



## CURRICULUM AND TEACHING POLICY

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### Curriculum and Assessment

#### The curriculum is:

- rich in powerful knowledge and language, which is specified, taught, assessed and securely learnt
- exceptionally well-planned and sequenced
- exceptional in its use of assessment to support learning
- manageable for teachers; supportive of teacher workload and wellbeing

#### Rich in powerful knowledge, which is specified, taught, assessed and securely learnt

1. Knowledge here can be defined as both substantive and procedural knowledge (i.e. how to perform subject specific procedures or tasks). Therefore, knowledge includes those concepts, facts, ideas, stories, techniques and procedures which are important to know in order to have a deep understanding of a subject.
2. Powerful knowledge gives scholars the cultural literacy they need to be able to take their place as informed, active citizens; be increasingly aspirational in their future choices, and excel in further academic study.
3. Desirable skills such as analysis, explanation, creativity, evaluation and independence of thought are only possible when a wide knowledge base is secure; all thinking involves connecting new ideas to existing knowledge.
4. Powerful knowledge includes knowing the language required to apply knowledge. Therefore, the best language for scholars to learn in order to apply their knowledge at each point in the curriculum should be specified, taught and practised.
5. Therefore, greater emphasis should be given to knowledge, with a view to covering 'fewer things in greater depth', and a commitment to the idea that overall, scholars will be taught, understand and retain much rich knowledge.
6. Curriculum planning should define and minutely specify the core substantive and procedural knowledge that is regarded as most important for scholars to learn.
7. Where curriculum content is minutely specified, clarity is provided which supports teacher workload, helps scholars understand the progress they are making, and enables high quality intervention for those who are not yet successful. Vague or unspecific curriculum content is burdensome for teachers, and a contributor to excessive workload.

#### Exceptionally well-planned and sequenced

8. Careful and skilful curriculum sequencing and planning is essential if scholars are likely to secure and retain knowledge.

9. This requires that the order in which scholars are exposed to core knowledge is carefully specified and planned so that concepts manifest 'indirectly, but powerfully and critically, in future learning of other content' (Counsell).
10. Effective sequencing also involves specifying exactly when and how core concepts will be returned to so that they are retained over time and will form the basis of retrieval practice at the beginning of every lesson.
11. Where it is sensible to do so, planning should take into account the content that is being taught, or has been taught, in other curriculum areas at any point. Links between subject areas – for example where the same period is being considered in English, Art and History – should be planned, understood and capitalized on by teachers in each subject.
12. An effective curriculum therefore will have a very clear and convincing rationale for what is taught, and the order that it is taught in. It will clearly identify core concepts, knowledge, ideas, words and procedures, and will specify when they are to be introduced, and when / how they are returned to.

### **Exceptional in its use of assessment to support learning**

13. Effective teaching uses assessment and feedback constantly and fluidly in the classroom, through discussion, questioning and activities which require scholars to demonstrate learning. In some subjects, particularly practical subjects at KS3, this is very much the dominant form through which assessment takes place.
14. In the majority of subjects, it is also essential that a standardized approach to formative (interim) assessments is devised, so that it is consistently high quality and 'manageable, meaningful and motivating'. Formative assessments of this type should be centrally agreed and shared through the subject, and not left to each individual teacher to devise.
15. For formative and summative assessments, clear procedures must be in place which specify how the information gathered should be shared and used to adapt future teaching. Subject assessment policies should make this clear, and ensure that practice is 'manageable, meaningful and motivating'.
16. TFS assessment policies make these procedures clear, and ensure that practice is 'manageable, meaningful and motivating'. 'Manageable' here means efficient and achievable for teachers, with a sensible expectation of workload. 'Meaningful' means that assessments allow valid and reliable inferences to be drawn about what scholars know or can do, and what their next steps should be. 'Motivating' means that assessments should provide opportunities for accomplishment and challenge, to ensure that scholars benefit from the positive impact on motivation which comes from genuine learning and achievement. Whilst teacher praise and positive affirmation for achievement is valuable, scholars should be dissuaded from seeing work as being produced 'for the teacher' or for other extrinsic reward and guided towards the intrinsic motivation of genuine learning.
17. Formative assessments can take a variety of forms, including short answer questions and multiple-choice questions. They should not solely be a watered-down version of the summative assessment, but should aim to isolate and target the knowledge and skills which combine when scholars complete summative assessments.
18. Summative assessments should be standardized across a subject and be expertly designed. This means that they have high levels of validity (they test understanding of the core knowledge and skills as specified in the curriculum), and reliability (they allow the teacher to make reliable inferences about what a scholar has learnt and where gaps remain).
19. Well-designed formative and summative assessments include cumulative elements – that is to say, they include items which refer back to previous learning and content. This is designed to aid retention and ensure that knowledge is secure over time.
20. In best practice, standardized and carefully designed formative assessments allow leaders to collect raw data for vulnerable scholars, and therefore gain a clearer picture of the specific content which these scholars are not grasping.
21. It is the responsibility of school leadership (at subject and senior level) to ensure that high quality standardized formative and summative assessments are in place for each course that is delivered.

## **Manageable for teachers; an approach which supports teacher workload and wellbeing**

23. An effective curriculum will mean that a teacher is always clear as to what needs to be taught, in what order, to what time scale and how/when this is to be formatively and summatively assessed. This information should be provided through schemes of learning, subject assessment policies and subject assessment calendars – in place for each subject taught.
24. Teachers of an excellent curriculum are free to concentrate more of their attention on how to deliver content with skill, precision and energy.
25. Core resources - including formative and summative assessments, modelled answers, knowledge booklets, knowledge organisers, scheme of learning sequences and core activities – should be coherently planned, excellent quality, and easily accessible to all teachers of that course.
26. Resources should be designed following research-informed design principles as outlined in the Turner Teaching and Learning Handbook.
27. Teachers should be supported in the best ways to deliver the content of the curriculum through regular opportunities for training, sharing and discussion with other teachers of their subject wherever possible. Opportunities for teachers to access training and have these discussions within faculties and subject areas are essential and should be planned in whole school and faculty meeting time.

## **Expert Teaching**

Our aim is to provide the best possible opportunities for scholar achievement, progress and learning. We do this by focusing all of our teaching and learning professional development work on the elements of our practice which research shows make the most difference (R. Coe et al, What makes great teaching? Review of the underpinning research, 2014). These elements are in our planning and delivery and every teacher has a responsibility to:

### **Know the curriculum deeply**

1. Maintain deep and fluent knowledge of the curriculum content they teach.
2. Use agreed mid and long-term plans to guide the learning and ensure that it is well-organised over time.
3. Maintain deep and fluent knowledge of the relevant language and terminology related to the subject.
4. This includes knowing and teaching a full range of rich academic language to allow scholars to talk, think and write about the subject.
5. Understand typical ways scholars think about subjects, concepts, processes and ideas, anticipating common misconceptions and planning teaching to account for these

### **Plan well-constructed sequences of lessons, with clear explanations, delivered with conviction**

6. Plan lessons and lesson sequences with a clear focus. Lessons which try to address or introduce multiple concepts, or are cluttered with multiple activities, are to be avoided, as working memory is likely to become overloaded.
7. Use well-planned direct instruction and explanation so that content is clear and every scholar can access the lesson and tasks. Avoid assuming knowledge that the scholars may not have – explain words and ideas explicitly.
8. Explicitly teach powerful language, including Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary through etymology (the study of the history of words, their origins and how they change over time), morphology (the study of word parts: roots, prefixes and suffixes), and use in context.
9. Employ effective questioning techniques, insisting on high quality responses, using the TFS questioning model. This includes but is not limited to 'No Hands-up', 'Wait Time', 'Right is Right', 'Format Matters', 'No Opt Out' (William, and Lemov et al)

10. Ensure scholars' activities are appropriately challenging, high-value and purposeful in helping scholars to learn, practice and retain curriculum content. All lessons should be planned based on scholars completing the most challenging work, made accessible to all through carefully sequencing substantive and procedural knowledge through excellent models and high-quality explanation.
11. Wherever appropriate, model how to access and complete tasks, and how to achieve excellence in the quality of work produced.
12. Provide opportunities in lessons for extended practice, to ensure that knowledge and skills are secured, before moving on to new learning.
13. Avoid low-value, or inefficient filler tasks, such as posters or gimmicky 'creative' tasks, the completion of which distracts scholars from the subject content required to be learnt.
14. Ensure that scholars with SEND are effectively provided for, through high quality teaching, and following strategies from the SEND profiles.
15. Lessons should include regular periods of silent, independent work during lessons. This is essential to help scholars concentrate and manage distraction.

### **Ensure effective assessment and feedback**

16. Fully understand and implement TFS CHECK method to ensure that practice is manageable, meaningful and motivating
17. Use formative assessments in the form of MCQs to make decisions about post-assessment teaching, by identifying gaps and planning teaching to address these.
18. At the begin of each lesson, make regular use of short, low-stakes quizzes to ensure that knowledge is retained over time. Retrieval practice should include reference to recently learnt material, e.g. from the last lesson, as well as material from further in the past – last week, last month, last year

### **Set purposeful homework**

19. The purpose of homework is for scholars to learn, memorise, revise or practise the knowledge and skills that they are taught in school. Therefore, homework activities should be those which require scholars to think deeply about the knowledge and skills they've been taught.
20. Scholars should be given a minimum of one week to complete homework. Each subject should set no more than 30 minutes of homework per week and may set fortnightly rather than weekly homework.
21. Tasks are recorded on the parent App and all tasks are set through Google Classroom or other online platforms. These tasks take the form of quizzes and worksheets. Homework Club, device loans and the ICT Suite means that all scholars have access.
22. All subjects set quizzes and retrieval tasks using Google Forms or other online platforms which are self-marking. These can then be analysed through the platform for gap analysis and addressing misconceptions. Homework should not require any other marking by the teacher as the conditions in which homework is completed cannot be verified, therefore formal feedback and marking is unlikely to be beneficial. Learning from homework can be tested through application and retrieval practice in lessons as well as through data analysis of online quizzes.
23. Open-ended research homework, such as 'find out about' or 'find five facts' should not be set, particularly at KS3. It is our responsibility to identify core knowledge and provide this through the curriculum and resourcing, with scholars taught to learn and retain it at home. Open-ended research, whilst providing a surface sense of independence, frequently results in low quality work and little genuine understanding or retention, and is inefficient in promoting learning. It is also likely to disadvantage vulnerable scholars still further.
24. Tasks such as posters or model-making should only be set as compulsory homework if they directly represent the skill or knowledge being learnt. This means that a model could be set as homework if, for example, relevant to an Art scheme of learning on model making, or a poster set if scholars are learning about the use of posters for propaganda in History. This is because they tend to result in scholars spending lots of time thinking about the act of creating the homework, such as their presentation, colours or pictures, and are often inefficient as a tool to promote deep thought about and retention of the core material.

25. Detentions should be given for missed homework and for not meeting the pass mark set by the teacher. Google quizzes and forms can be set for editing so that scholars can change their answers. The answer function can also be used to support scholars to correct their answers. In some instances, not meeting the pass mark may be an indication of a need for intervention and support – this may take place during Morning Meeting, DEAR or Homework Club where the scholar may be given a second opportunity to complete the test, if appropriate. However, if scholars have not met the standard due to lack of effort, teacher judgement should be applied and detentions set accordingly. Teachers should also consider that a scholar regularly not meeting the required standard perpetuates their disadvantage, therefore expectations should remain ambitious for all scholars.
26. If scholars fail to complete homework and are set five homework detentions in one term, they will be expected to attend compulsory homework club, in addition to any detentions.

### **Create an effective working environment**

27. Understand and insist upon school rules and routines in relation to scholar behaviour (see policy).
28. Insist upon high standards of effort and presentation, using 'Strive for Five'
29. Hold scholars to account for completing work. It is expected that this includes regular use of silent, independent work during lesson time.
30. Contribute to the upkeep of well-ordered and well-organised classrooms, by storing books and resources in an organized manner.

### **Responsibilities**

**The Senior Leadership team** is responsible for overseeing the successful implementation, continual refinement, monitoring and evaluation of the school's approaches to curriculum, assessment and teaching, according to the principles and practices outlined above.

**Subject Leadership** are responsible for ensuring that approaches to curriculum assessment are clearly defined, resourced and adhered to within the faculty. This incorporates the generation and upkeep of clear schemes of learning and a clear faculty assessment policy. Furthermore, Subject Leadership are responsible to ensure that teachers are made clear as to the expectations and procedures required, and supported to develop the deep knowledge required for successful curriculum delivery.

**Teachers** are responsible for reading, understanding and implementing the taught curriculum, and approaches to assessment specified in the subject assessment policy. Teachers are also responsible for learning the content of the curriculum in depth and detail, so that they are able to deliver content with authority, fluency and flexibility.