

DARLAND HIGH SCHOOL
Minimum Learning & Teaching Entitlement Policy

One of the strongest challenges in terms of Learning and Teaching at Darland School from the recent Estyn inspections is that of consistency. We are all aware that as a staff we can produce good learning experiences for our pupils. The challenge to building the consistency of learning and teaching across the school lies in:

- ✓ sharing the good practice within and between departments
- ✓ maintaining a clear and unapologetic focus on learning in everything we do
- ✓ monitoring, evaluating and reviewing our practice to both demonstrate progress and to further improve our effectiveness.

In an effort to establish a common understanding of effective teaching and learning, I have collated the whole staff views on the minimum teaching and learning entitlement developed during the whole school January 2010 training day and in the School Improvement Group.

The aim of this policy is not to produce a Darland blueprint that all lessons will follow: our school has too many strengths in too many areas to produce a one size fits all model for learning. One of the major strengths of our school is the diverse styles of learning across the curriculum. To stifle that rich creativity would be counterproductive. However, it is important as a staff to state our principles that are essential for effective learning and to hold those principles in mind when planning and delivering the learning experiences of our pupils. A lesson planning template reflecting the Accelerated Learning approach will be made available.

Staff responses have been collated into 3 sets of agreed principles for effective learning:

1. the structure of learning
2. interactions within the lesson
3. tasks and activities for learning

1 Structure of learning

- Carefully considered seating plans to promote learning relationships (copies in file on teacher's desk for cover supervision)
- Attractive learning environment – displays which help pupils to develop skills, require interaction
- Teacher controlled working groups (such as home and away) that are changed at regular intervals
- Learning objectives are clearly understood and are focused on skills and context
- Meet and greet. Creates a positive social and emotional start to the lesson
- “Get them in, get them on” – getting pupils into the classroom as soon as possible and starting their learning as soon as possible
- 4 phase lesson – CONNECT – ACTIVATE – DEMONSTRATE – CONSOLIDATE – repeated as often as needed in any given lesson
- CONNECT phase used to help pupils recall previous work, to understand big picture, to see how learning will link with future lessons
- Balance between teacher exposition and pupil activity
- Planning of maximum opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their learning (to themselves, to each other, to the teacher)
- Range of learning activities offered to accommodate all preferred learning styles
- Balance of individual, paired, small group and whole class activities

- Meaningful homework to support learning: could be thinking, researching, preparing, following up class learning

2. Interactions within the lesson

- Balance of teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interactions, avoiding overuse of Q & A led by teacher with whole class
- Teacher mobile to facilitate the learning of the whole class
- Pupils have frequent opportunities to verbalise/demonstrate their own learning (not just to teacher)
- Thinking skills are developed through the use of challenging questioning. Pupils prompted to give reasons for thinking, think time given
- Positive interactions made to promote secure learning environment
- Misconceptions valued as allow exploration of thinking and of consolidating knowledge and understanding

4. Tasks and activities

- copying from the board, a book or a powerpoint should be limited
- Variety of activities to cater for all learning styles
- Activities planned to maximise pupil involvement (paired work = 50% pupil involvement; teacher led Q&A = 4% pupil involvement)
- Pupils must be challenged to process information, not reproduce it!
- Challenge and pace for all pupils in all activities (timings to be used)
- Opportunities for pupil led learning as well as teacher led learning
- Pupils encouraged to reflect on their own learning (metacognition) and skills development
- AfL quality feedback given to pupils so that they know where they currently are, where they are going and what they need to get there
- Target setting for all pupils
- Opportunities for teacher, peer and self assessment

Learning and Teaching Policy

Principles

At Darland School we believe that all pupils should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which allows them to fulfil their potential and prepares them for the challenges of a constantly changing world. Fundamental to the school ethos is that high expectations and good teaching by well qualified staff enable pupils to learn effectively and to develop the skills they will require for lifelong learning. Learning is considered to be the right and responsibility of all members of the school community.

Aims

- To provide all pupils with the opportunity to experience: the aesthetic and creative; the linguistic and literary; the scientific; the mathematical; the technological; the physical; the moral and the spiritual and the human and the social
- To provide a challenging and the flexible curriculum which provides pupils with the skills and range described in the National Curriculum
- To have high levels of attainment for all pupils, enabling them to achieve their potential
- To foster a love of learning
- To have high expectations of learning in which every pupil feels challenged and inspired to achieve
- To develop each pupil's compassion for others, self discipline and a sense of moral and collective responsibility
- To ensure equal opportunity for all pupils no matter what their gender, race, class, ability or belief
- To encourage pupils to take responsibility for and to reflect upon their own learning
- To give all pupils a sense of personal success, achievement, belonging and self esteem through recognition, celebration and being valued.

Strategies

To achieve this we:

- have a range of policies and practices which are central to our philosophy
- ensure all staff are engaged in professional discussions at subject and whole school level so that the improvement of teaching and learning is always a key focus
- provide all staff with Continuous Professional Development tailored to individual and whole school priorities
- enable the sharing of good practice within and between departments so that pupils have access to the most effective teaching and learning
- regularly update the data available to staff regarding prior achievement, current achievement, targets and estimates
- engage pupils in discussion of realistic and challenging pupil targets
- involve support staff, learning coaches and other agencies to ensure all pupils are able to access learning
- regularly monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning in faculties in discussion, between the line manager and the head of faculty, of book scrutinies and lesson observation in accordance with the Line management Monitoring Schedule.