

Framework for Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Try our best to do our best to be the best we can be

How we commit to achieving the most effective:

Growth mindset culture – High expectations for all

Informed by the research findings of Carol Dweck and others we recognise that intelligence is malleable and enhanced by high quality teaching, care, guidance and support. We believe this is particularly pertinent for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or those who experience barriers to learning. Students are more likely to get better at something if they believe intelligence can be changed through hard work.

What this looks like at Beechwood: We carefully select language such as ‘learning’ over ‘work’, avoid language that suggests innate intelligence, praising processes rather than outcome and discussing ability in terms of skills. For example:

“Every time you practise, you’re making connections in your brain stronger.”

“You can use this mistake. Think about why it didn’t work and learn from it.

“If you could already do it, you wouldn’t be learning anything.”

We support our students in recognising that mistakes are part of the learning experience and that we should not be afraid to FAIL (First Attempt In Learning). Redrafting, refining and making improvements are central to achieving success.

We model the high standard of work that is expected, developing a sense of unity and pride in classes, encouraging students to be critical, analysing exemplars and their own work and as a result suggest improvements and create excellence.

Our Mindset Manifesto



*believe that all of us
can go beyond our best*

Curriculum maps and sequences of learning

Strong **curriculum design** is dependent upon superior subject knowledge, including a deep understanding of what excellence and progression in the subject looks like as well as a detailed understanding of the National Curriculum programmes of study, exam syllabi and associated **summative assessment** requirements. When planning a sequence of lessons we focus on what students will be learning, rather than what they are going to do. Within that sequence of lessons, there'll be **captivating** experiences which prompt high quality dialogue and support the initial encoding of knowledge and concepts into long term memory, thus ensuring **mastery learning**.

What this looks like at Beechwood: We plan **learning sequences** that build upon prior knowledge, taking student learning from the “known” to newly acquired knowledge and skills. We use good quality **assessment** information to inform our planning, including low stakes pre-teaching tasks and tests (launchpad **assessment**).

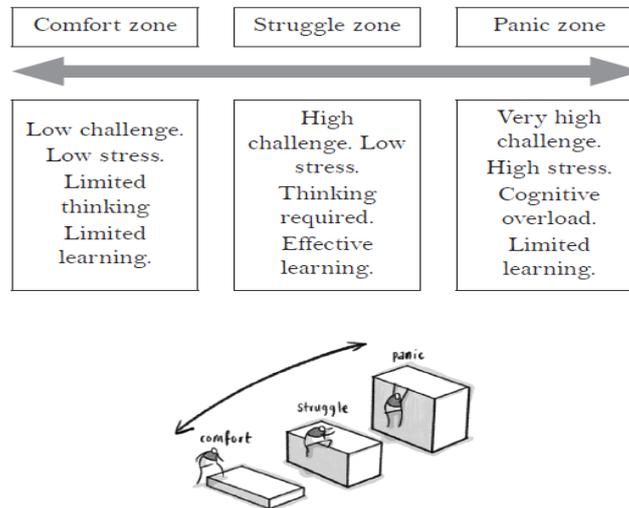
We use our knowledge of students’ areas of strength and weaknesses in relation to the subject and provide appropriate **scaffold** and **challenge**.

Underlying misconceptions and knowledge and skill gaps do need to be worked on but through appropriate **scaffolding**, which is withdrawn at the right time, students can master concepts. Strategies to **scaffold** could include:

- Generating and using success criteria
- Showing excellence before students start work
- Worked examples to support modelling and explanations
- Partially completed examples for deliberate practice

- Lingering with the concrete and pictorial before working abstractly
- Guided groups / use of additional adults

If work is too easy, students will switch-off; if the work is too hard, students will switch off. We pitch learning in the “zone of proximal development” – hard, but achievable with support.



We need to ensure there is appropriate **challenge** for students who grasp concepts quickly. Strategies to **accelerate learning** include :

- Questioning and dialogue that deepens understanding and encourages students to make links between ideas or synthesise and analyse concepts
- Tasks that require students to extend their thinking and apply ideas and skills in different contexts
- Wider reading for breadth and depth using increasingly sophisticated texts

We engage students by conferring with them and providing some choice in how they learn and how they demonstrate **mastery**. We provide opportunities for low stakes competition. We **captivate** their imaginations through stories, technology and interesting projects that are purposeful, relevant and connect to real-life.

Cognitive science tells us that **desirable difficulties** makes information harder to encode (learn initially) but easier to retrieve later. This leads to deeper learning and improved long-term memory. We can create desirable difficulties by:

- Spacing learning apart with increasingly long gaps
- Interleaving topics rather than blocked practice
- Testing frequently – using low stakes quizzes at the start of topics/lessons to identify prior learning as well as knowledge gaps, and to interrupt forgetting.

Teaching with care, clarity and control

Teachers who **care**, develop supportive, personalized relationships with students and strive to cultivate an emotionally safe environment where all students feel respected and learning

is the central focus. This means that learning spaces are effectively **controlled** by teachers who are vigilant, manage and redirect off-task behaviour and foster conditions that allow for optimum learning. Teaching with **clarity** means that explanations and feedback are clearly understood by students.

What this looks like at Beechwood: Adults are courteous, respectful and fair with all students, even while being firm. Teachers are sincere in their interactions with young people so that students believe that their teachers want the best for them. In return, students know what is expected of them both academically and behaviourally and develop effective learning dispositions (Be Beechwood).

Leaders and teachers establish an orderly school environment by developing and implementing effective and efficient classroom routines and all staff consistently apply the Behaviour for Learning Policy. Teachers have high expectations for good behaviour and always follow through to hold students accountable.

Teachers use a variety of strategies to check for student understanding, e.g. quizzes, entry/exit tickets, review of written work, and intervene promptly to address misconceptions and clarify key concepts.

Explanations

Hattie's research identifies quality teacher instruction as one of the top three most effective strategies for impacting on learning. Good **explanations** are tethered to something students already know about (connect with prior learning), introduce new ideas in short manageable chunks (so as not to overload the working memory) and transform abstract ideas into concrete ones.

What this looks like at Beechwood: Teachers use students' prior knowledge to hook them into new learning. They explain key concepts with **clarity** and precision, using a range of techniques such as demonstration, visual cues and practical apparatus to help make the learning more concrete and credible. To generate student curiosity and therefore open up learning gaps, teachers use stories, anecdotes and analogies in their explanations.

Modelling

Modelling how to apply knowledge and skills enables students to reach higher standards. Students need to watch and listen to experts as they guide them through the process, step-by-step, before they make an attempt themselves. This can also work in reverse through deconstruction, where students see an example of an end product and work backwards from there, identifying the stages and parts that contribute to its overall quality.

What this looks like at Beechwood: We **model** procedures in small chunks, followed by focused **practice**, followed by more **modelling** and **practice**. We use 'worked examples' to prepare students before they tackle new problems (particularly effective in maths). Some modelling is best undertaken in 'real-time', thinking aloud so that the cognitive choices we

make are verbalized (making the invisible, visible). This works well for more challenging tasks, particularly writing in a subject-specific context (Talk for Writing methodology). Teachers also use pre-prepared examples, some created themselves and others from students (past and present) to explore and identify successful features to imitate and innovate. We archive excellence, collecting exemplars from teacher-designed models, to student work, to those created by real-world experts in our subject areas.

Practice

Following teacher instruction, students need opportunities to practise applying their learning in order to consolidate and secure their understanding. **Practice** is key to **mastery**. We want our students to *practice for fluency*, so that knowledge and procedures are well-consolidated in their long-term memory and can be effortlessly recalled once mastered, e.g. times-tables, definition of a metaphor, that the Atlantic Ocean separates Europe and America. We also want our students to engage in *deliberate practice*; this is when practice is hard and just outside of the student's "comfort zone." These are challenging objectives that require a sustained effort to achieve, where mistakes are inevitable and feedback is essential for redrafting and improving, e.g. discursive essays, solving multi-step maths problems.

What this looks like at Beechwood: We know from Graham Nuthall's research that to securely learn a new concept, a student must revisit it in its entirety at least three times over a few days or weeks. We plan our **sequences of learning** so that students regularly revisit and return to key concepts and processes, and we incorporate "time for forgetting" through spacing and interleaving. Lessons also include activities that are deliberately designed to practice memory retrieval, e.g. quizzes, partner tests ("tell A 5 things you remember about earthquakes").

When planning a **sequence of learning** we encourage teachers to ask themselves, (1) Which ideas and concepts are absolutely crucial to the overall **mastery** of the topic?, and, (2) How many opportunities to return to these ideas in different contexts can you include in the plan?

Teachers recognise that practice is a journey from dependence to independence during a **sequence of learning**. At different stages in the sequence, students will need more or less teacher support, with teachers knowing when is the right time to withdraw **scaffolds**.

Dialogue and Questioning

Pertinent **dialogue** and **questioning** is essential for checking understanding, shining a light on any misconceptions or gaps in knowledge and for deepening and developing understanding. High quality **questioning** and **dialogue** reinforces a classroom culture where students are expected to articulate their thinking with accuracy, use subject-specific vocabulary and develop the skills of academic debate.

What this looks like at Beechwood: Teachers formulate questions and follow-up questions that **challenge** students to **explain** and justify their thinking. Students are also encouraged

to design their own questions. With the endpoint in mind we include a range of closed and open questions that **scaffold** and build cognitive **challenge**. We mix up random and targeted questioning, using what we know about our students to inform our strategies. We ensure there is thinking time between asking a question and expecting a response.

Dialogue is encouraged as both an alternative and a supplement to questioning. This can range from regular opportunities to ‘think-pair-share’ to more orchestrated discussion using the ABC strategy – Agree with, Build on or Challenge. After one student has shared an idea ask the next student whether they would like to ABC; insisting that they comment on the previous student’s remark and speak formally, e.g. “I would like to build on Tyler’s comment...” These kind of discussion stems are really useful for scaffolding dialogue and when teachers make them visible (e.g. through display) and insist they are used, the quality of dialogue and the academic register dramatically improves.

Reflect and Evaluate

Feedback to close gaps

Good **feedback** has a very strong impact on student attainment (Hattie, 2009) but it must be tactful, specific and explicitly relate to the agreed success criteria. Give the students opportunity to respond, redraft and move towards excellence. Teachers use their professional judgement to decide which kind of **feedback** is most effective and appropriate for each task. Feedback can be peer, self, collaborative, verbal, written but is best when focused on process and designed to provoke improvement. It must provide an experience that facilitates further learning and development.

What this looks like at Beechwood: We recognise that **feedback** should be a reciprocal process. Following the identification of a “learning gap” (something a student cannot do yet, or does not yet know), the resulting feedback should be aimed at closing this gap. **Feedback** from the performance of the students should then inform future teaching.

Feedback is only useful when it is acted upon, and we have established the principle of **DIRT** (Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time) across the school with the expectation that teachers build-in regular opportunities for students to correct, redraft and polish their work.

Formative and summative assessment

Formative assessment is a process whereby learners recognise where they are in their learning journey and what they need to do to improve. There are a range of teaching strategies that promote **formative assessment** including exploring examples to establish success criteria /toolkits, peer and self-assessment, verbal and written feedback and dialogue and questioning. Ultimately, our aim is to make **formative assessment** an ongoing, personalized thought process so that students regard this as “what we do when we learn.” It is important therefore to encourage **metacognition**, to include opportunities for learners to reflect and evaluate how and why they have been more or less successful in a task.

Five Strategies of Formative Assessment (Wiliam 2011 *Embedded formative assessment*)

- Clarifying, sharing and understanding learning intentions and success criteria
- Engineering effective classroom discussions, activities and learning tasks that elicit evidence of learning
- Providing feedback that moves learners forward
- Activating learners as instructional resources for each other
- Activating learners as the owners of their own learning



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Summative assessment requires teachers to use their subject knowledge, their grasp of expected standards and how progress is made within their subject to reach a periodic judgment about student performance. Teachers ask themselves the following questions when making **summative assessment** judgements:

1. How well has the student learned what I have taught?
2. How much support did they need?
3. How on track are they to meet the expected standard?

What this looks like at Beechwood: We recognise that the most effective **feedback** happens immediately and prompts an instant improvement. This can take the form of **verbal feedback** from the teacher, but can also be prompted by the teacher **modelling** collaborative marking and then students using peer and self-assessment to make improvements. This is marking in real-time. However, there will also be a need for “distance” marking where teachers review students’ work and provide **written feedback**. Distance marking must give students clear guidance about how to improve and be followed by dedicated **DIRT**. We encourage a smart approach to marking and feedback which requires students to think and work harder in responding to marking and feedback than it took teachers to produce it (Dylan Wiliam, 2011).

Teachers are sensitive to the needs of their students and adjust their lessons to the here and now. **Feedback** from student performance is used to inform future planning, both for that specific class (e.g. time for ‘re-teaching’ key elements) and when reviewing and updating **curriculum maps** and **sequences of learning**. For example, if a significant number of students struggle to master a specific skill or sustain a gap in their knowledge this would indicate that teaching for that learning sequence needs to be adapted.

Formal, **periodic assessments** are pre-planned and exemplify the high standards expected in teaching and learning. These are developed at subject level so that they provide appropriate data which can be analysed and acted upon to improve teaching and learning.

Professional learning and performance management is designed to improve pedagogy – ‘making the difference projects’

One performance management area will be focused on developing a strand of teaching as outlined in this framework. This must be in the form of a ‘making the difference project’, which dependant upon career stage expectations will either be a personal, departmental or whole school project. Department meetings must have allocated time to focus on the devleopment of excellent teaching at the delivery and curriculum planning level. Professional Learning Partnerships also provide dedicated time for teachers to learn and improve collaboratively.

Sustained professional learning is most likely to result when:

- the focus is kept clearly on improving student outcomes;
- feedback is related to clear, specific and challenging goals for the recipient;
- attention is on the learning rather than to the person or to comparisons with others;
- teachers are encouraged to be continual independent learners;
- feedback is mediated by a mentor in an environment of trust and support;
- an environment of professional learning and support is promoted by the school's leadership


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Our beliefs and principles with regards to teaching, learning and assessment are informed by the following (amongst others):

- Allinson, S & Tharby, A (2015) – *Making Every Lesson Count*, (Crown House)
- Berger, Ron (2003) – *An Ethic of Excellence: Building a Culture of Craftsmanship with Students*, (Heinemann)
- Clarke, S (2014) – *Outstanding Formative Assessment*, (Hodder)
- Coe, R et al (2014) – *What Makes Great Teaching? Review of the Underpinning Research*, (Sutton Trust)
- Dweck, Carol (2007) – *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, (Ballantine)
- Hattie, John (2009) – *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement, and Visible Learning and the Science of How We Learn* (2014, Routledge)
- Lemov, Doug (2010) – *Teach Like a Champion*, (Jossey-Bass)
- Nuthall, Graham (2007) – *The Hidden Lives of Learners*, (New Zealand Council for Educational Research Press)

- Strong, Julia (2013) - *Talk For Writing In Secondary Schools: How To Achieve Effective Reading, Writing And Communication Across The Curriculum*, (Open University Press)
- Wiliam, Dylan (2011) – *Embedded Formative Assessment*, (Bloomington)
- Willingham, Daniel T (2009) – *Why Don't Students Like School? A Cogniitive Scientist Answers Questions About How The Mind Works and What It Means For The Classroom*, (Jossey-Bass)

Our Framework has also been influenced by the findings of the reports from Independent Teacher Workload Review Groups, published by the DfE in March 2016:

- [Eliminating Unnecessary Workload Around Planning and Teaching Resources](#)
- [Eliminating Unnecessary Workload Around Marking](#)
- [Eliminating Unnecessary Workload Associated with Data Management](#)