

Downlands' Learning and Teaching Policy

1) Vision

Teaching and Learning is at the centre of what we do at Downlands, and we believe that all students, whatever their ability, should receive high quality teaching to enable them to achieve their full potential.

We believe that teaching and learning should be active and engaging, and that student participation in lessons is the most effective way to enable students to achieve outstanding outcomes.

Teachers should consider the most appropriate teaching methods and strategies to engage, support and challenge all students. Teachers should use a range of methods, different teaching styles, resources and activities to create effective lessons.

We also believe that Downlands should be a professional community of learners, and that all colleagues should be engaged in developing their own practice through learning communities, departmental collaboration, CPD programmes and academic research.

2) Aims

- 75% of all students to achieve progress to target.
- To create students who are prepared for the next stage of learning.

3. Effective Outstanding Practice

3.1 Downlands' 5:

For effective learning to take place the school expects that the **Downlands' 5** are embedded in all lessons.

We have **high expectations**.

- We positively reinforce Downlands' expectations of uniform and behaviour.
- We motivate and challenge students to achieve their full potential.

We support and challenge the **progress of all students**.

- We know the progress of all our key groups of students.
- We challenge all students equally to achieve their very best by planning lessons which meet all students' needs.

We enable students to **understand their own progress**.

- Assessment is embedded in all lessons.
- Progress is reviewed during lessons and at the end of lessons.
- Feedback is regular and enables students to make their own progress.

We make **learning active** and **develop students' independence**.

- In lessons pupils work in a variety of ways.
- Lessons are used to develop students' independence.

We develop **literacy and numeracy**.

- We use lessons to develop our students' literacy and numeracy.

3.2 Learning Objectives:

Learning Objectives should be shared at the start of the lesson, and progress towards those objectives should be reviewed throughout the lesson. Students should be clear on the starting points of their learning and what progress they have made during a lesson or over a series of lessons.

Learning Objectives should be communicated in two parts with **Content and Progress**.

Content: The content refers to the topic/focus of learning for that particular of lesson, e.g:

- “ For you to understand/gain knowledge of ... “
- “ For you to consider/make a judgement about... “

Progress: The Progress refers to the assessment criteria which the lesson, or series of lessons is working towards. This should clearly demonstrate to students what they need to be able to do to achieve their target level or above.

3.3 Assessment and Quality Feedback

At Downlands we believe that effective use of assessment is a key factor in enabling students to make outstanding progress.

Departments and teachers are required to regularly assess each child's progress and it is an expectation that there will be evidence of previous assessment in marked exercise books, files or portfolios.

Formal Assessments:

Every department will have summative assessments that assess understanding, competencies or skills at key points in their planning. Formal assessments should be regular (at least once per half term), marked with A,O,B, and graded with GCSE grades.

The purpose of these assessments is to provide teachers with feedback on their students to enable them to plan for progress. The assessment should also form part of the learning process for students enabling them to make their own progress.

Independent work and homework should be marked notionally with an A (above target), O (on target) or B (below target) which relates to the individual target for that child.

Quality Feedback:

Feedback should be informative and enable students to clearly understand their progress. Feedback should focus on student's strengths and identify areas for development.

Feedback should lead to improvements in student's work and enable progress to their target grade or beyond. This could be through WWW and EBI or through dialogical marking. It is for the HOTL and teacher to develop a variety of approaches to providing high quality feedback for their students, which enables them to make outstanding progress.

The frequency of feedback should be in line with school policy.

The Key Elements of Effective Assessment Practice:

- Students know their own progress and act on feedback
- Teachers share assessment criteria through Learning Objectives
- Feedback facilitates student's understanding of their strengths and areas for development
- Students review and reflect on their performance and progress as part of lessons through self and peer assessment, one to one feedback and activities which engage them in the assessment criteria, such as dialogical feedback.
- The assessment criteria is continually shared with students throughout lessons.
- Pupils are given time in lessons to discuss progress and/or reflect on written feedback.

4. Monitoring of Learning and Teaching

4.1 Lesson Observations

All teaching staff as part of the appraisal process will have two full observations each year these will be carried out by a member of SLT or the colleague's line manager. At present these observations are graded against OFSted criteria and used to support school judgements about the quality of teaching and learning within the school.

Feedback from these observations should be developmental and support the future development of a colleague's practice.

4.2 'Drop in' Learning Walks

The senior leadership team will complete a learning walk once a week as part of the monitoring process. These learning walks will be used strategically to focus on key areas of the schools development, such as progress of Year 11 groups, pupil premium, elements of the Downlands' 5.

Any concerns will be discussed through the line management structure.

4.3 Line Management Quality Assurance Cycle

The quality of learning and teaching is monitored through collaboration between SLT and HOTLs through the Line Management Quality Assurance cycle. This cycle supports the department's self-evaluation form which highlights the strengths of departmental practice and the areas for development.

- **Data Analysis:** To be completed by HOTL based on summer exam results and discussed with line manager and in a data meeting with Head teacher.
- **Learning Walks:** These should be completed in collaboration with Line Manager, the observations from Learning Walks should be summarised on the Learning Walks proforma and used to inform the HOTLs self-evaluation form.
- **Book Scrutiny:** These should be completed by HOTL in collaboration with line manager and should be used to inform HOTL about quality of marking, and progress of students. The outcomes of the book scrutiny should be used to inform the department's self-evaluation form.
- **Pupil Voice:** Students will complete the Downlands' pupil voice survey, which is closely linked to the Downlands' 5. The feedback from the book scrutiny will be used to inform the department's self-evaluation form.

5. Continued Professional Development

At Downlands we believe that professional development is both an entitlement and a professional expectation. It is a professional expectation that colleagues engage in learning communities through joint observations and sharing resources.

Downlands aims to be a professional community of learners who are engaged in professional development through departmental collaboration, learning communities and academic research. It also aspires to develop colleagues who lead learning at all levels in departments and across the whole school.

Downlands aspires to provide professional development opportunities for colleagues at all career stages to develop their own practice and leadership of learning.

Learning Communities: Colleagues are expected to engage in a learning community. Colleagues join a community most connected to their professional needs/interests. The Communities expect colleagues to experiment with different aspects of their practice. The Communities also require colleagues to observe each other's practice and provide non judgement feedback.

NQT = Professional Studies Programme and summer learning project

NQT+1 = Academic Research project, through the Expansive Education programme.

Good to Outstanding Programme = Coaching based programme providing experience colleagues with intensive support to develop their practice from Good to Outstanding. Colleagues complete a learning project which helps to develop an aspect of Outstanding practice in their own department.

Middle Leader Programmes: Project based external course which develops aspiring middle and new middle leaders.

Senior Leaders Programme: A colleagues development is supported through associate membership of the leadership team, a whole school project and an external course.

6. Wider Learning/Homework

The objective of homework at Downlands is to:

- Encourage pupils to develop the practice of independent study
- Develop perseverance and self-discipline, planning and organisational skills
- Allow practice, where it is needed, of skills and exam technique learned in the classroom
- Permit more time to be spent on each curriculum area
- Enable classwork to concentrate on those activities requiring the teacher's presence
- Open up areas of study and to make possible the use of materials and sources of information that are not accessible in the classroom.
- Give parents (and other adults) a supporting role in pupils' work.

Setting Homework:

Homework will be set in lessons by class teachers. Students will be asked to write tasks clearly into their journals, adding further information for example, the date the homework is set and due in.

Some homeworks will be accessed via the Moodle site although the details will still be recorded in the journal. To ease transition, only the core subjects of Maths, English and Science will be setting homework for the first three weeks i.e. until Wednesday 24 September.

Details of all homework tasks will be entered onto our Information Management System (SIMS) by teachers, along with the due date. In some cases there will be a link to a Moodle page. Parents and students will be able to view all homework set via Insight.

Types of Homework Set:

Pupils should experience a range of homework tasks across all their subjects. In any subject no single task will dominate. Homework tasks could include any of the following:-

- An investigation Project
- Research
- Reading
- Drafting
- Making
- Interviewing
- Oral practice
- Spellings
- Structured Revision Preparation for future work/ lesson
Continuing/extending/reinforcing work started in class
- Exam/Assessment Practice

As well as what is formally set, pupils should always be encouraged to read fiction, non fiction, daily broadsheet papers. This extends their knowledge and interest in other areas.

Frequency of Homework:

Suggested Time allocation:

- Years 7 & 8 approximately 30 minutes per subject weekly.
- Year 9 to approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour per subject weekly.
- Years 10 -11 set appropriately to fulfil the GCSE course requirements with a suggested minimum of 1 hour per subject weekly.

These are guidelines only and the length of a homework may vary according to the nature of the task set.

Monitoring of Homework:

At Downlands tutors will check and monitor the completion of student's journals.

Tutors will check and sign journals regularly as stated, noting parental comments. They will sign the journal weekly and make any comments.

It may not always be appropriate to set homework and from time to time homework may not be set.

At Downlands it is the responsibility of all students to record all homework and ensure completion by the deadlines set. Staff WILL invoke sanctions for non completion of homework and for missed deadlines.

If pupils complete a task to a satisfactory standard within the time limit they should always be encouraged to read or research further around the subject to extend their knowledge.

HELP FOR PUPILS IN SCHOOL

For pupils who find difficulty in completing homework at home the school offers a variety of support strategies. A study support club operates every lunchtime with a member of staff to assist with any problems. Schedules of rooms and staff are posted on the tutor noticeboard. In addition the library is open every break and lunchtime and after school.

Subject staff are always willing to help pupils who have problems with a task. They must see them before the lesson.

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