

# **Furze Platt Senior School**



## **Learning Policy**



# FURZE PLATT SENIOR SCHOOL

## Learning Policy

At Furze Platt Senior School learning and achievement are highly valued. At its best learning is exciting, rewarding and empowering. We are committed to fostering high quality learning for every student so that they are successful at school and enter the adult world with the skills and attributes to enable them to become life long learners.

The school is a learning community. Learning is our highest priority and we expect students and staff to learn while they are here.

### **The purpose of this policy is to:**

- to be explicit about the values and practices which the school promotes
- to promote consistently high standards of learning and teaching across the school
- to provide clear support and guidance to new staff when they join the school
- to inform professional development programmes for all staff involved in supporting learning and raising achievement
- to inform students, parents and carers of their role in the learning process

### **Attitudes and Values**

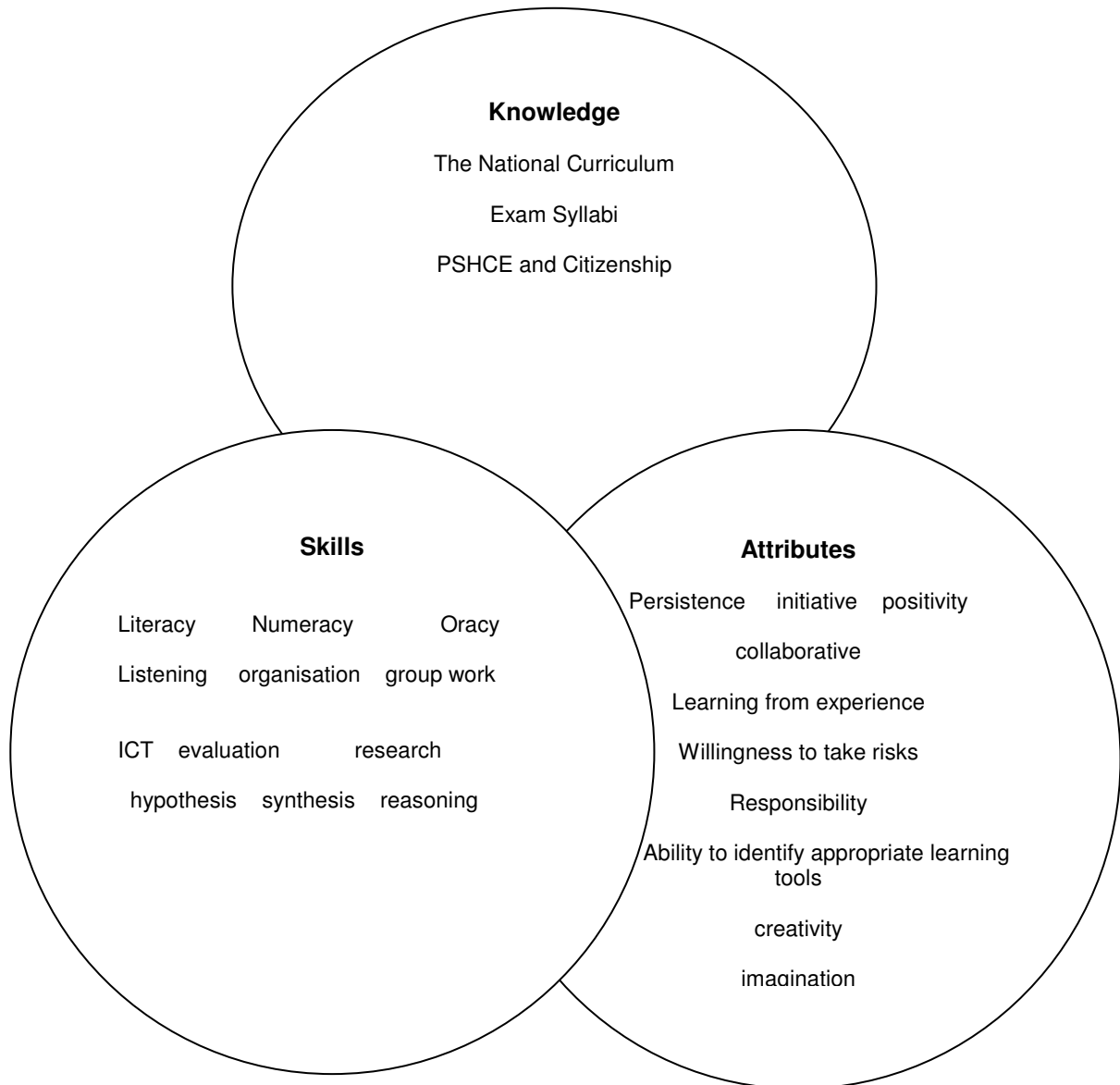
A number of central tenets underpin the approaches promoted throughout this policy. They are:

- All students have a right to learn
- Becoming an effective learner is central to students' being able to maximise their potential
- Students need to recognise their responsibility to work collaboratively and co-operatively so all can learn effectively together
- Teachers do make a difference and good teaching is a highly skilled and complex craft which can be continually improved
- Effective teachers are learning too and will model learning behaviours to students
- Effective, high quality learning requires proper and thorough planning
- Effective and high quality learning thrives in a positive ethos where there is an atmosphere of mutual respect
- Students should be encouraged to take increasing responsibility for their own learning

Teachers will promote these attitudes and values at all times.

## Developing Effective Learners

To develop effective learners we need to recognise that as well as knowledge students need to develop some important skills and attributes.



***High quality learning is brought about by well planned teaching underpinned by challenge and high expectations.***

## Organising Learning

### Planning

Planning is essential to high quality teaching and learning. We expect all teachers to plan their lessons prior to delivery and that lesson plans will take account of the following:

- The content of the lesson must be clearly located within the context of the subject scheme of work with clear learning objectives (See Appendix 1)
- In the case of examination classes, the lesson plan links clearly with the external examination body syllabus and criteria
- Learning objectives must be clear to students and in language that is accessible to them, e.g. *know, understand, can do*.
- Teachers must have defined learning outcomes and be able to identify what all, most and some students should have learnt by the end of the lesson.
- Teachers should plan activities which motivate and challenge students.
- Lessons should have appropriate progression and pace within them.
- The plan must take account of the different learning needs and styles of the student and thus activities must be sufficiently differentiated e.g. for more able and SEN students (See Appendix 2)
- Lessons must have appropriate resources to support the learning objectives
- Teachers should take account of student targets in planning and assessing work
- The lesson plan should incorporate how the teacher intends to assess the learning both during and after the lesson
- Lesson activities should be informed by prior learning and assessment
- The lesson should link clearly with previous learning and students need to see each lesson in the context of their learning and progress.
- Teachers must keep a record of all prior learning activities and be able to show how their current lesson links with prior learning and future learning activities

## **Structure**

The structure of the lessons will take account of research on effective learning (Appendix 3). Whilst recognizing that lesson structures will sometimes vary the following elements are agreed as essential features:

### **Setting the context and creating the climate:**

- Establish a purposeful learning environment
- Start positively and to time
- Share the content (focused by the learning objectives) and how they will learn (the processes).
- Identify the benefits and their importance in the 'bigger picture'
- Explain the expected outcomes

### **Initial activity(s) to engage the learners:**

- Pose problems
- Arouse curiosity and then invite participation
- Get students actively involved
- Use a variety of visual, auditory, kinaesthetic techniques
- Provide opportunities to explore problems in a range of groupings

### **Activity(s) tasks to practice/ explore/consolidate new learning:**

- Provide opportunities for students to show what they know/have learned/can do in a variety of ways
- Provide opportunities for group interaction and developing oracy
- Encourage creativity and risk taking
- Create opportunities to review and refine the learning – a chance to 'do it better'
- Give learners opportunities to reach their own solutions
- Find opportunities for peer and self assessment
- Recognize different approaches to solving problems
- *Remember learning **processes** as well as **content***

### **Reviewing the learning:**

- Link directly to the content and process outcomes shared at the beginning of the lesson
- Reflect on the learning: 'What have we learned and how have we learned'
- Review how learning is transferable: 'How might what we have learned be useful elsewhere?'
- Consolidate/extend for homework: e.g. mind mapping, pose a similar problem
- Signal what will come next lesson

**Ask the question:  
'Is my lesson worth behaving for?'**

## **Homework**

Effective homework is a part of the lesson planning process and homework must be an integral part of the lesson. The school is committed to extending the learning activities of the classroom to wider learning situations and, as such, teachers must set sufficient and relevant homework to maximise learning time. Homework encourages and fosters independent learning, which is a central aim of our learning community.

Homework should encompass a range of activities, which support the learning in the classroom. Homework must be an essential part of the planning and the lesson, and as such should normally be set during the main body of the lesson so that students can see the relevance and importance of how it extends the learning activities of the classroom.

In addition, teachers should:

- Make sure students see the value of the tasks they are being given in that they consolidate and extend learning
- Ensure that homework is written clearly on the board and enough time allowed for students to copy it into their diaries (homework doesn't have to be given at the end of the lesson; it can be given at the start or middle).
- Check that students understand what they are expected to do and can access the skills and resources to achieve the task(s) set.
- Make the deadline clear for when the homework is due and ensure this is written in the relevant section in the planners
- Use a range of learning activities where it comes to homework as well as in the lesson, avoiding needless repetition
- In general, 'finishing off' class work activities are likely to be perceived by many students as unfair in that they favour the more able, and consequently, this type of homework should rarely be used
- Make students aware that homework is a compulsory part of the school curriculum and their education
- Make students aware that failing to complete the homework will result in consequences e.g., after school detention, contact with parents etc. (Teachers must insist upon and enforce high expectations)

Furze Platt has a highly valuable resource in the Learning Resource Centre, which includes the use of PCs, and students should regularly be reminded of this resource available to them before school, at lunch time, and after school.

## **Rewarding Achievement and Effort**

The school is committed to rewarding student achievement and effort at all levels, and as such, subject teachers should look for, and use, all opportunities to reward students for genuine achievements. Teachers must ensure that they recognise the achievements of all students relative to their ability.

We are committed to developing a positive learning environment in the classroom, and believe that within such a setting, students will be encouraged and motivated to achieve. As such, teachers should avoid negativity wherever possible in the classroom. Negativity demotivates and hinders achievement. Comments should be realistic without being destructive and teachers should aim to make the final comment always positive.

Tangible rewards, such as commendations, should be used wherever possible. We should also promote the nature of *intrinsic* rewards, i.e., learning and gaining knowledge is an achievement in itself which we all should value.

The school aims to celebrate success and teachers should do so regularly in the classroom. Subjects should contribute to formal celebrations of success such as the annual Speech Evening and termly celebration assemblies. The school has a rewards policy linked with the school behaviour policy, and all teachers must familiarise themselves with, and use, the policy.

### **Assessment, marking and record keeping**

In line with the requirement to have high expectations of all our students, it is vital that all students are made to feel that their work, both in and outside of the classroom, is valuable. Consequently, teachers must regularly mark and assess students' work and provide constructive feedback to enable further improvement in line with the **Marking and Assessment Policy**. Teachers must ensure that students understand the purpose and expected learning outcomes of all work set so that it is clear to student's that their engagement with the tasks set is *worthwhile, valuable and relevant*.

All teachers must keep detailed records of student achievement as this is vital in measuring progress and in tailoring teaching to fit the needs of individuals.

Teachers should identify students who have missed key amounts of work due to absence from school. Where students miss key topics / activities, teachers need to make relevant provision to enable these students to catch up on what has been missed, and have this work assessed.

Teachers should also take note of the individual students who are identified on the SEN, EAL and Gifted & Talented registers, in order to ensure that their special needs are met.

### Promoting effective learners

Students need to be supported to understand that they have certain rights and responsibilities associated with learning. The following **learning contract** outlines how both teachers and students contribute to effective learning.

#### Learning Contract

Teachers will	Students will
<p>Respect all students' right to learn. This means they will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Begin lessons promptly</li><li>• Establish a purposeful and positive atmosphere</li><li>• Tell the students what they are going to learn and what they should achieve by the end of the lesson</li><li>• Give students opportunities to learn in different ways which they find motivating</li><li>• Provide appropriate resources to help with learning</li><li>• Have high expectations of all students</li><li>• Be firm but fair to all students and follow the school behaviour policy</li><li>• Use praise to recognise achievements</li><li>• Set homework that is relevant to the lesson</li><li>• Review the learning at the end of the lesson so students have time to think about what they have learnt</li><li>• Mark work and give good feedback</li><li>• Provide students with guidance on what work needs to be done if they have been absent</li></ul>	<p>Respect all students' right to learn. This means they will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arrive on time and prepared to learn</li><li>• Have their diary, correct books and equipment</li><li>• Listen carefully to the teacher and each other</li><li>• Take part in all class activities even when they seem difficult</li><li>• Use resources carefully: they are there for everyone</li><li>• Co-operate with each other at all times</li><li>• Accept the authority of the teacher</li><li>• Always try hard and take pride in their work</li><li>• Complete homework and hand it in on time</li><li>• Be honest about what they have learnt and what they still find difficult</li><li>• Take responsibility for their own work and look after it</li><li>• Catch up on what they have missed when they have been absent</li></ul>

## Teaching Objectives

Central to effective lesson planning and delivery is a clear sense of purpose. Departmental schemes of work and medium term plans provide teachers with **Teaching Objectives**. These help teachers provide students with the 'big picture' and puts their learning in context.

*e.g. Students should be taught to recognise that when light travels from a source it is transferring energy, and use this idea to explain the behaviour of light, including reflection and absorption.*

## Learning objectives

Students learn best when they are clear about the learning which they are expected to gain from a lesson. At Furze Platt teachers will **ensure** that students understand what they are going to learn. This may be accomplished in a number of ways.

Where there is a whiteboard or projector in the classroom then it is an **expectation** that the learning objectives will be clearly displayed. It is sometimes desirable to have the students write the objectives in their exercise books. Learning objectives can also be reinforced by placing them on worksheets and resources. Learning objectives for lessons should be written in **student-friendly language**, so as to involve students in the assessment process and promote independent learning.

*e.g. Use the idea of energy transfer to explain what happens when rays of light shine on transparent, opaque and translucent materials.*

It is often useful to have the students explain to the teacher, in their own words, what is to be learned in order to confirm understanding. Teachers refer to the learning taking place during the lesson with reference to the stated learning objectives and use them as the focus for questioning and assessment.

## Learning outcomes

In order to clarify to students how to **demonstrate** that they have achieved the learning objectives they must also be made aware of the possible learning outcomes. Learning outcomes help teachers and students recognise achievement and support assessment and planning.

Learning outcomes should be differentiated to provide challenge and to help students understand what is expected of them.

e.g. **All students** will describe what happens when rays of light shine on transparent, opaque and translucent materials.

**Most students** will be able to explain how the energy is transferred when rays of light shine on transparent, opaque and translucent materials.

**Some students** will be able to explain how the energy is transferred when different coloured filters are placed in the paths of the rays of light.

**A few** students will be able to explain how the energy is transferred when different coloured filters are placed in the paths of the rays of light and draw conclusions about the relationship between energy transfer and wavelength.

## Differentiation

*'Differentiation is clearly linked with the principle of equality of opportunity. The opportunity to learn **effectively** is a right for all students. Differentiation is necessary to secure an effective curriculum. It puts the emphasis firmly on what is **learnt**, rather than what is **taught**.'*

Planned differentiation can be by:

- **Resource:** *set common tasks but provide different resources for students of differing ability*
- **Task:** *focus on a common topic but set different tasks for students tailored to their ability level*
- **Support:** *provide more targeted support e.g. for less able students. teacher time, help sheets, TA. Remember more able students will also need targeted support.*
- **Response:** *teacher feedback to what a student has achieved is tailored to take into account the prior ability of the student and their current level of achievement. For example, in a piece of written work one student have achieved well if they have explained key facts well, another may be expected to have provided more detailed analysis. The teacher's response will be different for each student.*
- **Grouping:** *Students are grouped for tasks in a way that takes account of their abilities. For example, sometimes mixed ability groupings within a class provide support for the less able and sometimes students can be grouped with those of similar ability to complete differentiated tasks and challenge each other*

Within the classroom, work set must be appropriate to the needs of the students and match to the learning objectives. Teachers must employ a range of differentiated activities and resources to ensure that all students are able to achieve and show progress during the lesson.

In many classes, there will be additional support provided for some students. Where there is additional in-class support, the subject teacher is responsible for deploying the additional support in the best way possible to meet the needs of the students.

More able students also require differentiated planning. Teachers need to plan for opportunities for these students to widen and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills (**See FPSS Gifted and Talented Policy**).

## Different Teaching and Learning Styles

Teachers need to take account of different preferred learning styles of their students and should take account of different approaches to learning. There are a variety of preferred learning styles models, one of them being the three styles of;

- Visual (learn through seeing)
- Audio (learn through hearing)
- Kinaesthetic (learn through doing)

While teachers need to take account of the fact that students do have preferred learning styles, we also need to recognise that as teachers we should aim to develop their competence and confidence in all styles.

In addition we should also be aware of Gardner's research into multiple intelligences. Multiple intelligences are seven different ways to demonstrate intellectual ability.

As such lessons should incorporate a **variety** of activities which allow students to use different styles and intelligences. In addition, students should be given the opportunity to work:

- independently
- in pairs
- in groups

Teachers will have to focus on teaching and developing the skills necessary to work within these different environments and establish ground rules and routines. Students should be given responsibility in the classroom, and where possible take the opportunity to 'act as teachers' either within a pair, group or whole-class context.

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***Learning Styles: detailed descriptions***

<b>Learning Style</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>
<b>Visual Learners</b>	<p><b><i>learn through seeing...</i></b></p> <p>These learners need to see the teacher's body language and facial expression to fully understand the content of a lesson. They tend to prefer sitting at the front of the classroom to avoid visual obstructions (e.g. people's heads). They may think in pictures and learn best from visual displays including: diagrams, illustrated text books, overhead transparencies, videos, flipcharts and hand-outs. During a lecture or classroom discussion, visual learners often prefer to take detailed notes to absorb the information.</p>
<b>Auditory Learners:</b>	<p><b><i>learn through listening...</i></b></p> <p>They learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say. Auditory learners interpret the underlying meanings of speech through listening to tone of voice, pitch, speed and other nuances. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard. These learners often benefit from reading text aloud and using a tape recorder.</p>
<b>Tactile/Kinaesthetic Learners</b>	<p><b><i>learn through , moving, doing and touching...</i></b></p> <p>Tactile/Kinaesthetic persons learn best through a hands-on approach, actively exploring the physical world around them. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration.</p>

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