



Teaching & Learning Policy

Applicable from 27th January 2022

Signed: 

Chair of Governors

1. Rationale

Throughout the five year 'Plashet journey', we actively work with our students so they enter post 16 provision as well qualified, knowledgeable, inspiring and confident young women who can thrive in a changing world. We continue to hold dear our school motto 'Working together to promote and celebrate achievement' and are therefore committed to providing positive opportunities for learning and development within a caring and inclusive environment so our students may achieve academic excellence. In realising these goals, teaching and learning is core to our purpose.

Teachers are the experts; it is their role to think carefully about the body of knowledge our students hold in each discrete subject and how best to convey this knowledge and expertise to our students. We fundamentally believe that all students have an entitlement to learn about 'The best which has been thought and said' (Matthew Arnold). Therefore, we deliver a carefully sequenced knowledge-led curriculum model. There is clearly defined discrete substantive subject knowledge that students are expected to learn and use in their thinking as they progress through the key stages to become knowledgeable multi-disciplinary thinkers.

All our systems are designed to meet this core purpose. This policy is designed in such a way to support the most effective pedagogies in the classroom to achieve our aims. Teaching & learning at Plashet therefore, is research led and informed by our own best practice. We also take innovative risks with confidence in our practice. The policy does not seek to stifle the creativity of the Plashet teacher; rather, each feature is designed to 'guide' the teacher in those practices we believe are important to achieving our aims.

In this respect, all teaching staff are supported to find the style that promotes the most progress and has the best impact in their classroom. It is a professional expectation of our teachers that they pursue:

- Constant growth of subject knowledge
- Regular review of existing and new pedagogies
- An understanding of cognitive science and its application to learning
- Engagement in innovative practice, ongoing self-reflection, peer evaluation and effective CPD

2. Aims of Teaching and Learning at Plashet School

This aims of teaching and learning at Plashet School are designed to support our school vision alongside the following principles of teaching and learning which also guide the work in the school:

- The Social, Moral, Spiritual & Cultural Development of students
- The Promotion of British Values & Citizenship
- Application of work related learning and the eight Gatsby benchmarks
- The Teacher Standards and post threshold standards as applicable
- Teacher Appraisal Procedures
- Plashet Self Review Procedures

It is an expectation all Plashet teachers are leaders of knowledge in their specialism and design academically rigorous lessons. Teaching and Learning therefore offers all students regardless of background or prior attainment the opportunity to learn the substantive knowledge required to be autonomous learners, capable of multi-disciplinary thinking.

Learning at Plashet School is:

- Carefully sequenced around agreed substantive subject knowledge
- Planned to support the principles of effective memory and retention
- Planned to support effective memory transfer
- Planned with consideration for cognitive load theory
- Planned to promote disciplinary thinking

Teaching at Plashet:

- Follows established effective student learning routines
- Promotes high aspirations and expectations for all students
- Is motivating and thought provoking ('Memory is the residue of thought' Willingham)
- Is mindful of individual levels of desirable difficulty, maintaining a level of stretch and challenge for all students
- Provides opportunities for deliberate practice
- Uses effective formative assessment strategies to measure learning against defined objectives
- Is responsive to learning
- Promotes reading and offers opportunities to engage with the most complex tiers of vocabulary in each subject discipline
- Stimulates thinking, and supports students to participate in thoughtful speaking, discussion, debate and dialogue
- Encourages students to ask questions and seek answers
- Endeavours to support meta-cognition and articulation of the learning processes whenever appropriate
- Encourages students to self-regulate and learn independently while embracing the intrinsic rewards of achievement and the joy of learning for its own sake.

3. Inclusion

Plashet School is an inclusive non-selective school. Lessons are designed with the needs of all students in mind and are inclusive throughout. They are sufficiently planned so that all students might participate. Planning accommodates students with different needs and at different levels of ability. However planning always facilitates stretch and challenge for all students. Lesson design is sufficiently open ended to allow students to produce responses at different levels of sophistication. Verbal and written feedback is sufficiently differentiated to support students to make progress from a range of starting points. Any additional adult support or small group interventions should result in accelerated learning for those students involved.

Differentiation is a long-term process that mirrors the long-term nature of learning and progress for individual students. We believe differentiation does not always mean tiered resources and tasks in every lesson. Nor does it always mean that a lesson where every student is doing the same task is fundamentally worse than one where students do have different tasks. Effective differentiation allows different students to achieve and make progress at their level of attainment relevant to their starting point. In designing learning the teacher should seek to establish that all students could effectively access the learning and that the 'planning for learning' allows each student to make progress according to or beyond their individual starting point.

4. Planning for Learning

It is the responsibility of each teacher to use their expertise to design and deliver learning in line with departmental schemes of learning. Lesson design will support students to:

- Master the substantive and disciplinary knowledge of the discrete taught subject
- Remember what they have learnt
- Read, write and speak with confidence
- Meet the wider aims of teaching & learning at Plashet School (Section 2)

At Plashet School, we promote a mastery-learning model. This is reflected in all subject curriculum planning. Mastery learning breaks subject knowledge into clearly specified objectives with learning associated checkpoints pursued until they are achieved. To achieve mastery our curriculum is planned using a spiral model (Bruner). Key concepts underpin each discrete subject curriculum across two key stages of study to support the development of schemata and disciplinary thinking. This involves structuring subject curriculums clearly, so complex ideas are taught at a simplified level first, and then re-visited regularly at more complex levels later on. Therefore, subject course content is taught at levels of gradually increasing difficulty (hence the spiral analogy).

Students are provided with deliberately designed opportunities to master disciplinary knowledge in all subjects. Students are provided with repeated opportunities to deliberately practice the relevant 'skills' and to think critically in each subject once the relevant substantive knowledge has been mastered.

The following should be taken into consideration when planning learning:

Subject Knowledge

Teacher subject knowledge is used to strengthen and deepen learning. Teachers should be confident with the material being taught and should use their knowledge of the subject to teach 'to the top' and promote stretch and challenge for all students through lesson design and use of effective questioning strategy. Targeted questioning is used throughout each learning episode to test student knowledge and understanding. Teacher subject knowledge should support challenging questioning, asked within a 'no-hands' culture as a rule. Once substantive knowledge has been mastered, carefully structured modelling is used to support the application of subject knowledge and promote disciplinary thinking.

Literacy and Oracy

Appropriate strategies are used to effectively support the development of students speaking, listening, reading and writing. So that all students might offer written responses at or beyond their expected level of attainment, teachers provide opportunities for clear, organised deliberate practice of writing. In subjects where extended writing is less appropriate students, produce extended tasks, which practise substantive and disciplinary knowledge designed with increasing levels of complexity and challenge. Teachers model reading aloud, all students are given the opportunity to read appropriately challenging fiction and non-fiction material as part of their lessons. Students are actively supported to explore the meaning of substantive vocabulary as it emerges. Learning is also designed to offer students the opportunity to speak. It is an expectation that all staff promote the use of formal spoken English and encourage students to improve their speaking ('say it again, say it better' approach).

Spaced Learning

Distributing studying over time, overlearning (continuing to study even after knowing the material), and frequent self-testing are the most important ways to improve students' memory. (Willingham)

This approach acknowledges that real learning does not occur in one-time episodes. Wider spacing is more beneficial than short-term spacing and generates better learning in the future. To be successful in this approach, subject knowledge is explicitly identified, categorised and sequenced across five years of study. To support retrieval practices and disciplinary thinking, the distribution takes into consideration 'desirable difficulties' (Bjork). Schemes of learning and curriculum plans demonstrate where students are exposed repeatedly to each main subject concept at regular intervals and how schemata therefore is developed throughout five years of study.

Interleaving of Subject Content

Interleaving is spacing rather than massing practice and blocking content. It includes regular low stakes testing as retrieval to aid future recall and enhance learning. (Bjork)

Interleaving offers opportunities for desirable difficulties. Where appropriate, numerous topics are weaved together in each scheme of learning to be taught throughout the year. Teaching of new content is always anchored in prior knowledge schemas, with opportunities for recall. Learning is chunked effectively to reduce the impact of cognitive load on the working memory.

Thinking

Willingham writes 'memory is the residue of thought', that students are more likely to remember something if they have to think about it. At Plashet, we plan learning to make sure that students are actively 'thinking'. We discourage passive learning and design learning to promote active engagement with subject content. This way there is a better chance students will retain their learning. If students are always thinking about their learning and in particular thinking about the meanings and significance of what they are learning, then they are more likely to remember it, and to remember it meaningfully.

Teachers at Plashet therefore take the following into consideration when designing learning:

- It is not possible to effectively 'think' around knowledge that is absent. The teaching of substantive knowledge should precede disciplinary knowledge.
- We understand new things in the context of the knowledge we already hold. New knowledge must be linked to prior knowledge with learning episodes designed to promote 'disciplinary thinking' rooted prior and new acquisition of knowledge.
- Proficiency requires practice. Deliberate practice of disciplinary thinking should be a regular feature of lesson design.
- The design should offer sufficient challenge and desirable difficulty for all students.
- What we know can change through sustained hard work. At Plashet, we always therefore talk about successes and failures in terms of effort, not ability.

Regular Retrieval Practices:

A century of research shows that practice testing (low-stakes quizzing) and distributed practice (spaced, spread out study) are the most effective techniques for learning, evidenced across ages, abilities, tasks and contexts. (Dunloskey et al)

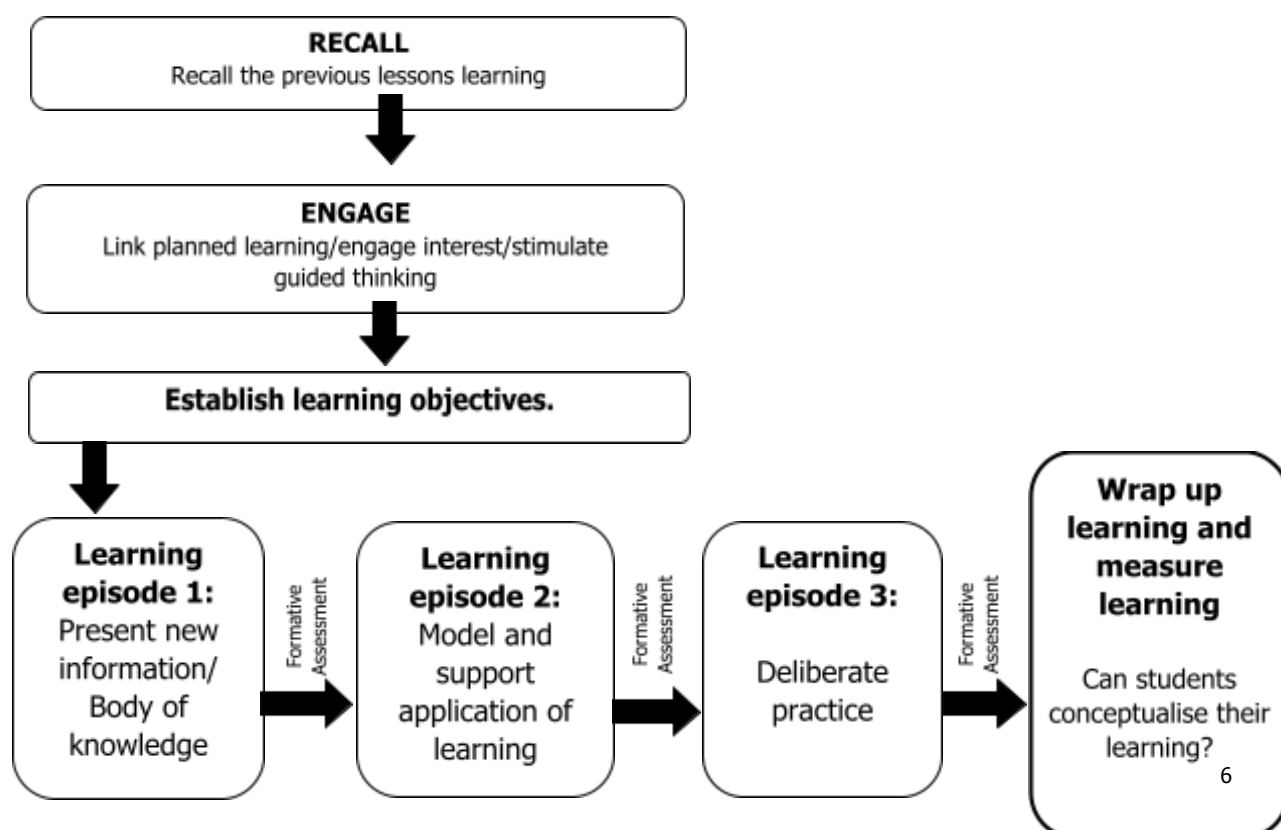
So that students retain information in their long-term memory, design of teaching and learning promotes effective and regular retrieval practices. Students are supported to retrieve subject knowledge at regular intervals. Spacing learning over time allows for regular quizzing and retesting of subject knowledge to develop the cues and 'retrieval routes' to stored information (Roediger & Karpicke 2006). Quizzes mostly take place without revision as they are designed to assess students' long-term memory rather than what they have just crammed. Teachers use this information to support them in deciding when a learning objective has been sufficiently met. The assessment of learning should be clear and systematic. Formative assessment therefore is routine and reflected in the lesson design. Teachers use this to inform the direction their lessons take. Teachers will re-teach or 'over-teach' when aware of knowledge gaps identified through either formative or summative assessment. Following whole cohort summative assessment points, question level analysis should also enable subject leaders to review and refine long and medium term curriculum plans. Teachers will re-teach content as required until they are satisfied this has been transferred to long-term memory.

Use of Feedback

The use of feedback is a feature of most lessons. Feedback can be verbal or written, live and responsive or planned in advance. Teachers should ensure the Marking and Feedback Policy is followed rigorously with all marking and feedback following school and departmentally agreed protocols. There is an expectation that students will be provided with opportunities to reflect on feedback, improve their work and be supported to make any corrections or improvements as required. Students should be encouraged to evaluate their own learning and that of others so they have an understanding of how they might improve.

5. The Learning Process

Time should be used well and should be gauged according to the level of mastery. Formative assessment should inform use of time and ensure it is rigorous and always purposeful. Some lessons may legitimately focus on input, with response and practice to follow over a series of lessons.



Formative Assessment:

This may take the form of low stakes teacher assessment and/or feedback
Teachers should respond as required, re-teaching if deemed necessary.

Evaluation of Impact

Regular review and evaluation of Teaching and Learning is an important part of our ongoing self-review procedures. Quality assurance and evaluation of the impact teaching and learning is analysed using the following information:

- Summative assessment data
- Curriculum self-review framework including termly subject learning walks, exercise book/folder review and student focus groups
- Pastoral self-review framework including termly subject learning walks, exercise book/folder review and student focus groups
- Inclusion Pastoral self-review framework including annual subject learning walks, exercise book/folder review and student focus groups
- Annual Appraisal lesson observation
- Teachers who are in the process of gaining QTS are supported through regular observations by their subject mentor and the professional tutor

Associated Policies

Curriculum Policy

Assessment Policy

Home Study Policy

Appraisal Procedures

Self-review Procedures

SEND Policy

SMSCD at Plashet School

Supporting Community Resilience