

# Oaks Park High School

**Title of Policy:** Teaching & Learning

**Person responsible:** SLT

**Date for review:** 2017

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## **At Oaks Park teachers should:**

### **Know their subject well:**

- Adjust teaching in line with students' responses.
- Structure introductions and explanations well.
- Identify problems through focused, exploratory questions.

### **Have high expectations:**

- Encourage independent learning.
- Stress accuracy, precision, correct vocabulary and previously taught routines.
- Require students to justify and extend answers.

### **Use a variety of teaching strategies:**

- Lay firm foundations before moving students on to higher task.
- Detect the right activities to reinforce learning points.
- Vary the teaching method to suit the concept to be taught.

### **Use time and resources well:**

- Require students to engage actively with them.
- Maintain pace, while avoiding tasks dragging on.
- Spend little time on administration (eg. registers, books etc.)

### **Check students' understanding:**

- Adapt strategies to suit purpose.
- Be quick to point out and correct (to whole class) common mistakes.
- Focus questions clearly on key learning points.

### **Reinforce learning:**

- Constantly review learning – particularly during conclusion phase.
- Set and check learning objectives.

# A Framework for Teaching at Oaks Park High School

## Underlying Philosophy

Good teaching means effective learning. This should be the aim in every lesson. The Framework for Teaching is designed to put in place a structure and pedagogy which supports these goals. It is not a highly prescriptive curriculum but a useful framework within which to plan and deliver effective lessons.

The key principles and beliefs underpinning the framework are, in no particular order, as follows:

- We need to build on prior learning at KS2 and both our pedagogy and curriculum should reflect students' experiences at primary school.
- This framework draws a great deal of attention to using oral work to develop understanding. Just because a student has 'got it down in his/her book' does not mean they have learnt anything.
- The framework provides excellent opportunities to develop a student's capacity to think for him/herself and is designed to ensure that students are required to engage with learning throughout the lesson. There is little opportunity to disengage.
- Emphasis is placed on the role of the teacher in modelling as part of the teaching process.
- Students are expected to listen to both the teacher and each other. The role of students 'taking the lesson forward' is an important part of the pedagogy.
- The framework recognises the importance of having a basic structure to lessons. Good learning takes place where there has been good planning and clear 'signalling' to students as the lesson moves from one stage to the next. Pace and challenge within lesson planning is essential.
- Reinforcement or 'over-learning' is built into lesson structures. This also provides an excellent opportunity for formative assessment; thus enabling the teacher to check understanding and adjust planning when necessary.
- The framework adopts a pragmatic approach to issues surrounding differentiation. Establishing a pedagogy based on integration rather than total differentiation helps to make the teacher's job easier and 'keep the students together', thus allowing equal access to quality texts, for example. It challenges the more able and supports those who move at a slower pace.
- Assessment for Learning techniques will be used to aid learning.

**The framework should not be viewed as a straitjacket - it is designed to be used flexibly. The underlying issue should be one of 'fitness for purpose'.**

## Typical Lesson Structure

The framework is based on 4 stages within every lesson. Guidelines for timings are provided; however these may need to be varied as and when required. Timings below are based on 60-minute single lessons. Teachers will need to make necessary adjustments for double lessons.

- A short lesson starter (5-10 minutes).
- Introduce the main teaching points.
- Develop the main teaching points (group activity & independent practice).
- Plenary (5-10 minutes).

## Starter

- The starter should begin quickly and not overrun.
- The aim of the starter is to get the group settled and focused ('warm up the brain').
- Students should follow the same routines at the start of every lesson (eg. coats off; work, equipment and planners out; bags on the floor; register taken).
- The starter should review the last lesson and/or homework and set the aims for the lesson ahead, **focusing on learning objectives**. It is not based on 'hands up'.
- Homework and 'key words' should be written in planners.
- Teachers should avoid confrontation with difficult students wherever possible.

## **Main teaching points**

This section addresses the key learning objectives and is teacher-led.

- The whole class moves at the same speed.
- Progress and learning is assessed and monitored orally throughout the phase.
- Opportunities are provided for students to develop their confidence in speaking and listening.
- The whole phase is interactive, between both teacher and students and between the students themselves.
- It is not didactic, with the teacher as deliverer and the students in receipt.
- It is important for the teacher to plan the transition between each part of the phase carefully.

## **There are a number of strategies that the teacher can employ:**

### **Teacher exposition/demonstration**

This technique will often start off the main teaching phase.

- It should employ an appropriate range of resources.
- Teachers should 'commentate' on their thinking when explaining or modelling.
- New language/spellings should be dealt with explicitly.
- Teaching should not be punctuated by questioning the class. Students should be concentrating on understanding what is happening and on trying to remember what they have learnt.
- It should be made clear that students will have a chance to ask questions at the end of each 'chunk' of learning.

### **Pair/group discussion work**

- This is a very good way of ensuring that all students are engaged in the lesson and provides excellent opportunities for students to think for themselves in a less pressurised setting than whole-class questioning.
- It provides a good link between teacher exposition and structured whole class questioning or student demonstration.
- Clear timescales and expected outcomes need to be set by the teacher.
- Teachers should not be worried about all students 'reporting back'. The main aim of this technique is to allow opportunities for all students to engage with the learning.

### **Structured questioning**

This provides opportunities to develop understanding. Teachers should:

- ensure a range of questions are asked from low to high order ('descriptive, reflective, speculative');
- rarely use 'hands up'. Much better to select students to answer; this enables teachers to ensure students have had adequate 'thinking time' and means questions can be targeted to push more able students;
- not be afraid to ask the same student a series of progressively more challenging questions;
- not repeat a student's answer. This encourages students to mumble. If a student is too quiet, s/he should be encouraged to repeat the answer more audibly;
- give students who are reluctant to answer time to respond. If this fails, re-phrase the question or ask another instead. Never move on to another student until you have received a response and praised it.

### **Student demonstration**

This is perhaps the hardest technique to introduce, but the one that can contribute the most to learning when successfully implemented. It is very dependent on the creation of the right classroom ethos and the teacher needs to train students in the routines.

- It is best used towards the end of the main teaching phase.
- The teacher should model an explanation first, followed by a confident student first.
- When students are at the front the teacher should consider moving to the side of the room.
- Listening students should be encouraged to give feedback, and ask questions of the student at the front.

### **Development of main teaching points (independent practice and group activity)**

The aim of this part of the lesson is to reinforce and develop learning from the main teaching phase. This will usually involve students working as individuals; however on some occasions it may be more appropriate to work in groups.

- Time is provided for the teacher to support less able students.
- Tasks can be set to develop further more able students' thinking and understanding.
- Independent practice provides opportunities to check understanding.
- The teacher needs to explain very clearly how written or practical work should be presented; where it should be done; the importance of handwriting, spelling, punctuation etc. where appropriate; any health and safety considerations.
- Where appropriate, students should assess their own or each other's work at the end of the phase. This enables students to gain early feedback on their progress and understanding.
- For some practical subjects, more time may well need to be given to independent practice than is suggested in the broad guidelines.

### **Plenary**

- An opportunity for reflection and to summarise key learning points.
- A chance for students to express what they've learnt and for the teacher to check their understanding.
- Homework can be explained / demonstrated.
- An opportunity to praise the group on how they are working.
- It is important for the teacher to protect this time and for a routine to be followed for every lesson.

### **Pre-conditions for learning**

For the framework to be effective there are certain pre-conditions for learning which need to be in place:

#### **Classroom culture**

The framework is about:

1. collaboration in the classroom,;
2. integration, not 'absolute' differentiation;
3. dialogue, not monologue.

Clearly we need to recognise that it will take time to train students to accept some aspects of the framework. Others may already be established by experiences at KS2.

It is important for teachers to make very explicit what they expect students to actually do at every stage in a lesson.

Teachers should always challenge behaviour that does not meet expectations, in line with the school code of conduct. As always, it is the notion of **respect** which underpins both the framework for teaching and our code of conduct.

#### **Layout of teaching space**

There are a number of principles, which underpin how the space should be organised:

- Students should all be facing the main focus for explanation/demonstration/central resources.
- Students should be able to see and hear the teacher and each other.
- A data rich seating plan should be in place for each group. Staff must plan carefully the seating of target groups such as Disadvantaged students.

**Classroom Observations**

Oaks Park Policy for Teaching & Learning will be supported and monitored by regular classroom observations.