

# Colchester High School



# Teaching and Learning Policy

## COLCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL Teaching and Learning Policy

We are committed to the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum, informed by the National Programmes of Study, but at the same time reflecting the particular abilities, aptitudes and aspirations of our own pupils. This policy aims to ensure that all pupils have an equal access to that curriculum, and that the quality of their learning experience leads to a consistently high level of involvement and achievement.

This policy applies to the whole school including the Early Years Department.

### **AIMS**

At Colchester High School we aim to:

- Raise levels of attainment for all pupils, enabling them to achieve their personal best
- Develop confident, disciplined and enquiring learners, able to make informed choices
- Foster a love of learning
- Foster self-esteem and personal responsibility, linked to respect for the needs and feelings of others
- Facilitate considerate and positive relationships between all members of the school community
- Ensure equal opportunities in relation to gender, race, social class, special needs and beliefs, as discussed in the Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Promote Fundamental British Values including valuing and respecting all cultures
- Provide a safe and happy work place
- Promote a thoughtful attitude towards the immediate and wider environment.
- Protect children from the risk of radicalisation and extremism under the Prevent Duty.

We place considerable emphasis on the development of basic skills in language, literacy, numeracy and ICT, and believe that these skills are fundamental to each child's ability to benefit from a wider curriculum, discussed in the Curriculum Policy. The rest of this policy document takes the following format:

**TEACHING**  
**PLANNING**  
**SCHOOL POLICIES**  
**DIFFERENTIATION**  
**RECORD KEEPING AND ASSESSMENT**  
**MONITORING AND EVALUATION**  
**RESOURCES**

## **LEARNING AND THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

### **ROUTINES AND RULES**

### **ACHIEVEMENT**

### **DISPLAYS**

### **EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **EYFS MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF LESSONS**

### **TEACHING**

Every teacher develops his or her unique style, and our school is stronger for the variety that this brings. There are, nonetheless, common features of best practice that should guide our teaching. Some of these are noted below:

- Define learning objectives clearly for each lesson and share these with the pupils.
- Plan the use of time in each lesson to ensure a balance between instruction, explanation, discussion, written and practical tasks.
- Establish clear rules and routines, and have high expectations. Be friendly, firm, fair and consistent. Give all instructions clearly and without ambiguity, and let the children know that you are in charge.
- We all learn in a variety of different ways – so make sure all pupils have the opportunity to experience auditory, visual and kinaesthetic learning.
- Be sure of your subject knowledge, particularly when you are teaching unfamiliar topics.
- Pace your lessons well, to maintain your own and the children's enthusiasm.
- Think about the questions that you intend to ask and how you will ask them. Many questions simply require the recall of information – what questions can you use to prompt the making of inferences, the drawing of conclusions? Be aware of who is answering your questions. Are all pupils required to find answers? How do you check that everyone has understood? Are girls and boys equally involved in both asking and answering questions?
- Plan lessons to ensure a balance between individual, group and whole class activities. Plan lessons that have children taking the roles of teacher or coach, as well as learner.
- Where it is appropriate, ensure that work is differentiated to provide realistic and achievable targets for the least confident, and genuine challenges for the most able. Your own grouping strategies may go some way to meeting this objective, but think imaginatively about how, for example, able pupils can be stretched by something more than simply doing a greater amount of what everyone else is doing.
- Use a brief plenary session to conclude each lesson, to draw together the strands of that lesson, to clearly explain any homework assignment, and to allow the children to ask any questions.

### **PLANNING**

All teaching staff are required to plan lessons. This should take into account key learning objectives, the activities to be undertaken and the resources required to support those activities. The means by which children's progress will be assessed, and brief evaluations that will guide future planning should also be considered. A standard template lesson plan is to be used.

Regular staff meetings will be used to help with planning. A personal copy of "The Teacher's Planner" is available for Staff to use if they wish.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES**

All curriculum and procedural documents are reviewed and updated as part of a regular cycle. The school's expectations of staff, and a detailed description of their responsibilities and obligations, are set out in the Staff Handbook, and Cognita Employment Handbook.

### **DIFFERENTIATION**

Teachers will differentiate the curriculum by:

- Task
- Outcome
- Teacher / adult support
- Questioning
- Adjusting the demand of the task
- Using additional support

Differentiated tasks will be detailed in planning. Learning objectives will be specified for all differentiated teaching. Detailed reference will be made to Individual Education Plans.

### **RECORD KEEPING AND ASSESSMENT**

Clear records of pupil progress should be maintained by all teaching staff, including any standardised test information, alongside teachers' own observations and an 'on going' commentary. Regular assessments are made of pupils' work in order to establish the level of attainment, to be analysed and to inform future planning. Practicalities are detailed in the Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy

### **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

- Pupils work will be monitored by the Head of Senior School, or Head of Lower School.
- The Head Teacher, Director of Studies, or any other middle manager will observe each class teacher in a specified curriculum area at least once per term, as part of our Performance Management procedure.

### **RESOURCES**

We hope to provide a range of resources to support teaching and learning across age ranges and the curriculum spectrum. Resources are the subject of regular audit, and the annual budget process requires a careful assessment of priorities for the replacement of consumables or resources and for the addition of new materials and equipment. Staff may contact subject leaders with suggestions for specialist materials which may need to be ordered.

Pupils will be taught how to use all resources correctly and safely, with care and respect, and with regard for Health & Safety and waste.

Care will be taken to ensure that resources reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of our society, and that all pupils have equality of access.

### **LEARNING AND THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

We believe that children are likely to learn best when they:

- Are happy, secure and confident.
- Are interested and motivated.
- Achieve success and gain approval.
- Are given tasks that match their ability.
- Clearly understand what is required of them.
- Are aware of the boundaries that are set for their safety and well-being.
- Are challenged and stimulated.

Each learning environment should be organised to facilitate learning and the development of independence, with particular regard to Special Educational Needs. We aim to ensure that children have the experience of:

- Whole class teaching, group work, One to one teaching, Conferencing, Collaborative learning in pairs or groups and Independent learning
- Making decisions.
- Working co-operatively and developing social skills.
- Solving problems.
- Being creative.
- Expressing their own ideas with confidence; listening carefully and courteously to the ideas of others.
- Developing independence and use initiative.
- Receiving support when it is required.
- Achieving academically.

In particular, for younger pupils in the lower school:

- The resources in each area will be grouped according to curriculum subject and clearly labelled.
- Writing resources will be available for use at all times, and will be centrally accessible.
- Book corners will be comfortable and attractive
- Labels and posters should wherever possible reflect the language diversity in the school
- In Reception areas for imaginative play will change regularly, in order to give opportunities for a range of play and role play, which will contribute to learning in a purposeful manner
- Pupils will be involved in the maintenance and care of all equipment and resources.

Effective learning is likely to take place in an environment that:

- Is stimulating and offers realistic challenges.
- Is calm and orderly.
- Is happy and supportive.
- Is well organised, and well resourced.

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- Is fair and disciplined.
- Is welcoming, and courtesy, kindness and respect are fostered.
- Provides equal opportunities.
- Makes clear the schools commitment to high expectations of pupils' work, behaviour and effort.
- Values and celebrates achievements.

In that environment, and from as early a juncture as possible, children should be encouraged to develop their organisational skills and independence through:

- The setting of appropriate tasks that enable them to progress without constant reference to the teacher.
- The building of their confidence and self-esteem through praise, reward and the occasional use of appropriate sanctions.
- The example set by all staff, both teaching and non-teaching.
- Co-operation.
- The exercise of responsibility and self-reliance.

### **ROUTINES AND RULES**

We believe that in the classroom, these contribute to a healthy learning environment. Children are at their best when they know where they stand. To be effective, therefore, routines and rules should be:

- Agreed by the children and clearly understood.
- Fair and consistent.
- Simple, realistic and positive.
- Kept to a minimum in number but enforced consistently.
- Based around daily activities with which the children are familiar and comfortable.

All rules should contribute to the child's understanding of the boundaries of behaviour, and should be consistent with the school's behaviour policy.

### **ACHIEVEMENT**

Children will achieve in a variety of situations and activities and often at widely differing levels. Social, physical, creative and academic achievement can be celebrated in many ways. Children are often very realistic about their abilities and about status within their peer group. They like to earn recognition and are often acutely aware of when our praise is unmerited. The achievements of all children should be recognised and rewarded by:

- Verbal or written praise by peers, teachers, Principal or parents.
- Displays of their work.
- Opportunities to perform or to share their successes, for example in assemblies or school productions.
- The awarding of stickers, house points or certificates.

Where appropriate, children should also be encouraged to appraise their own achievements, for example what mark would they have given that piece of writing?

## **DISPLAYS**

High quality displays set the tone of any classroom, and any school. They help to create a stimulating and attractive environment, and can contribute significantly to the sense of pride that children have in their school. A number of pointers to good display work are suggested below:

- Encourage variety – displays in 2D, 3D and differing media.
- Ensure that displays are changed regularly.
- Ensure that all areas of the curriculum are covered from time to time.
- Try to make some of the displays interactive – stimulating the children's questions, and eliciting their responses.
- Give all children the opportunity to see their work on display.
- Make clear and colourful labels and headlines for displays – these can have an eye catching effect.
- Encourage children to use the potential of ICT to create work for display – graphics, clip art, Publisher etc.
- Mount all work carefully – do not put up work for display with single drawing pins or single staples. To do so suggests a rushed and unprofessional job.
- Back all displays boards with colourful paper, and ideally a border.
- Keep a photographic record of past displays.

## **EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)**

In the EYFS it is recognised that children are competent learners from birth and develop and learn in a variety of ways. This learning takes place through the implementation of the early learning goals to implement the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of the academic year in which they reach five. This is achieved by developing their personal, social and emotional development; creating opportunities for communication, language and literacy; planning occasions for the child to problem solve, reason and work with number; develop their knowledge and understanding of the world; and support their physical and creative development. These areas are delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Systematic observations are taken of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. These observations are matched to the expectations of the early learning goals.

## **EYFS MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

- Pupils work will be monitored and moderated by Nursery staff and the Head of Lower School.
- Individual targets are agreed for each child.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF LESSONS**

During lesson observations, the detailed Teaching and Learning criteria is used, and this is available to all staff as a useful guide. The additional simplified examples below are given to provide further guidance:

### **Outstanding.**

The lesson is at least good in all or nearly all respects and is exemplary in significant elements, as shown by the exceptional enjoyment and progress of the learners.

**Good.**

Most learners make good progress because of the good teaching they receive. Behaviour overall is good and learners are keen to get on with their work in a secure and friendly environment in which they can thrive. The health and safety of the learners is not endangered. Teaching is well informed, confident, engaging and precise. The work is well matched to the full range of learner's needs, so that most are suitably challenged. Teaching methods are effectively related to the lesson objectives and the needs of the learners. Teaching assistants and resources are well deployed and good use is made of time. Assessment of learner's work is regular and consistent and makes a good contribution to their progress.

**Requires Improvement.**

The lesson is inadequate in no major respect, and may be good in some respects, as shown by the satisfactory enjoyment and progress of the learners.

**Inadequate.**

A lesson cannot be adequate if:

- Most learners, or a significant specific minority of learners, makes less than satisfactory progress, whether this is due to unsatisfactory teaching or the impact of bad behaviour.
- Learner's overall behaviour or attitudes are unsatisfactory, and the tone of the lesson is inimical to the development of learner's personal qualities.
- The health or safety of the learners is endangered.
- The teaching is unsatisfactory. This will usually cause the learner's progress to be satisfactory in spite of the teaching due to the good attitudes of the learners.

Unsatisfactory teaching is likely to have one or more of the following:

- Weak knowledge of the curriculum leading to inaccurate teaching and low demands on pupils.
- Work badly matched to the pupils' starting points.
- Ineffective classroom management of behaviour.
- Methods which are poorly geared to the lesson objectives or which fail to gain the interest and commitment of the learners.
- Inadequate use of resources, including assistants and the time available.
- Poor assessment.

**REVIEW OF POLICY**

This policy will be reviewed annually.