

THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL



POLICY DOCUMENT 74 – APPROVED 06/05/2021

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

Vision Statement

*We, the staff and governors, aspire
to ensure that all our students,
irrespective of ability
and regardless of anyone's doubts,
achieve their potential in full;
and we aspire in this way to make Thomas Mills High School
the best in the country.*

Thomas Mills High School is an Academy and a company limited by guarantee incorporated in England & Wales under number 7605059

Teaching and learning at Thomas Mills High School should inspire, challenge and create a love of learning for its own sake. It values each pupil as an individual and regardless of ability or background, enables them to flourish through hard work and commitment.

‘The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.’ William Arthur Ward

Effective Teaching at Thomas Mills High School

All Teachers Should:

- Know their students. A clear knowledge of the individual needs of each learner is key to ensuring that they are able to maximise their progress. Pupils are also much more likely to make progress when they know that the teacher has a genuine knowledge of them as an individual but they also see that teacher goes the extra mile and is prepared to do something different on occasion to engage them in their learning.
- Use differentiation where appropriate. Careful and strategic differentiation enables pupils across all abilities and backgrounds to maximise their achievement and so going forward in working towards ‘closing the gap’. Done correctly, this acts as a clear support mechanism and breaks down barriers to maximise pupil progress and engagement.
- Challenge the learners. Lessons should encourage pupils to extend and consolidate skills and knowledge as well as creating an environment where students wish to take on challenge and are not afraid of stepping out of their comfort zone. This may mean going beyond what is considered the standard curriculum level and even going beyond the classroom.
- Carefully plan lessons with a clear focus on what the students need to achieve. Teachers focus on solo taxonomy. They know where their pupils are, where they need to be and scaffold this process through carefully planned lessons. The key to this being successful is the flexibility to respond and adapt as the lesson is being taught to learner reactions, while keeping focus on the objectives.
- Give effective and timely feedback. This should be both verbal and written feedback with formative comments and levels in line with the school marking policy and level criteria. Teachers should also employ DIRT (Directed Improvement and Reflection Time) style marking across all years, where appropriate, to ensure that pupils are able to reflect and make use of the feedback as part of continual progress.
- Show mastery of their subject. It is imperative that teachers demonstrate enthusiasm and clear expertise in their field. This is not only through subject knowledge but through subject pedagogy. This has a huge impact on progress, as well as ensuring that the students are engaged, enthused and inspired in each subject area.
- Use a variety of questioning strategies effectively. These should be appropriate to the age, ability and content being taught and used to not only measure progress but also to engage and inspire.
- Create a safe and purposeful learning environment in which students feel safe, respected and able to flourish to the best of their ability. Teachers should employ timely and appropriate behaviour for learning techniques that encourage pupils to be active

participants in their own learning. This enables students to build resilience, ask questions and develop their own commitment to success.

- Create an inspiring environment for the learners. Every classroom should be bright and engaging, with displays that aid learning and showcase pupil work.
- Use research to inform their teaching and are aware of cognitive theories and their approach to learning. Use of meta-cognition and retrieval theories give a relevant and evidence based foundation for knowledge retention.

Monitoring Review and Evaluation

There are a variety of Quality Assurance measures and Performance Management processes that not only monitor and review teaching and learning but also aim to progress and develop the skills of the staff.

The QA process has three phases:

Autumn Term: Developmental Observation (not graded). QA managers discuss with individual teacher's key focus points for the observation to ensure that feedback from the observation helps specific areas of their teaching to be developed.

Spring Term: Department Review (not graded). QA managers discuss department development plan progress with Heads of Department and key features of this are then observed during a learning walk across the department. Verbal and written feedback is given to the Head of Department as to how to move things forward from that point and as evidence of development plan implementation.

Summer Term: Performance Management Observation (not graded). Full lesson observation with verbal and written feedback from their line manager in line with individual performance management targets. The observation form used during this term uses the teacher standards to assess the lesson and to help the teacher to move forward and develop.

The QA team meets every term to feedback and evaluate the process as well as flag up key areas for development of teaching and learning within the school.

Whole Staff Continual Professional Development meetings take place a number of times each year. There are range of sessions that target key teaching and learning topics as well as areas that have been raised though the QA process. These aim to help teachers to move from good to outstanding and to encourage them to continually developing their own pedagogy and skill set. This is combined with a culture of regular information sharing to help teachers have practical techniques on which to build their practice.

'Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better.' Dylan William