Ysgol Maesydderwen

Teaching and Learning Policy

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Ysgol Maesydderwen

Learning & Teaching Handbook

Working Together, Achieving More
Cydweithio i Gyflawni

Reviewed January 2021

Contents:

Rationale:

This policy offers clarity about the expectations of what should happen, on a day-to-day basis, in an Ysgol Maesydderwen classroom. The aim of this policy is to ensure a consistent approach in three key areas:
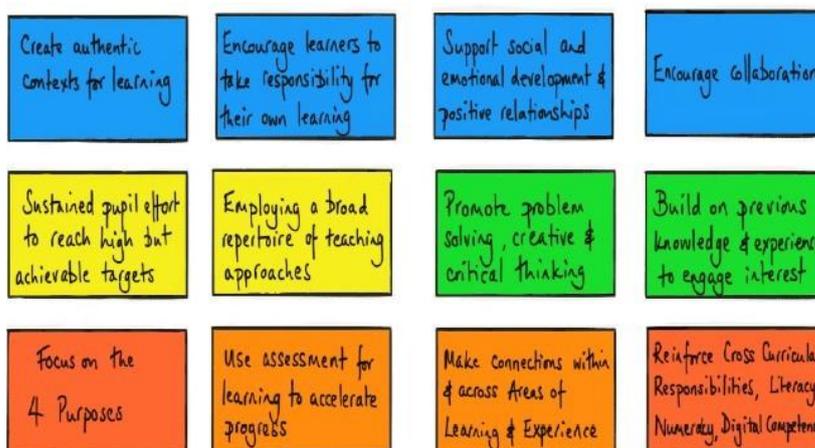
Marking and Feedback
Planning for Learning
Teaching

While it is true that marking, planning and teaching should adapt to suit the learners' needs; this policy outlines the whole-school "non-negotiables" in these three key areas. If any detail is not included within the policy it is not required. That does not mean it cannot be used.

This policy defines consistent approaches to feedback and planning, alongside key whole-school teaching strategies, which will make everyone's job easier. It will allow teaching staff to build up a repertoire of expertise, knowing that what they are doing in these key areas is consistent with what is going on in other classrooms across the school. It will also allow our teachers to support each other as we continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum.

This policy recognises the importance and value of the **12 Pedagogical Principles** which underpin the new **Curriculum for Wales**. All teaching staff are encouraged to collaborate with colleagues to develop these strategies, ensuring that all learners have the best possible learning experiences at Ysgol Maesydderwen.

"Teaching is a lifetime's craft. Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better."
(Professor Dylan William)

This handbook is complimented by the school's Blended and Distance Learning Policy.

Learning Policy
One Page Summary

Marking and Feedback

Marking and feedback have two purposes. To enable pupils to act upon feedback to make progress over time. To inform future planning and teaching.

- ➢ Teachers must have a secure overview of **progress data** and **target grades** for all learners
- ➢ Marking must be primarily formative, may be selective and may include a specific **D**edicated **I**mprovement and **R**eflection **T**ask (DIRT) which is clear about what students must act upon.
- ➢ Core tasks must be highlighted in schemes of work and feedback for these agreed activities provided on the whole-school **Core Task Feedback Sheet** (or an approved departmental version)
- ➢ Marking and feedback must be **regular** and **timely**
- ➢ Teachers must use the whole-school **marking code**
- ➢ Teachers must use appropriate "**growth-mindset**" comments

Planning for Learning

Planning is a process not a product. Its primary function is to enable high quality delivery which meets the needs of all pupils.

- ➢ Be clear and precise about the knowledge / skills you want students to **learn**, not just what you want them to do – backward planning strategy
- ➢ Ask yourself **why?** Planned activities, including homework, must be designed to facilitate learning and not just keep pupils busy
- ➢ There must be evidence of **long-term planning** in schemes of work and **short-term planning**
- ➢ **Differentiation** must be incorporated into both long-term and short-term plans, ensuring that the **needs of all pupils and groups of learners** are met
- ➢ There should be no **dead time**

Teaching

Classroom teaching has the greatest influence on pupils' learning.

- ➢ All teachers must deliver appropriate elements of the three **cross-curricular responsibilities** (literacy, numeracy and digital competence) and assess pupil progress in these skills
- ➢ Teachers must be explicit about **differentiated learning outcomes** and **key words** for a lesson
- ➢ Go with the learning: the flow of **great progress** is more important than sticking rigidly to the lesson plan
- ➢ All pupils must be **working harder** than the teacher and develop key strategies to become more **independent**
- ➢ Teachers must always ensure that **learning has stuck** through checking that it is incisive, systematic and effective

Marking and Feedback

1. Teachers must have a **secure overview** of the starting points, progress and context of all pupils.

A **secure overview** means that;

   a. All teachers understand and use the data held on each learner, as part of the whole-school tracking process, effectively. This includes:

   i. Previous attainment data (National Tests, End of KS Levels, Unitised results, reading ages etc.)
   ii. Minimum expected grades (MEGs)
   iii. Flightpath grades
   iv. CATS and PASS data
   v. Internal departmental data
   vi. Individual Education Plans and ALN One Page Profiles

   b. Teachers should understand a pupil's overall strengths and weaknesses. In examined courses, it is mandatory to have closing the gap interventions highlighted, where there is underperformance in relation to target grades

   c. Teachers must be aware of the link between pupil wellbeing and learning. This entails:

   i. Ensuring that the Behaviour for Learning policy is adhered to
   ii. Maintaining an awareness of specific pupil wellbeing information that is shared with staff
   iii. To attend appropriate briefing sessions and liaise effectively with pastoral staff

   It is important to understand that a pupil's background rarely means you should adjust your aspirations of what they can achieve. Sometimes there are events in a pupil's life that make it very hard to learn anything. These pupils are the exception and not the rule.

Without a **secure overview** and knowing our pupils well, it is impossible for teachers to give high quality feedback which truly benefits our learners.

2. Marking must be **primarily formative**, may be selective and may include a specific **D**edicated **I**mprovement and **R**eflection **T**ask (DIRT) which is clear about what pupils must act upon.

Primarily formative means that the focus of your marking must be showing pupils how they can improve. Just giving a summative mark or grade often means that pupils spend their time comparing how they have done with their classmates and not on improving their mark.

   a. Teachers must use **WWW (What Went Well)** and **EBI (Even Better If)** when commenting on pupils' work, ensuring that comments relate back to shared success criteria and encourage pupils to develop a growth mindset. Teacher comments should be in red or green

   b. Where appropriate, and in all core assessments, teachers must comment on pupils' progress in the relevant **core responsibilities** (literacy, numeracy and digital competence)

   c. For core assessments teachers must either use the **whole-school green feedback sheet** or an agreed departmental version which incorporates all aspects of the whole-school proforma

d. Formative feedback should include frequent use of **self and peer-assessment**. Pupil judgements must be guided by shared success criteria

e. The purpose of **selective marking** is to enable a more precise focus on areas for development and ensure progress within them. In between core tasks, teacher feedback should be a combination of verbal feedback and live marking. When pupils have too many corrections it can be difficult for them to know where to start

Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Task (DIRT)

For every core task, every pupil should be set a Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Task. These tasks must allow pupils to close any gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils must be given suitable time to respond / correct / amend / add to their work and, where appropriate, these activities should help improve pupil grades.

DIRT tasks are only effective if:

I. you allocate enough time for pupils to complete them. This could be in class (an excellent starter activity) or as a specific homework activity
II. you check that pupils have completed the task properly and redo again if they have not. Do not accept sloppy or half-hearted work
III. the pupil knows which specific area of improvement to focus on and how to make it better

DIRT tasks are not meant to increase workload. As long as marking is manageable, meaningful and motivational for the pupil then that is all that matters. Focus on marking for impact and improving outcomes.

3. Marking and feedback must be **regular**.

If pupil work is marked regularly, it means they get regular feedback (written or verbal) and the opportunity to improve. Marking, as with homework, should be proportionate with curriculum time. Detailed diagnostic marking (written feedback) must be completed for core tasks, with a minimum of one core task identified per half-term. If the time taken to mark a class set of books is out of proportion with the amount of time the class collectively spends on responding to the feedback, then something has gone wrong. If pupils do not engage with feedback, there is no impact. Spending hours on marking does not automatically mean that this section of the policy is being followed.

The frequency of marking varies by age group, subject and what works best for the pupils and teacher in relation to any particular learning activity. Teachers are encouraged to adjust their approach to feedback as necessary and are trusted to incorporate the outcomes of feedback into subsequent planning and teaching.

Remember the point of marking should be to help motivate pupils to progress. This does not mean always writing in-depth comments or being universally positive: sometimes short, challenging comments (possibly live marking) or oral feedback are more effective. If the teacher is doing more work than their pupils, this can become a disincentive for learners to accept challenges and take responsibility for improving their work.

4. Teachers must use the **whole-school marking code**.

The marking code must be displayed in every classroom in at least size A3. When used by everyone it saves on time without detriment to the overall impact. The pupils must feel that their work is marked in the same

way across the school. Symbols from the code should be predominantly in the margin in written work; the key is that pupils understand where they are making mistakes or their work needs to be improved. The same symbols must be used when marking electronically

No other symbols should be used, such as codes for effort. Marks are acceptable as part of, for example, a test with twenty questions or a sample examination paper. National Curriculum Levels should **never be used**. Progress grades, in relation to flightpath target grades, can be used on core tasks and where it is deemed appropriate by the teacher.

The Marking Code:

✔	correct / good point / well-written (avoid indiscriminate "tick and flick")
✖	incorrect / wrong point
Sp	correct a spelling mistake (you may choose to give the correct spelling)
P	correct a punctuation mistake
CAP	use a capital letter
⋀	you need to add a word or phrase
//	you need to start a new paragraph
/	you need to start a new line
?	this does not make sense
T	you need to use the correct verb tense
+	this needs rewording / rephrasing
E.G.	you need to provide an example

5. Teachers must use appropriate **growth mindset** comments.

Growth-minded language must be used by all teachers when giving pupils feedback. This focus on developing a growth mindset amongst learners, aims to ensure that pupils become persistent, resilient and focused upon the process of learning. It is important to give pupils feedback about **their** progress and **their outcomes**, so that they can specifically see **their** growth.

Using feedback stems is a simple way to ensure that you are proving useful process-orientated feedback on student work.

I noticed how ……………………...
Look at how much progress you've made on …………………….
I see a difference in this work compared with …………………….
I admire how hard you have worked on ……………………..
I can see you really enjoyed learning ……………………..
Could it make a difference if you …………………..
Have you considered trying a different strategy to …………………..
You're on the right track here, and might consider ………………………….

Responses to common pupil comments

I don't understand …..	You may not understand **yet** but let's look at what possible strategies you could use.
Bill is the smartest kid in the class, and had the best score. I can't do that.	Bill did do well on his exam. You should speak to him about how he prepared for it.
This is too hard for me.	Hard is good! It means you are learning.

'Person' vs 'Process' Critiques

'Person' Critique	'Process' Critique
You have messed this up.	This didn't seem to work well for you. How could you approach this problem differently?
You did your best, but it isn't good enough for ………….. grade.	You didn't quite meet your goal, but what did you learn?
Maybe ………….. just isn't your thing.	Keep practising. Every day you get closer to mastering this.
You are naughty, misbehaving, causing a problem.	You made a bad choice. What will you do differently in the future?

Planning For Learning

Planning is a process, not a product. It has one purpose, to enable high quality delivery which meets the needs of all learners.

1. Be **clear** and **precise** about the knowledge / skills you want students to **learn**, not just what you want them to do.

Planning is about hard thinking, not form filling. It is a thinking process. Your habits of thought are of fundamental importance. As obvious as it may sound, your planning must consider what you want pupils to learn first, and spend some time on it, before you give any consideration to what you want them to do. High quality planning requires you to start with the end in mind (backwards planning). What do you want your pupils to learn? Ask yourself:

1. Where are the pupils starting from?
2. Where do you want them to get to?
3. How will you know when they are there?
4. How can you best help get them there?

You should aim for excessive clarity and precision to articulate what you want your pupils to learn and what you want them to do so they learn it. Your explanations should be phrased in such a way that pupils quickly understand what they are aiming for. Breaking down what you want them to learn can often reveal skills or knowledge they have to acquire which needs to be taught.

2. Do the **"so why?"** test. Activities, including homework, must be designed to facilitate learning and not keep pupils busy.

To improve pupils' understanding of their own work, it is useful to consider why and how we are planning learning. Over-planning can be very common when you are going to be observed. If an activity is not making a significant difference, then drop it.

Activities need to be focused on learning and not control. This can be easier said than done, especially at the start of your career or when you are establishing yourself with a new class, but in any circumstances this should be your long-term aim. After planning always check that the activities are supporting you to deliver the learning you want to achieve, and whether there was a more efficient way of doing it. Ask yourself **"so why?"** about each activity and the length of time allocated.

3. There must be **evidence** of both long-term and short-term planning.

Teachers are not expected to produce individual lesson plans for individual lessons, but we do expect to see evidence of planning over time. There is an agreed lesson plan proforma (see appendix) if teachers wish to use a single lesson plan. Short-term lesson planning can be recorded electronically or on paper.

As a rough guide, teachers should not spend more than 5 or 10 minutes planning a lesson (at least once you are through the first year or two of your career and you have appropriate resources). There is no such thing as perfect planning and schemes of work must be in place to support lesson planning.

4. **Differentiation** must be incorporated into both long-term and short-term plans, ensuring that the **needs of all pupils and groups of learners** are met.

The greatest influence on effective learning is the teacher and the quality of teaching. High quality teaching must incorporate appropriate differentiation. Differentiation is the first wave of intervention.

Effective differentiation should be seen in planning lessons and giving appropriate feedback. Both planning and feedback should meet the needs of individual learners and groups of pupils. Based on our quality assurance procedures, this is the most challenging aspect of teaching in the school. Teachers must adopt a "differentiation over time" approach, rather than attempting to meet the needs of individual pupils in one-off lessons through time-consuming methods, which is not sustainable, nor is it effective on teachers' workload and productivity.

Short-term lesson planning must include Differentiated Learning Outcomes (DLOs), using the whole-school Bronze, Silver and Gold terminology, for each lesson or short period of sessions. DLOs should clearly set out the teacher's expectations of learners and be linked to appropriate success criteria. DLOs should ensure that teachers have the level of challenge right in the planning process.

Typical Differentiation Techniques to Consider when Planning

- Seating Plans
- "From the Top Down"
- Variety
- Differentiated Resources
- Timing
- Extension Tasks
- Order of Tasks
- Questioning
- Assigning Roles
- By outcome
- By support
- Model answers
- Writing frames

5. There should be no **dead time**. This includes a flying start (Bell Work) and appropriate pace for the intended learning.

Dead time is any time during a lesson where learning isn't happening. Teachers should always aim to adhere to the following:

1. Leave the room on time and tidy for the next person.
2. Meet and greet at the start of the lesson so that learners can get off to a flying start; end and send on time.
3. Don't waste time waiting for latecomers to arrive.
4. Consider the amount of "teacher talk" time.
5. Little or no copying, particularly lesson objectives.
6. Use time efficient methods e.g. - don't spend too much valuable time drawing tables etc.
7. Consider the transition from one activity to the next.
8. Check learning effectively and avoid wasting time on things already learned.
9. Use timings / time limits for activities and parts of activities.

Teaching

1. All teachers must deliver appropriate elements of the three **cross-curricular responsibilities** (literacy, numeracy and digital competence) and assess pupil progress in these skills.

We are all teachers of literacy, numeracy and digital competence. The quality of provision and assessment within these three key skills must form an integral part of teaching and learning. Many strands of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) are covered across the curriculum. There are priority literacy and numeracy strands allocated to departments, these must be incorporated into departmental schemes of learning and lesson planning. The skills toolkits also give teachers appropriate support in assessing pupil progress in skills, through routes of progression and differentiated learning outcomes, for departmental priority strands.

When you teach and assess core cross-curricular responsibilities, be explicit to enable pupils to see the relationships between subjects.

Core task feedback sheets must include narrative on a pupil's progress in the appropriate cross-curricular responsibility. Feedback must be formative in nature and supported by the differentiated learning outcomes in the relevant teacher toolkit.

2. Teachers must be explicit about **differentiated learning outcomes** and **key words** for a lesson.

In Ysgol Maesydderwen learning outcomes for a lesson, or series of lessons, must be differentiated using Bronze, Silver and Gold (see planning for learning). Pupils must know the knowledge and skills you want them to learn and the language they are expected to understand and use. Having said that, there are different ways of being explicit.

The standard way is to have the differentiated learning outcomes and key words on the board at the start of the lesson and referred to, when appropriate, throughout the lesson and particularly at the end. In most cases this is what you should do. Do not ask pupils to copy down learning objectives. This is a "control activity", not a learning one. Copying is definitely not a flying start to learning as an appropriate bell task.

Sophisticated variations that can aid learning include:
➤ asking for a reminder of the previous lesson's learning outcomes and key words, the class then speculates what they will be this lesson
➤ complete the first activity, then ask the class what they think the learning outcomes are
➤ do the entire lesson and then ask what pupils think the learning outcomes were

Key words mentioned at the beginning of a lesson and never again serve no purpose. If your high expectations are represented in your language, at least some of the keywords will not be commonly

understood by the class and will play a very significant role in your lesson. It is a high level teaching skill to be able to build your lesson around one or two keywords. By definition, the number of key words should be small, no more than two or three for a lesson.

3. Go with the learning: the flow of **great progress** is more important than sticking rigidly to the lesson plan.

"Go with the learning" means teachers have the freedom to teach and veer off from lesson planning when necessary to ensure learning takes place. It is about valuing teachers who intuitively recognize whether pupils have learned what they have been taught and adjust the lesson accordingly. This freedom is far more important than following over-detailed lesson plans, a tick-box culture or pleasing an observer. This still however means that planning must be thorough, otherwise there is nothing to veer away from. "Winging it" might be possible in experienced hands, but is not desirable and is definitely not professional.

Some lessons do not work out the way they were intended. Sometimes knowledge and skills do not stick, activities need to be shortened / lengthened or done in a different order. The point of a lesson is to maximize learning not a deliver a plan.

4. All pupils must be **working harder** than the teacher and develop key strategies to become more **independent.**

Ultimately it is the pupil who has to perform in an examination or job interview and we have a responsibility to ensure learners become independent. It is essential that teachers ensure a high **level of challenge** is present in all lessons, thus preparing pupils for hard work for sustained periods. The level of challenge must be reflected in the differentiated learning outcomes and should always take into account where individual learners *are*, compared to where they need to be. Planned activities must ensure that onus is placed on the pupil to be more independent – remember they should be working harder than you.

Your planning is key to this, particularly the lesson structure and how you adapt longer activities while teaching. The start of the lesson can set the tone. Teach the learning behaviours and routines you want to see.

5. Teachers must always ensure that **learning has stuck** through checking that it is incisive, systematic and effective.

Teachers must never assume that learning has happened just because you have taught something. We can only know what our pupils have learnt through effective assessment for learning (AfL). Ensuring that **learning has stuck** must be enshrined into any lesson planning and delivery. It is not only something that should happen at the end of a unit or a lesson, but should be used frequently to inform next steps. Key strategies must include effective questioning, an informative plenary activity, regular learning check points, whole class response tools and of course more formal assessment opportunities. Remember to monitor the progress of individual learners to get confirmation that learning has stuck.

YSGOL MAESYDDERWEN
Core Task Feedback Sheet

Pupil:		Teacher:	

Assessment:

Pupil Self and/or Peer Assessment

Teacher Assessment

What Went Well…	**Even Better If…**

Skills Development (Literacy / Numeracy / Digital Competence)

DIRT (Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time) Activity

Ysgol Maesydderwen

Lesson Plan

Date		Time/Duration		No. of learners		Year group/Class	
Teacher				Subject			
Information on groups of Learners							

Context of the Lesson / Links to Prior Learning: How does the lesson fit in the big picture for learning?

Differentiated Learning Outcomes: What progress should learners make during the lesson?

Gold:

Silver:

Bronze:

Connect: How will you engage learners quickly and get them thinking?

Input and Activate: How will you introduce pupils to the knowledge and skills needed to be successful?

Demonstrate: How will pupils practise and develop their knowledge and skills?

Consolidate: How will you and the class reflect on the progress that has been made?

Assessment for Learning: How will you know what pupils have learnt? What questions will you ask? How will you ensure pupils know how to improve?

Skills Development: How will the lesson develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and / or digital competence? How will you measure progress in these cross-curricular areas? Will there be opportunities for pupils to use their Welsh language skills?