

Teaching and Learning Policy

2021/2022

PARTNERSHIPS | OPPORTUNITY | INTEGRITY | EQUITY | EXCELLENCE | PEOPLE-

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Thornhill
Academy

Enriching Lives, Inspiring Ambitions

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1. Vision

Our vision is for all our students to make outstanding progress and achieve grades which will open the door to the future of their choice, regardless of background and circumstance. We want students at Thornhill to be curious and develop a thirst for knowledge; to be resilient and to value effort; to understand that sometimes failure is an essential part of the learning process and to recognise that developing a positive, 'can do' attitude will help them to set and achieve aspirational goals.

The classroom is at the heart of everything we do at Thornhill. If we are to achieve our vision, we need to ensure that we are developing a thirst for knowledge in all of our students.

Teachers are expected to:

- Show outstanding knowledge and passion for their subject area.
- Know their impact – evaluate the effect they are having on students learning and adjust teaching accordingly.
- Be skilled in formative assessment practices, assessing students' progress thoroughly throughout the lesson, changing the course of the lesson as appropriate.
- Know what students know, and what they need to do to improve in the different aspects of the subject
- Use assessment data, assessment of current performance & assessment objectives to plan effective lessons
- Set clear intentions that students understand
- Provide students with appropriate and timely written or verbal feedback that will improve pupil's work.
- Differentiate the work appropriately to effectively challenge all learners.
- Challenge and inspire students, expecting the most of them, to deepen their knowledge and understanding
- Manage students well and insist on high standards of behaviour
- Use Homework to reinforce and/or extend what is learned in school
- Recognise and act upon any differences in the standards of achievement or progress made by different groups of students, for example to include: Pupil premium, SEND, etc.
- Take responsibility for their own professional learning. Professional Learning at Thornhill – Never Stop Learning
'Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better'
Dylan Wiliam

The purpose of this Teaching & Learning policy is an attempt to promote consistent practice, ensure clarity of purpose and engage staff in an ongoing debate. It is an opportunity to reflect upon aspects of our practice that, as a school, we hold to be effective. It is important that we recognise the role of the teacher as an expert and build upon this. There is not a recipe for expert teaching. The following information should be viewed as a guideline for staff to work within and beyond.

2. What Expert Teaching Requires

Expert teaching requires....

....*knowing the students* enables you to assess their needs and effectively raise their expectations. When is their engagement drifting? Why might this be happening? Do they need some help or should you leave them to figure this out? These questions can only really be answered if we know our students well, through our ***differentiated seating plans*** allows us to know our pupils and plan accordingly. Learners need a trusting, fair and safe environment that acknowledges that they 'may not know' and will make errors in learning.

....high levels of *challenge* - Appropriate challenge ensures that students have high expectations of what they can achieve. Robert Coe contends "Learning happens when people have to think hard." This seems like a great starting point and is directly connected to Daniel Willingham's proposition that "Memory is the residue of thought." What we think about is what we will remember and thinking 'hard' is more likely to produce long-term retention.

....engagement We need our students to engage in what is happening within the classroom. Engagement means that 'they will be thinking about that we want them to think about' and therefore learning is more likely to take place. Lessons must get off to a flying start, with students provided with a purposeful '**Do Now**' at the beginning of every lesson.

....explanation & modelling It is critical that new material is effectively explained in order for students to be able to move to other aspects of the learning process. Once information has been explained to students, they need to know what to do

with it. The best way for students to see what to do is for an expert to model the process. The emphasis of the modelling stage is on building procedural knowledge.

....effective questioning is a key part of what takes place in the classroom. Effective questioning can spark discussion, assess current performance and provide deeper levels of challenge. Through quality **cold calling** (questioning), we can increase our participation ratio and force our students to think. This is a key part of the learning process. We are far more likely to transfer something to long-term memory if we think about it. Effective questioning can also ensure that students are accurately using subject specific language within their answers.

....feedback. Effective marking and feedback is crucial in order to determine the next steps a student needs to take to improve their work. Sound marking and feedback practices lead to high levels of differentiation as students work on the content or skill that will move them forward.

....skilful formative assessment of student performance. This will enable the effective scaffolding of next steps within the lesson and beyond. Expertly used it will enable a teacher to judge where next to take the lesson. It is important to acknowledge that learning takes place over time. We need to reflect on this carefully as teachers and consider how we will change this improved performance into learning.

3. Management of Teaching & Learning

It is important that teaching and learning is monitored in order to ensure that all students receive the best education that can be provided.

Monitoring and evaluation

Leadership (SLT and Head of Dept) drop ins allows for consistent monitoring of standards from which feedback will be provided.

The HoD is responsible for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy across the department
- Regularly discussing items related to Teaching and Learning at Departmental Meetings
- Highlighting and disseminating effective Teaching and Learning practices within and across departments
- Ensuring pupils work is assessed and marked in line with the whole school policy
- Collating the findings from book and work reviews, as well as lesson drop ins, to form a regular part of the departmental self-evaluation process

4. Homework

Homework is set in order to:

- Encourage pupils to develop the skills, confidence, motivation and self-discipline needed to study effectively as independent and life-long learners
- Consolidate, reinforce and extend what pupils know, understand and can do at school
- Extend school learning
- Involve parents and carers in pupils' learning and keep them informed about what pupils are doing at school
- Help pupils to get to grips with managing particular demands, such as GCSE coursework

Homework activities might include the following:

- Short or long answer questions or pieces of writing
- Project based learning
- Learning key vocabulary
- Developing coursework
- Making a model
- READING: an invaluable support to learning
- Report writing
- Research
- Revision

- Simple experiments
- Teaching parent(s)/ carer(s) what has been studied at school

Homework procedures:

- All homework will be uploaded and can be accessed via classcharts.
- Departments must have a clear rationale for homework tasks.
- Homework will be set regularly.
- The completion of homework is compulsory and teachers will expect homework to be completed on time and to a high standard.