

Brentwood School

Teaching and Learning Policy

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BRENTWOOD SCHOOL
— Learning for Life —

Introduction

Brentwood School meets the needs of students with severe, complex, profound and multiple learning difficulties including autism. We are committed to high quality teaching and learning to raise standards of achievement for all students. We use an approach based on the Quality Framework for Learning and Teaching (QFLT) which is a toolkit that enables us to continue to improve the quality and consistency of professional practice across school. Teachers engage in regular learning conversations during which they are able to reflect on their teaching, its effect on learning and the impact this has on outcomes for students. We believe that engaging students in inspirational teaching and learning experiences helps them to lead fulfilled, rewarding lives and motivates them to become lifelong learners.

Effective teaching and learning at Brentwood are underpinned by a rich and varied curriculum. Lessons are delivered imaginatively, with a focus on multi-sensory teaching. Teachers employ a range of innovative teaching strategies to effectively meet the changing needs of the students as they mature. All students have differentiated objectives and personalised targets. Lessons build upon each student's prior attainment and experience; ensuring that all learners progress and develop well and maximise their potential. Lessons are planned to ensure that they provide students with appropriate challenge and pace while allowing opportunities for the acquisition, consolidation and generalisation of skills. All teachers and higher-level teaching assistants are responsible for the planning and delivery of the teaching and learning in designated classes. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to maximise learning opportunities and enable students to reach their full potential. Staff work in conjunction with therapists and other professionals where appropriate to plan personalised, challenging goals for individuals.

Aims and objectives

Brentwood provides broad, balanced, diverse and differentiated learning experiences within an environment that is safe, creative and fun. Our objective is to facilitate students' acquisition of knowledge, skills and qualities which will help them to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially, physically and morally, so that they may become independent and responsible members of the community. We aim to inspire students to have a lifelong love of learning.

We achieve this by:

1) Ethos

- Providing varied and appropriately adapted learning experiences that match individual needs and abilities
- Providing all students with opportunities to acquire, develop, practice, apply and extend their skills in a range of contexts across the curriculum
- Having high expectations of both students and staff
- Enabling students to become confident, and to have positive self-esteem
- Equipping students to be resourceful, enquiring and independent learners
- Enabling students to master key skills that will equip them for life
- Giving students access to a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities for functional learning

- Helping students to build positive relationships with other people
- Developing students' self-respect, and through respecting themselves, encourage them to understand the ideas, attitudes, feelings and values of others
- Showing respect for all religions and cultures and, in so doing, promoting positive attitudes towards other people
- Supporting students to understand their community, and helping them feel valued as part of it
- Helping students to grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens
- Developing in our students a lifelong love of learning
- Supporting all members of class teams to be leaders of learning

2) Communication

- Enabling students to express preferences, communicate needs, make choices, make decisions and choose options that other people act on and respect
- Making use of a variety of systems to promote effective communication and inclusive education e.g. Signalong, P.E.C.S., symbols, ICT, A.A.C, POD books, TD Snap
- Encouraging students to interact and communicate effectively with others in a range of social situations
- Recognising the crucial role which parents and carers play in their child's education and making every effort to encourage parental involvement in the educational process
- Working closely with specialists and professional agencies to ensure that student needs are met

3) Learning

- Promoting a positive attitude towards learning, so that students enjoy coming to school and acquire a solid basis for lifelong learning
- Developing the curriculum through medium term plans which give appropriate learning objectives and suggested activities
- Using medium term plans to plan individual lessons and sequences of lessons that have a clear learning intent and include opportunities for students to work towards their individual targets
- Incorporating a range of teaching and learning strategies and quality resources appropriate for an individual's age and stage of development
- Preparing students for an adult life in which they have the greatest possible degree of independence and agency
- Teaching students to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, and to understand right from wrong
- Helping students to understand the importance of truth and fairness, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all
- Enabling students to have respect for themselves and high self-esteem, and to be able to live and work co-operatively with others
- Ensuring that students have access to a wide range of opportunities to enrich and broaden their experience (e.g. educational visits, after school and lunch time clubs, residential trips, community visits, theatre productions, outdoor learning)
- Reviewing, monitoring and evaluating planning, teaching and learning strategies.
- Using a thorough process of continual assessment which informs future planning (formative assessment, B levels, Evidence for Learning, progress towards EHCP targets)

- Providing opportunities for external accreditation
- Providing opportunities for students to follow an appropriate reading scheme to develop their literacy skills, and appropriate strategies to develop their mathematical understanding
- Providing relevant work experience placements and independent travel opportunities for students where appropriate

Effective Teaching and Learning

The principal way to measure the true success of teaching is to evaluate the extent to which students make progress. Students learn in many different ways, and respond best to different types of input; we must therefore teach in different ways to address the needs of all our students. Teachers reflect on successful strategies for individual students and the next learning steps, and identify what they need to develop and implement in order for students to continue learning through the student progress process. The opportunity for peer-to-peer observations enables teachers to share their expertise and raise standards in teaching and learning.

Effective teaching:

- Ensures that students are aware of what they are learning about and their individual targets
- Helps students to recognise and value their achievements and successes
- Builds on what students already know
- Considers students' varied learning styles
- Is creative in approach, including the flexible use of learning spaces
- Builds secure foundations for subsequent learning
- Makes learning vivid and real
- Makes learning an enjoyable and challenging experience
- Develops the full range of learning skills across the curriculum
- Actively involves students in their learning

Effective teaching and learning takes place in an environment in which:

- Relationships provide a confident and positive atmosphere
- A culture of self-evaluation prevails
- There is room for reflection
- Learning is valued
- There is mutual respect between all members of the school learning community
- No-one is afraid of making mistakes
- Lessons are well paced; teachers vary pace to match the task and the needs of students

Effective teachers therefore:

- Actively promote independent learning
- Plan lessons, and sequences of lessons, that build on students' prior learning and give opportunities for the acquisition of skills
- Encourage students to be responsible for their own learning

- Ensure learning objectives address the needs of all students
- Ensure the behaviour of all students allows learning to take place
- Equip students with the ability to transfer knowledge and skills
- Have the flexibility to embrace unexpected responses without losing sight of the intended learning outcome
- Are not afraid to go beyond the objective, to better respond to student learning
- Make explicit reference to the learning that is taking place
- Recognise that students learn in different ways
- Set learning in a meaningful context and foster links to transfer and generalise functional skills
- Use skillful questioning
- Have high expectations

Adapted Learning

- Learning activities are adapted so that they are closely matched to individual needs
- Students work towards individual targets which are appropriate to their individual levels and needs
- Teachers and teaching assistants scaffold activities to enable students to experience success and build their confidence to progress independently
- Collaborative learning is encouraged through working in pairs, and in groups
- Independent learning is encouraged through adapted tasks and collaborative talk to support individual work
- Teachers reflect on completed lessons and use formal and informal assessment to plan future lessons and sequences of lessons

Equal Opportunities

We believe all students should have equal opportunities and equal access to all teaching and learning activities. Equal opportunities are addressed as follows:

- All students have access to all teaching and learning activities through the use of adapted learning strategies and tasks. These are based on individual needs.
- Resources and planning aim to reflect our multi-cultural society.
- Gender equality is promoted by ensuring that both boys and girls have access to all aspects of teaching and learning

Assessment and Record Keeping

Accurate and focused assessment is pivotal to ensuring high quality teaching, as it allows the work to be planned and taught to accurately meet the needs of the students whilst ensuring high levels of expectation and support. Progress is measured and evidenced at Brentwood using a number of different strategies.

Assessment of learning and assessment for learning are incorporated into each activity, at an appropriate level. (See Assessment Policy). Our student progress process encourages teachers to analyse effective strategies for individuals. Teachers acknowledge the small steps of progress that lead to secure knowledge and understanding, whilst ensuring that adequate challenge is in place. Teachers are encouraged to use all forms of assessment, both formal and informal, to inform future planning and to put interventions in place where appropriate.

Monitoring and review

A key aim of the monitoring is to learn from good practice, understand when improvements are needed and know the next steps to move forward.

Evidence from monitoring feeds into:

- School self-evaluation
- School development plans
- Staff development planning
- Performance management meetings
- Reports to governing bodies

In assessing the effectiveness of the teaching and learning policy, the following monitoring procedures may be used:

- Learning walks and lesson observations
- Analysis of student attainment and progress data
- Reference to QFLT and progression with strands
- Reflecting on the impact of learning conversations
- Scrutiny of teacher planning and assessment documentation
- Tracking individual learners, or cohorts of students
- Evaluations from the impact of training (with a teaching and learning focus)
- Evidence from parental and student questionnaires
- Success in meeting teaching and learning priorities on the school development plan

Reviewed: Jane Roberts
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