

Whole School Teaching And Learning Policy

The community of St. Mark's believes that every individual is created by God and is precious to God. Each person is called to serve God and their neighbour and to fulfil their potential.

St. Mark's is a Catholic School which has at its heart a love of God, the education of its students and a mission to serve our neighbours and community. We seek to foster a spirit of truth, reconciliation, justice and peace. We are committed to developing the spiritual, intellectual, moral, cultural, social and physical potential of all our members within a safe and supportive environment.

Aims

- To maintain and develop a learning environment that reflects St Mark's vision and mission statements
- To provide teachers, support staff and other adults with an opportunity to share a framework for the planning and delivery of high quality lessons
- To assist pupils in becoming effective learners

Principles of good Teaching and Learning

Research shows consistently that pupils learn more effectively when:

- teachers have high expectations for their pupils' learning and attainment
- lessons are effectively planned
- lessons have appropriate pace
- lesson content is challenging
- lessons focus on what the students should be doing in order to achieve
- lessons have discrete phases which are framed by plenaries that engage the students in monitoring their progress and linking their learning
- teachers make effective use of assessment data to plan lessons and tasks for individuals and groups of students
- teachers support pupils' application and independent work by providing prompts, literacy support, a variety of activities appealing to a variety of learning styles and further forms of support to cater for all abilities
- effective questioning by teachers is used to support learning, challenge students and engage all pupils in thinking for themselves and identifying patterns, links and structures in learning.
- teachers share with pupils the success criteria for assessing their work
- pupils have the opportunity for peer and self-assessments and set goals for their own learning.
- pupil interest is sustained through the use of a variety of teaching and learning strategies and activities
- teachers make effective use of praise to encourage pupils and engage them in challenging learning.

Elements of Effective Lessons

Outstanding lessons will show evidence of

- a culture of positive relationships between pupils and adults as well as between pupils and their peers and adults and their peers
- teachers and pupils having high expectations of the learning experience
- appropriate pace
- appropriate stretch and challenge
- effective and appropriate differentiation strategies employed ensuring achievement by all students
- highly effective questioning
- LSAs involved effectively with teaching and learning
- pupils having the opportunity to work independently and co-operatively
- pupils having the opportunity to reflect on how they learn and what they have learnt
- pupils remaining on-task and engaged with the learning
- outstanding progress made by students.

This list is by no means exhaustive. Whilst Ofsted criteria should not dictate lesson content, it is useful to have clear insight into the criteria used for lesson observations as the criteria provide focuses for effective elements of successful lessons.

Effective lessons should show discrete phases for learning. For example a lesson might have 4 phases:

- Phase 1 – engagement task (bell task/ ‘fascinator’) starter/establishing the context/ sharing learning objectives
- Phase 2 – new information – students building knowledge and skills to achieve learning objectives
- Phase 3 – application of knowledge of skills to achieve challenging outcomes
- Phase 4 – Plenary - examination of learning, identifying patterns, links and structures in learning, assessing progress against success criteria, link to prior and future learning.

Within this structure, the following list of elements may not necessarily be followed sequentially, and many may occur more than once, or at various stages during a lesson.

Bell Task

Works as a fascinator to engage students in new learning; it could involve a word search or solving a logic puzzle or listening to music or viewing an image and formulating questions on how the material links with today’s learning.

Setting the context

Sharing learning objectives and success criteria; providing an overview. They will be used to show explicitly what pupils will know, understand, and be able to do by the end of the lesson and should have a focus on a taxonomy of skills (for example Bloom's or Anderson's) to ensure appropriate challenge is offered in the lesson.

Starter

A short starter activity linking prior with new learning or which focuses the students on the skills they have and will develop further in today's lesson or a quiz to access previous learning that will be applied to a new situation

Teaching and Learning Activities

which relate to the outcomes of the lesson, are suitably differentiated for all abilities including providing stretch and challenge, are varied within to cater for a range of learning styles

Plenaries

These should occur more than once in a lesson and as learners move through the phases of the lesson so that progress can be monitored by teachers and learners. There should be a variety of methods used which might include measuring progress against learning objectives, traffic lighting, true/false game, anagrams, using key vocabulary in sentences, matching key words to definitions, identifying hierarchies in content covered so far. The learning outcomes should be revisited in a variety of ways at the end of the lesson and at various stages throughout the lesson. Future learning may be explained.

Homework

- Tasks are planned and built into a programme of work.
- Tasks are suitably differentiated.
- Pupils have sufficient time to understand and record the homework; therefore setting homework at the end of a lesson is not always the best time.

Assessment for Learning

Please refer to St Mark's Whole School Policy on Assessment for Learning.

Differentiation as part of Learning and Teaching

Differentiation can be seen as an on-going process that is accommodating the needs of individual pupils in St Mark's School. Differentiation is best achieved when based upon an informed review of the pupil's learning, through a diagnostic and formative assessment procedure.

Strategies for differentiation include

- variety of task
- targeted resource
- type of resource
- presentation of resource
- directed seating
- questioning

- appropriate pace
- support through targeted group work

The Role of the Student

For learning to be effective we can expect that students:

- come prepared for lessons
- are willing to take risks
- are willing to get involved with tasks and challenges
- are reflective
- are willing to work independently or in groups
- take responsibility for their learning
- take responsibility for their conduct
- show respect for their peers and adults
- are resourceful in their learning
- are resilient and keep trying
- will engage in thinking about their learning and reasoning in their approach to challenges

Monitoring and Evaluation

Subject Leaders will

- support members of their departments in the delivery of high quality teaching and learning
- monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their departments through a variety of methods including observations, book looks, student interviews and surveys
- encourage dialogue within their departments on teaching and learning.
- ensure/promote consistency across the department
- identify areas for professional development for themselves and members of their department
- induct new staff into the procedures and expectations in their subject areas
- model good quality teaching and learning for members of their department
- be aware of the latest developments in teaching and learning in their subject area
- ensure that school policies are being implemented within departments
- be aware of and promote the latest developments in their subject area
- support members of the department with classroom management.

SLT will

- ensure that teaching and learning at St Mark's School will support each person to fulfil their potential
- promote and ensure consistency in the quality of learning and teaching across the school
- promote dialogue with staff on teaching and learning and provide a framework for good practice

- provide appropriate INSET
- support staff with classroom management
- monitor teaching and learning through classroom observations, interviewing students, book looks, analysis of examination results, Departmental Audits, effective line management and promoting the role of peer leaders in identifying elements of effective teaching and learning.

Governors will

- support the delivery of high quality teaching and learning through the appointment of highly effective staff
- monitor aspects of teaching and learning within the school as identified in the School Improvement Plan
- ensure that the quality of teaching and learning support the School in achieving its aims as outlined in the School's Vision and Mission statements.