Incorrect vocabulary
GR - Grammatical error
//-- new paragraph needed

Conclusion

Thornhill Academy is dedicated to delivering a quality education that meets the rigorous standards set by the 2014 National Curriculum in England. Our commitment to SOLAR teaching, effective assessment for learning, and high-quality feedback helps us provide a comprehensive educational experience for our students.

Policies to be read in connection with this policy:
- Trust assessment policy
- School curriculum policy- in development
- SEND policy
- PP policy
- EAL policy