

Belmont School Teaching and Learning Policy



Authorised:
(Headteacher)

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'I am always ready to learn although I do not always like being taught.'
Winston Churchill

The quality of teaching at Belmont School is outstanding. Detailed planning helps to ensure pupils are highly challenged and staff convey high expectations about achievement and behaviour' (Ofsted, 2014)

1 Introduction

Belmont is a “learning community” where all are involved in a continuous process of improvement and enrichment. We believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the notion that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone. Through our teaching we hope to equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives. This teaching and learning policy is intended to promote consistency, high standards and the achievement of the school aims. People learn in many different ways and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow our children to learn in ways that best suit them taking into account the seven main areas of intelligence: linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal/group working, and intrapersonal/ reflective. At Belmont we aim to provide a caring, supportive and stimulating environment with high quality teaching where pupils can aspire to - ‘**be the best that they can be**’.

Aim:

To provide a well balanced and enriched curriculum to equip pupils for all areas of life within and beyond Belmont School.

To achieve this the school will:

- Set high expectations of learners at school that clearly define the effort and behaviours that students should put into learning in lessons.
- Communicate optimism by using positive language and designing challenging tasks.
- Demonstrate a commitment to every learner’s success, making them feel included, secure and valued.
- Create an environment where learners feel able to make mistakes and comfortable to learn from them, without feeling inadequate or foolish.
- Create opportunities for learners to develop personal qualities such as considerate behaviour and positive and tolerant attitudes that will enable them to contribute effectively to the community.

- Set high expectations of learners at home – if possible by engaging parents in their child’s learning in partnership with the school. Parental involvement and support in the home is important.
- Provide a clear moral code as a basis of behaviour which is promoted consistently through all aspects of the school that will enable them to be role models within the wider community.
- Create a ‘high challenge-low stress’ environment for learning in which students are relaxed, believe that they can learn (high self-esteem) and want to learn (motivated).
- Create opportunities for students to enjoy themselves, which is when students learn best, because their emotional state is fundamental to learning.

2.1 *As a school we aspire to:*

- a. empower teachers at Belmont with models of how lessons are planned in order to maximise learning,
- b. provide common criteria against which excellent teaching and learning practice can be developed, celebrated and disseminated,
- c. ensure a common high quality of experience for all students to help maximise each individual’s potential, whilst supporting creativity and individuality within teaching and learning,
- d. provide an insight into the review and development of current and future teaching and learning practice, which enables staff and students to remain stimulated and focused,
- e. provide opportunities for staff to share good practice with other teachers and to encourage continued professional development, as part of our whole school learning community.

2.2 **The National Curriculum**

In line with the National Curriculum we create and adapt our curriculum to provide an accessible and relevant programme of study. This ensures an appreciation of creativity and achievement.

3 The Environment:

- Rooms are tidy, attractive and safe.
- Furniture is adaptable to a variety of teaching and learning styles.
- Resources are stored carefully, safely and clearly labelled. Staff and pupils are familiar and receive regular training for the use of these resources including information technology.
- Stimulating and relevant displays are produced, including those with children’s work or those of a multi-media nature.

4 Organisation and planning

4.1 Our schemes of work consist of 3 phases ;Long term, Medium and Short term. We agree a **long-term plan** for each class group. This indicates what topics are to be taught in each term, and to which groups of children. We review this long-term plan on an annual basis.

4.2 Through our **medium-term plans** we give clear guidance on the objectives and teaching strategies for each topic. As we have adapted the National Curriculum to our pupils' needs, we take our medium-term planning for those subjects directly from the guidance documents.

4.3 Our **short-term plans** are those that our teachers write on a weekly or daily basis. We use these to set out the learning objectives for each session and to identify what resources and activities we are going to use in the lesson. Wherever appropriate, teachers look for ways to make cross-curricular links in their planning.

It is deemed as good practise for all teachers to put their planning on the common area to share themes and topics with other staff and to assist cover if it is needed.

Our school fully supports the principle that young children learn through play and by engaging in well-planned and structured activities. Teaching in the Key Stage 1 class will build on the children's experiences in their pre-school learning. We do all we can to build positive partnerships with nurseries and pre-school providers in the area. The class teacher will continually assess the skills development of each child and record this using Pupil Asset software or another suitable assessment system. This assessment forms an important part of the future curriculum planning for each child.

We are well aware that all children need the support of both their parents and teachers to make good progress in school. We strive to build positive links with the parents by keeping them informed about how their children are being taught and how well they are progressing.

6 Quality Learning is:

- when students are captivated and enthused by what they are learning,
- an active process – a product of doing rather than receiving,
- linked to prior knowledge,
- supported by both the teacher and other students, and takes the form of interaction, collaboration and teacher intervention,
- collaborative through cooperation, dialogue and creating knowledge with others,

- centred on the learners' responsibility for their own learning. They are able to exercise choice, develop goals, plan their approach and work independently,
- reflective, enabling learners to monitor and review their learning,
- where learners make considerably better progress than may be expected and
- when students display a strong desire to participate
- is assessed on a regular basis and data is analysed to ensure all pupils are making expected progress and used to inform new targets and communication with parents.

7 Quality Teaching:

- provides carefully structured activities matched to students needs,
- gives students some responsibility for their work and independence,
- develops well planned, prepared and paced lessons that maintain high levels of interaction with the class,
- provides ample, challenging work stemming from expert knowledge of the curriculum, how to teach it and how students learn,
- maintains high levels of student involvement in tasks,
- creates a positive atmosphere in the classroom through excellent relationships, incorporating high levels of praise and encouragement,
- uses a variety of approaches where strategies and techniques are well selected and time is used productively,
- uses homework effectively, particularly to reinforce and extend what is learned in school
- uses effective differentiation to suit the needs of all pupils,
- is assessed through regular lesson observations that form part of the performance appraisal process, in conjunction with progress and attainment of pupils.

8 The role of the subject leader

8.1 The role of the subject leader is to:

- keep up to date with developments in their subject, both at National and Local level,
- provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject across all the Key Stages in the school,
- support and advise colleagues on issues related to the subject including planning, assessment and evaluation,
- monitor pupils' progress in that subject area,
- provide efficient resource management for the subject.

9 Lesson planning:

All lessons should contain the following elements in some form to enable us to unlock a student's full potential and hence maximise their progress and level of attainment:

9.1 Learning Objectives and Outcomes are identified and shared:

This needs to be a two step approach in which students are told not only the purpose of the lesson but also what the teacher expects in terms of outcomes from activity. There is a need to communicate why they are doing what they are doing and how it fits into the bigger picture of the subject or their wider learning across the curriculum at the start of each lesson. This is displayed as WALT's and WILF's within the classrooms (We Are Learning To What I'm Looking For?)

9.2. Review Learning to Link and Consolidate:

Learning review helps to create links with previous learning. This helps build secure foundations for subsequent learning, so that learners can progressively develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, attitudes and values contained in the curriculum.

An effective lesson should be organised into a sequence of distinct learning episodes with a beginning (teacher or student input), a middle (activity for students) and then a quick check for understanding before moving to the next episode – until the end of the lesson, at which there might be a longer review time (plenary). Students remember more from the beginning of a learning activity than they do from the middle. They also learn more from the end of the experience than they do from the middle. It follows that it is beneficial to create lots of beginnings and endings in a lesson. Review should be part of all beginnings and endings of all lessons and episodes, and therefore its effectiveness is important to learning. A review of learning done toward the end of the lesson is to consolidate learning and its retention (plenary).

9.3. Variety of Learning Activity:

The main activities of lessons are critical in making learning an enjoyable and challenging experience. These should stimulate learning through matching teaching techniques and strategies to the range of learning styles and needs within your class, and indeed groups within that class, to actively engage all students. Teaching techniques and strategies will make use of all the different learning styles, so as to maximise student's strengths, and respond to relative weaknesses. Lessons should provide opportunities for students to show and develop their skills and abilities to work both independently and collaboratively.

This might be achieved through:

- being confident, flexible, open-minded, willing to experiment and embrace change in terms of your own teaching style, and adapt appropriately.

- planning and delivering a range of activities that match the maturity of the learners and the material to be learned, reflect different learning preferences and involve high levels of time on task for 'making sense' of information. This may often be achieved by offering students choices and by negotiating learning strategies with students.
- using creativity and imagination, and the resources offered by new technology, to engage, enthuse, challenge and support learners, and reward their effort and achievement.
- engaging in a dialogue with students that centres on effective learning; what it looks like and how it can be developed.
- tasks set in a time context or that are 'time bonded'.
- the students being aware of the timing in the lesson and of the longer term deadlines.
- activities set in a sequential order that promotes progression and complexity of learning.
- assessment having informed the decisions behind which activities are selected and how the students are grouped for them.
- students being involved in planning, developing and evaluating their own activity and learning experiences.
- activities which are varied in order to access all learning styles and intelligences especially for more complex needs pupils .
- the sequence of tasks that students are engaged in, allowing for appropriate variation in the pace of learning, and the level of challenge.

The suggested average concentration span corresponds roughly to chronological age plus one or two minutes. More open ended tasks may be set over longer periods of time with older pupils. It is important therefore to remember that variety doesn't just happen; it needs to be planned according to what best meets the needs of the individuals within our classes.

9.4. Differentiation to Enable All Learners to Succeed:

Differentiation can be seen as an on-going process that is accommodating the needs of individual students in our school. It ensures that teaching allows most learners to make at least their expected progress in relation to their capability. It will also stretch the less able to work as close to their capability as possible. Differentiation is best achieved when based upon an informed review of the student's learning through a diagnostic and formative assessment procedure. Differentiation within classes should therefore take account of the baseline and targets /outcomes that each student has been set in the context of reaching their full potential. Learning tasks and activities and teaching and learning methodologies may therefore need to be adapted.

These modifications are made at the short term planning stage where the decisions about differentiation are informed by assessment. This might be achieved:

a) by TASK:

Because of their different strength and aptitudes, a range of tasks spanning abilities can be an effective way of differentiating.

b) by RESOURCE:

- Layout, design, graphics and readability of the resource.
- Using pupil-friendly storage and retrieval systems
- Training the pupils to use a variety of resources independently.
- Variety of mediums i.e. bigger striking implements, marker pens and poster paper.

c) by RESPONSE:

The response of the teacher/adult/fellow student is a form by which differentiation can be achieved. Marking of a student's work is an important medium for differentiation by response.

d) by OUTCOME:

Students working on a common un-differentiated task will inevitably produce different outcomes to the task.

e) by GROUP:

Differentiation by group is an important way to allow purposeful use of resources (including the other students in the group).

f) by SUPPORT:

Some students need greater support than others. There are a number of strategies that can provide support including using the skills of Learning Support Workers in the classroom to create a positive environment for learning.

10. Assessment used Formatively to Involve Students in their Learning

Long term objectives form part of each student's Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) and short term targets are recorded in the pupil progress files termly.

Belmont School is committed to continual and ongoing assessment using Pupil Asset. The key focus of assessment in teaching and learning must be to enable students to be continually aware of where they are now in their learning, where they can or need to get to, and most importantly how best to get there.

This might be achieved through:

- sharing learning objectives with students,
- recognising the standards to aim for by showing students exemplars of work previously produced by other students,
- sharing assessment criteria with students very early on in tasks, in a way which is easy for them to understand,
- providing the basis for varied and effective feedback and development points for students to help them realise their potential by making them active partners in their own learning,

- developing students' questioning skills,
- promoting confidence among learners and being aware of students' preferred learning styles,
- developing students' peer and self assessment by providing experiences and activities that enable students to be involved in assessing and monitoring their own and others' achievements,
- marking, assessment and reporting which ensures that feedback is provided to teachers and students about progress in order to support future teaching and learning,
- ensuring that assessment yields information that is useful in helping to improve *teaching*; helping teachers to get to know students and to plan work with appropriate pace and challenge and
- ensuring that assessment yields information that is useful in helping to improve *learning*; helping students and parents to understand how they learn best, and how well they have learned.

Assessment is of prime importance in informing teachers' future planning and activity with classes and in its influence on student motivation and self-esteem. It must be both constructive and sensitive. Also our aim in sharing this information with parents effectively is key to students being supported as well as possible at home.

11. Promoting and evaluating the policy

This will be achieved and supported by:

- A commitment to improving teaching and learning for individuals, departments, the school and the wider community.
- The development and improvement of learning and teaching as the central component in the school and department development planning cycle.
- The use of continued professional development (courses, coaching, inset, mentoring, training and so on) within the cycle and framework of performance management.
- The formal and informal monitoring systems which are already in place, augmented by lesson observation, peer observations, teacher planning scrutiny, work sampling, canvassing of staff and student views to inform the assessment of the following outcomes of effective learning:
 - a) More connected knowledge – of things, people, action
 - b) Greater complexity of understanding
 - c) Wider range of skills and strategies
 - d) Increased engagement and motivation
 - e) A more reflective and self-directing approach to learning
 - f) More positive emotions about and increased desire to learn
 - g) A sense of membership and participation in a learning community
 - h) A greater facility for interacting and learning with others
 - i) The promotion of oneself as a 'lifelong' learner

And most importantly the fun, sense of achievement and sheer enjoyment that learning brings.

12 Monitoring and review

This policy links with the following school policies:

- Assessment Policy
- Equality & Diversity
- Induction Procedures
- Performance Management Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

Governors will:

- know that staff are constantly striving to develop professionally
- support the Headteacher and the staff in the implementation of this policy
- play a full and active role in ensuring our aims are met.

This policy was drawn up by the Senior Leadership Team, working in consultation with the whole staff. Its use and effectiveness will be supported and monitored by the Senior Leadership Team, on behalf of the Headteacher and Governors.

The Governors' adoption of the policy demonstrates its importance for the school. The policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that effective on-going self-evaluating procedures are in place and adjusted where necessary.