Ranelagh School

Teaching and Learning Policy

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<th>Date reviewed by SLT</th>
<th>May 2016</th>
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<td>Date reviewed by Designated Governor</td>
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<td>(O;Subject Areas;Policy Documents)</td>
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“You can mandate adequacy but you can’t mandate greatness, it has to be unleashed.”

Joel Klein

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Introduction

Ranelagh is a progressive, demanding and vibrant place in which to teach and learn. The school has a tradition of academic achievement and a strong Christian ethos – in which students thrive. Our principal objective is the pursuit of excellence in everything we do; central to this is the quality of teaching and learning. In this policy our approach and procedures are outlined.

Our Student Learner Profile

We believe that students in our care require not only the knowledge and skills for academic achievement but need to develop for the future. With this in mind, our student learner profile aims to promote the qualities of: confidence, empathy, curiosity, resilience, creativity and independence.

Why are these learning qualities important?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Students who are self-assured are more likely to take risks, see mistakes as learning opportunities and be open to new learning experiences. They have poise and self-belief; this means that even when learning is difficult, they will persist.</td>
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<td>Resilience</td>
<td>Students are able to keep learning even when they find work difficult. They show flexibility and stamina. When they need to work for long periods on challenging problems they persevere.</td>
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<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Students who are keen to enquire will ask questions and have a genuine interest to learn more. They are inquisitive and work hard on further developing their skills and knowledge. This means they are more likely to understand their own abilities, interests and future aspirations.</td>
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<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Students can listen, understand and learn from others. They are well placed to work as part of a team. They show warmth, humour and positivity and collaborate effectively with others.</td>
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<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Students use inventive, resourceful and original ways to learn. They produce learning outcomes that demonstrate their ingenuity and imagination.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Students are self-motivated, they understand how they learn and can manage themselves. They have self-belief, can access resources and know how to learn successfully beyond Ranelagh.</td>
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Behaviour for learning

Ranelagh has an ethos which is based on Christian values. Respect for all is essential in developing a learning culture (the school has been awarded the RRS Award – Level 2). We believe in high scholastic ambitions, a vibrant student voice and exciting opportunities for collaborative learning.

We believe students’ learning is most effective when:

- high expectations of learning and behaviour are the norm and are clear to all
- individuals respect one another
- lessons are designed to engage students in demanding activity
- teacher talk is concise and always useful to students
- positive behaviour is praised and reinforced using our merit system
- teachers look to understand student circumstances, de-escalate difficult situations where possible and keep conversations positive.

Where behaviour disrupts learning:

- The student will be informed discreetly and given the chance to show improvement. The focus will be on the behaviour and not the individual – it could be that simply moving a student, giving them choices or explaining any possible consequences, will suffice.
- If this continues the diary will be used to record a written warning giving detail of the issue (on occasion it might be necessary to write a comment).
- A recurrence will constitute a case of defiance. A comment in the diary and contact with the Curriculum Leader or even a member of the Senior Leadership Team are likely actions – this might mean sending another student to reception for SLT support (this will be followed by a letter home to inform parents).

Staff should share any behaviour concerns with their CL (department detentions should be used) and where a pattern persists, they should contact the Head of Year, detailing the action taken so far (a full school detention should be issued). All behaviour that significantly disrupts learning should be recorded on a Behaviour Database slip and given to the pastoral support staff based in the school office. \*NB. It is important to note that students should never be sent out of the classroom on their own for behaviour concerns.\*

Our teaching and learning principles

We believe great teaching and learning do not follow a set formula. Instead, our teaching and learning principles are used to guide planning, practice and reflection. Based on fostering our learner qualities, our principles reflect the most effective research and practice. Great teaching is about careful reflection, consideration of students’ starting points, high scholastic expectations, memorable learning experiences, student involvement in demanding activity, checking that students have made progress and fundamentally about enjoying learning. The following table explores the relationship between the key principles of teaching and learning and the episodes of learning. It should be noted that not all aspects will necessarily be present in a single lesson.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Episodes</th>
<th>Learning Areas</th>
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<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teaching</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Extended Learning</td>
<td><strong>Feeling</strong></td>
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<td>Getting Feedback</td>
<td><strong>Feeling Supported</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feelings</td>
<td>Learning <strong>Knowledge and Skills</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying Being</td>
<td>Learning <strong>Knowledge and Skills</strong></td>
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At Rathgar we focus on teaching and developing work outside the classroom. Students develop their independence by undertaking their learning and work.

Teaching and learning are a process of feedback and give this to encourage and support each other to improve their work and share ideas. Teachers and students work together to find their own answers and support each other to improve their work and share ideas. They will make ready to ask for feedback and use this to improve their work and share ideas.

Feelings of being supported, encouraged and challenged help students feel part of a positive and inclusive environment. They thrive on tasks that are creatively planned to their ability and want to learn more. Students participate and listen actively to others - they are clear.

In the lesson, students are ready to learn – they actively listen, show initiative, have correct equipment and produce high-quality homework in preparation for the lesson.

Providing valuable opportunities that make learning memorable and meaningful, students are developed to be resilient, independent and to embrace views and promote higher moral principles.

Teachers encourage their passion for their subject with authority, homework and tests. Effective and engaging, curriculum, motivating lessons, successful learning, meaningful marks, students.

Knowledge and skills for learning...
Lesson Planning

Planning should be proportionate to the experience of the member of staff and their familiarity with the subject being taught. Our teaching and learning principles are provided to aid reflection, planning and practice.

It is important to be mindful of:

- Individuals’ circumstances and academic targets – which are recorded in mark books or equivalent
- Students’ starting points for learning – including their understanding of previous learning, homework, attainment and interests
- The need to devote sufficient time to learning about learning (so students can learn how to learn)
- The importance of developing our learning qualities of confidence, empathy, curiosity, resilience, creativity and independence
- The need for clarity of learner outcomes and how these will be checked
- The need for sufficient challenge and engagement
- The provision of time to learn, consolidate and practise
- The quality of questioning and dialogue which should include accurate use of language, checking of learning and extending learning further
- The importance of providing opportunities to reflect on feedback in a meaningful way
- The need to set homework that consolidates, extends or is used to prepare for future learning
- The availability of effective learning resources and the use of time
- The provision of support to extend the most able and those with any additional special need

All curriculum areas will have clear, useful and up-dated schemes of work to help plan individual lessons. The lesson plan pro-forma (See Appendix 1) is available in the Teaching & Learning area of the school network.

NB. It is important to consider that there is also a need for specific teaching which prepares students for examination success. This might include careful analysis of the course specification, examination technique and the development of what success looks like in an examination context.
Observing lessons

Lesson observations provide an opportunity to encourage and support colleagues. They give the observer the opportunity to help improve teaching and learning – to aid the teacher to recognise the relative effectiveness of their practice and any areas for development. It is important that the observer does not look to judge the lesson (or grade the lesson using Ofsted grades) when giving feedback. The aim is to promote reflection and high quality dialogue.

What happens before a lesson observation?

- Agree the focus – this could be linked to the Performance Management target, department focus or whole school priority.
- Agree the group, time and when feedback will be given.

When observing lessons:

- There should be minimum disruption to learning – although students will be asked about their learning and work.
- Observe the learning, nature of challenge and knowledge and skills being acquired.
- Notice how attentive, engaged and interested the students are.
- Take accurate notes on the cause and the effect of teaching and learning; consider how these notes will aid feedback and encourage reflection and dialogue about learning.
- Consider the quality of work.
- Consider whether the work sufficiently challenging? And appropriately presented?
- Consider feedback – is it meaningful and helpful for students?

What happens after a lesson observation?

- Feedback should be based on the agreed focus.
- Verbal feedback should be given within 48hrs and written feedback recorded on BlueSky within 7 working days.
- Feedback should not be judgemental – but focused on the relative effectiveness of teaching on learning.
- Consider the questions that are most useful to tease out reflection.
- Areas of significant strength should be highlighted on BlueSky, with the possibility of sharing these with others.
- Areas of improvement should be highlighted, strategies for improvement discussed and actions agreed - this should be highlighted on BlueSky.
- Summarise the discussion - ensuring any action is agreed and by when it should be undertaken.

Teaching that is recognised as not being effective due to a range of concerns will be addressed by SLT and/or the Headteacher.
Support for developing practice

A vibrant and progressive learning culture needs to be nurtured and honed. Teachers have the right and responsibility, to access high quality CPD throughout their career.

Our performance management process is designed to support and challenge our teaching and learning practice. Reflection, trialling new practice and evaluating effectiveness are key to continual improvement - our professional learning starts with our own reflection and analysis of needs. Our self-review document (Appendix 2) can be used to help with this process.

Performance management objectives are designed to focus on developing classroom practice. Support in achieving these objectives comes from our CPD provision. In-school support includes:

- department training often led by CLs
- professional training days
- our Directory of Expertise – colleagues that can offer support and exemplify best practice in key areas or offer mentoring or coaching
- workshops
- TeachMeets

External courses should be discussed and agreed initially with line managers and then booked via BlueSky. They should be based on needs identified by the school priorities, department plans or performance management objectives.
Marking and Feedback to improve learning

High quality feedback is constantly proven to improve student learning. The following practice is designed to help students make improvements with their learning whilst being considerate of staff workload.

- **Share and expect the highest quality work** – using the maxim, ‘*if it’s not your best work, it’s not finished.*’
  Work that doesn’t reflect the student’s ability should be challenged – drafting and re-drafting helps students understand quality and builds resilience.

- **Marking should credit effort not talent – praise should be purposeful.**
  Students should be clear on what learning is secure and where they need to further improve.

- **Marking should be used to improve learning** – consider how the marking going to improve student learning.
  Key learning points need extra attention – other tasks might be better assessed using peer or self-assessment.

- **Marking should elicit student action** – students take responsibility for their own learning through their response.
  Students should understand where they need to improve and respond to questions or advice fully.

- **Marking should focus on literacy, this includes subject specific spellings.**
  All students need to develop their writing skills and should have clear direction on what they need to improve – special attention should be given to commonly misspelt words and specialist vocabulary.

*NB. See department specific policies*
The importance of homework

We believe homework helps in developing our student learner profile characteristics - especially independence and resilience. Homework should consolidate, enrich or extend learning. Homework is set depending on the homework time-table. Students should have sufficient time to record homework accurately in diaries and this needs to be checked.

Guidelines for dealing with homework concerns

- Ask the student for the reasons behind the issue – discuss these with them.
- Complete a ‘Missing homework’ sticker (yellow) with relevant action point for the student and fix in diary.
- Note this action in your mark book.
- When the student shows you the completed homework, sign the sticker in the diary.

Still no homework?

- If the homework is still not done, the student should be detained at break or lunchtime in order to complete the homework. This action may be taken by the individual teacher or within the department (according to Departmental policy)
- This action should also be recorded in your mark book; a Behaviour Database should also be completed. You may wish to make reference to this in screening, particularly if repeated.
- For Year 12 and 13 issues, the ‘white slip’ system should be used.

Significant homework issues

(This may be typically characterised by 3 separate instances of late/incomplete/poor quality homework (i.e. 3 stickers) during a half-term).

- Discuss the concerns with your Curriculum Leader, including actions taken.
- The Curriculum Leader, with the class teacher, should meet with the student to discuss the issue.
- The Curriculum Leader will then send a letter home, explaining the concerns and the actions to be taken (standard letter available). In some cases, a telephone call to a parent may also be relevant.
- The letter must be copied to the HoY (for file) together with any notes from a telephone call.
- HoY will monitor patterns regarding homework, using feedback from tutors, teaching staff and Curriculum Leaders, and will take appropriate action such as further contact with parents, use of a Homework Report Card, closer monitoring of the school diary etc.
- Significant homework concerns are dealt with by SAM via the Homework Report Card
- HLS/EAC to be informed of actions taken and, if necessary, take additional action e.g. formal letter, meeting with parents.
Challenging the More Able

Ranelagh typically has a larger than average number of higher attaining students and many are very able. Students may be identified at different stages in their school career, as they develop at different speeds, or as their talents become apparent through a particular project or experience. We will take advantage of information and data about students from a variety of sources.

**It is the responsibility of every individual class teacher to be aware of the students on the register, and to plan appropriate opportunities for them within each lesson.** This will include:

- Encouragement of scholastic study wherever possible.
- Highest expectations of learning and challenge.
- Personalised activities that aim to stretch, enrich and deepen understanding.
- Provision of detailed feedback which develops a rich understanding and encourages further study where appropriate.
- Allowing individuality of response.
- Encouragement of creativity and imagination.
- Satisfying developmental stage rather than chronological age.
- Stressing of process rather than content.
- Encouragement of high quality thinking.
- Use of higher order thinking skills.
- Provision of many open ended situations and questions.
- Opening up further opportunities for research.
- Inclusion of an abstract quality for both number and language.
- Inclusion of opportunities for problem solving and decision making.

A rich diet of activities, trips, clubs and teams should be offered by all departments. Attendance is monitored on Assessment Manager and G&T students are monitored – ensuring students are actively encouraged to engage in appropriate activities.

The pastoral needs of the more able students are recognised and supported by the school. Support structures are necessary which recognise their need to work with others of the same ability at times. All staff should bear the following points in mind:

- Students of high intellectual ability can appear way ahead of their chronological age.
- Some more able learners find their ability isolating and become ‘loners’.
- Under-achievement may be caused by more able learners feeling threatened by peer pressure.
- Some more able learners appear ‘different’ from their peers.
- All students respond to praise; it is just as important to more able learners.
- There is a danger that praise is not given because expectations are so high.
Supporting SN students - Implementing the Code of Practice in every lesson

All Teachers are teachers of SEND and have responsibility for the progress of their students, the differentiated and personalised learning and the development of materials, in different formats. All staff, paid or voluntary, hold a duty, in relation to their role and responsibilities within the school, to promote equal opportunities. Within both the classroom and extended curriculum activities, all Ranelagh staff are committed to ensuring:

- The contributions of all students are valued.
- High expectations are set for all students.
- Working towards developing effective strategies that facilitate access to learning through a variety of teaching and learning styles, with appropriate modification of both the indoor and outdoor learning environments.

LSAs work in partnership with teachers, to provide feedback about the student(s), to help in setting targets, monitoring and evaluating programmes, recording information and contributing to student reviews.

The work of an LSA is complex and involves many skills, including but not limited to: direct support to access lessons; liaising with teaching staff; helping in setting targets; implementing IEPs; providing targeted interventions (in groups or for individuals); carrying out, when appropriate, physiotherapy or occupational therapy exercises; arranging, at the discretion of teaching staff, the adaptation of teaching resources to meet individual need.

Additional provision in the school is characterised by three waves of intervention:

**Wave 1** is based on the concept of ‘Quality First Teaching’, with well-defined differentiation and the appropriate use of learning aids. Quality First Teaching includes:

- highly focused lesson design with sharp objectives
- high demands of student involvement and engagement with their learning
- high levels of interaction for all students
- appropriate use of teacher questioning, modelling and explaining
- an emphasis on learning through dialogue, with regular opportunities for students to talk both individually and in groups
- an expectation that students will accept responsibility for their own learning and work independently
- regular use of encouragement and authentic praise to engage and motivate students.

**Wave 2** - These vary between departments and year groups and can include, but are not limited to: small groups and sets; departmental homework clubs and study support sessions; subject specific catch up sessions; provision of additional differentiated materials, access to alternative examination courses; the use of Individual Provision Plans (IPPs); departmental report; AD (HoY) report card following screening.

**Wave 3** - These are provided following consultation with the SENDCo and the Assistant Headteacher (Student Support and Guidance), on a needs led basis.
Some students are identified as having needs which are in excess of that which can be provided for within the school’s general provision (above). Such students have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a Statement of Needs (Statement). From September 2014, EHCPs will replace Statements: existing statements will be transitioned into EHCPs at key stage transition points across the next 3 years.

(See Staff Handbook - C5  SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

Links to further reading

Ron Berger An Ethic of Excellence: Building a Culture of Craftsmanship with Students
Brown, Roediger and McDaniel Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning
Carol Dweck Mindset: How You Can Fulfil Your Potential
Jonathan K Foster Memory: A Very Short Introduction
Pauline Gibbons Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning: Teaching Second Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom
Daniel Khaneman Thinking, Fast and Slow
Oli Knight & David Benson Creating Outstanding Classrooms: A whole-school approach
Doug Lemov Practice Perfect & Teach Like a Champion
Alistair Smith High Performers: The Secrets of Successful Schools
Dylan Wiliam Embedded Formative Assessment