

# STRATTON EDUCATION TRUST

## Teaching & Learning Policy



Review date June 2016

**Vision: At the heart of our approach is the concept of:**

### **Equity and Excellence**

This means that at Stratton Upper School we strive to give students an outstanding and fair experience of learning and opportunity. Our aim therefore is to support every teacher to develop their practice such that they become outstanding teachers with thorough evidence of excellence in the **Teachers' Standards**.

**We aim for our students to become skilled, engaged and independent learners with the ability to make rapid and sustained progress.**

**There are 4 key areas that build the foundation of our approach to teaching and learning. These are engagement, challenge and support, independence and quality feedback**

**Engagement** makes everything else possible. Engaged students learn and make progress. It is characterised by a sense personal responsibility and involvement, of being fully absorbed by whatever it is they are doing, it is based on positive relationships across the school. Such involvement in learning allows students to step up to challenge, to make best progress and to take advantage of opportunity. It is essential to help students become independent, develop the confidence and courage to give themselves and each other quality feedback and stretch themselves to their limit. For teachers, engagement is the starting point, it is the foundation that enables sustained learning to take root and flourish.

**Challenge and support:** Without challenge there can be no progress. However we know that challenge needs to be broken down to meet the needs of all groups of learners. We expect teachers to appropriately stretch and support all learners to reach their potential. We stress the idea of teachers planning to get it right first time in lessons. Well informed planning for learning based on in depth knowledge of students' needs, means our teachers focus on the quality of their input to design well informed classroom based interventions. Students who are not able to make appropriate levels of progress are then identified by teachers for additional support.

**Independence:** Learning needs to be structured to allow students space and time to consolidate, extend and deepen their understanding. To do this they need knowledge, attitudes and habits to learn effectively. We expect staff to facilitate this via high quality planning and feedback. We know that students are intrinsically motivated and we support them to develop independence because they are keen to improve, are enthusiastic about their learning and because enjoy their work. We aim to develop responsibility, skills and resilience so that students can think about their learning and rate of progress and solve problems that are preventing them going forward.

**Feedback:** Learning needs to be structured to provide opportunities for student to receive and review frequent feedback on their progress. For teachers this dialogue informs the direction of learning activities and planning. As Learners move through the school they need to become increasingly adept at assessing progress against success criteria and responding to feedback to adapt to improve the quality of their work.

Therefore, our vision can be summed up as: Every Student Matters

- **Every student Engaged**
- **Every student Challenged and supported**
- **Every student an Independent learner**
- **Every student receiving and giving high quality Feedback**

**Appendix:** We support our staff to develop their skills and experience through observation, feedback, personalised and targeted CPD linked to PM, the sharing and celebration of good practice (**Teachers' Standard 8**).

**Engagement** is developed where there is a purposeful learning environment where routines are reasonable, sensible and understood (in accordance with our **Behaviour Policy**). Students learn well in structured, stimulating classrooms and respond well to routine, consistency and high expectations in every learning environment. **We expect teachers to** manage the learning environment to impact positively on student progress where students are displaying a sense of achievement or satisfaction at meeting a challenge and an interest in the topic. It is not characterised merely by humour or laughter (**Teachers' Standards 1 and 7**). The following, whilst not an exclusive list will assist in developing engagement over time:

- Staff and students arrive on time; Staff greet students as they enter and manage the area outside their classroom and the immediate journey to and from lessons;
- Students enter and leave the classroom in an orderly manner and are seated in a planned and appropriate fashion
- Students prepare for learning by getting organised at the start of lessons taking off coats, getting books and equipment out and putting bags on the floor;
- Students listen to the teacher and each other so that learning time in lessons is fully utilised at an appropriate pace.
- Classrooms are well organised throughout where Teacher input is structured with clear learning goals, with a variety of appropriate activities that give opportunities for students to work individually or collaboratively.
- Students have periods of time for independent work
- Achievement is recognised quickly either verbally, through written feedback or by displaying learners' work to celebrate success, encourage confidence and develop engagement.

**Challenge and support.** To support this **we expect teachers to** develop clear, worthwhile learning goals that are differentiated. All learners learn in different ways and have different learning styles so **high quality planning and teaching** needs to acknowledge this (**Teachers' Standard 3 and 4**). We ask our teachers to plan and use a range of strategies based on **knowledge of their classes to meet different needs**, to support **progress** and to develop engagement. Similarly, working individually, with peers in pairs, small groups or as a whole class allows students to learn from each other and to lead others in learning so this should be visible in classrooms. Tasks need to be appropriately challenging and differentiated (**Teachers' Standard 5**). Staff also need to make their approach towards developing **literacy, SMSC/BV** visible (**SET SMSC Policy and statement on BV**). One of many useful tools which we encourage staff to use in learning activities is Bloom's Taxonomy of thinking. This provides a hierarchy of progressively more challenging thinking. As part of our approach to Literacy **we expect teachers** to encourage students to talk about their learning confidently, developing the skills of speaking and listening to support **oracy**. Teachers are expected to plan lessons well, and although there is no requirement to show this planning the **Stratton formal lesson plan** outline has been devised to support staff in their planning covering all areas of thinking we believe to support the idea of **quality first teaching**. Equally during learning we know that by listening, observing and **skilfully questioning** staff can reshape tasks and explanations to improve learning.

We hold a firm belief in students' ability to achieve so identifying and challenging underachievement is the responsibility of us all. Together **we expect teachers to** use

relevant data to inform expectations and monitor progress. They must share this with students, address barriers to learning which may prevent progress, (such as disruptive, passive behaviour or lack of student confidence), be aware of other issues that may be affecting learning, (such as SEND, EAL, PP, AFA). To do this we must talk to students about learning in lessons to establish reasons for any underachievement, negotiate to review target, recognise progress and use appropriate praise or sanctions when work or behaviour fails to meet an acceptable standard (**Teachers' Standard 2**). **We expect teachers** to identify students who are not making the right levels of progress for additional support. Support always starts with quality first teaching. Should subsequent intervention be needed strategies include subject area intervention, Year team involvement, whole school action such as "Achievement for All" and if needs be via the input of the Learning Support Department.

**Independence. We expect teachers to** create competence in their students. Students need to have planned opportunities to become responsible for their own learning for example by being able to ask questions of the teacher or peers about their own learning, chances to reflect on what they have learned in a lesson and how they have learned it. Learning in and outside the classroom via well thought through **homework** tasks that allow autonomy in students is also important and so we expect teachers to use homework in a planned, meaningful, varied, clear and regular way (**Teachers' Standard 2** and in accordance with our **Homework Policy**).

Teachers can create competence in a variety of ways e.g. by raising students' self-esteem; arouse curiosity; apply imagination to lessons through the creation of resources and contexts for learning; make learning relevant worthwhile, useful and useable; provide choice to help students make the cognitive switch from feeling they have to do something to wanting to do something; provide challenge to stretch students and allow them the opportunity to overcome obstacles and to make learning enjoyable.

**Feedback (Teachers' Standard 6)** Most learners respond to positive praise about learning. It confirms what you already knew, dispels doubt, raises self-esteem and builds confidence. **We expect teachers to** communicate the criteria to which students are working so that students know what the final outcome of their learning should look like and are able to apply these to make accurate judgements of their own work. **We expect teachers to** feedback frequently and in varied forms, accurately using assessments to plan further learning. (**Afl**) according to our **Assessment and Marking Policy**.

- Students should be aware of their working at grade/level, their target grade/level and the steps needed to achieve that grade level; Teachers should know and record individual targets for their students, current working grades and predicted levels of progress. Ideally it is helpful to note this on a seating plan.
- Student friendly criteria should be used as part of learning.
- Students must have frequent opportunities to self and peer assess work against specific criteria to ensure they can self-assess effectively e.g. using model answers.
- Teachers should keep a record of what students need to do to improve on their current progress.
- Teachers should frequently check progress and intervene accordingly by altering planning within and between lessons. Plenaries or mini plenaries (throughout the lesson) are useful and also develop metacognition. Where feedback is immediate this is helpful. Skilful **questioning** allows staff to check understanding, decide who needs support or challenge, intervene with the whole class, groups or individuals to support further progress
- In written feedback teachers should use Marking and Assessment Policy which builds a common language for all of us to use. E.g. use of symbols or codes relating to set criteria 'WWW' = What Went Well, 'EBI' = Even Better If, MRI = My Response Is.

- Students understand that they will receive detailed written feedback periodically and selectively. However, a general principle is that they will receive written feedback once every 6 lessons.
- Other forms of feedback are also helpful e.g verbal feedback from a teacher or peer backed up with a signature and date on the students' work
- Teachers must ensure that adequate time is given to allow and require students to respond to, act upon feedback and to **“fix”** work.

### **Approval Process**

Date of approval:

Governors committee & date when policy first considered:

Review date: