

## Teaching & Learning Policy

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## **Introduction**

At Downe House Riyadh we believe in the concept of lifelong learning. This policy is intended to have a positive impact upon the learning and teaching process at Downe House Riyadh, enabling each child to achieve his/her maximum potential. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding, fulfilling and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun. Teaching and Learning at Downe House Riyadh targets and reflects a range of individual learning styles. Through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding and attitudes necessary to be able to make informed choices about important things in their lives. We believe the appropriate learning experiences and teaching strategies help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

At Downe House Riyadh we conduct all our learning and teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all, responding professionally and sensitively to the needs of all our pupils.

We believe that people learn in different ways. At Downe House Riyadh we provide a rich and varied personalized learning environment that allows children to develop their skills and abilities to reach their full potential, through improving both academic achievement and personal development.

## **Aims of the Teaching & Learning Policy**

At Downe House Riyadh we aim:

- to develop confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners, able to make informed choices.
- to foster children's self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people.
- to develop children's self-respect and encourage children to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others;
- to show respect for all cultures and, in doing so, promote positive attitudes towards other people;
- to help children grow into responsible, independent and positive people;
- to foster a love of learning so they develop positive lifelong habits and values;
- to provide a safe and happy workplace.

We work towards our aims through providing a challenging and stimulating programme of study, based on the Early Years and British National Curriculum, with

important modifications to take into account our international setting and our international body of children. Our creative approach to curriculum development is designed to enable all children reach the highest possible standard of personal achievement.

We offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways.

Activities are planned which promote:

- enquiry based learning;
- active learning;
- giving children choices;
- asking and answering questions;
- shared talk;
- investigation and problem solving;
- collaborative learning;
- creative thinking;
- critical thinking;
- reflective thinking;
- mental and physical productivity;
- practical application of skills.

These activities are organized in a variety of ways incorporating an element of pupils' choice:

- group work;
- pair work;
- independent work;
- whole class work;

They are promoted in a variety of ways, which include:

- role-play.
- responding to musical or recorded material;
- visual engagement;
- physical engagement;
- hot seating;
- marketplace activities;
- questioning activities;
- debating, discussing;
- making oral presentation;
- making things and being creative;
- artistic pursuit.
- mind-mapping.

Each classroom is equipped with an interactive whiteboard. The development of

key ICT skills is promoted in timetabled ICT lessons and by the use of devices in the classrooms. We use advanced technologies wherever possible to engage pupils and to move learning forward.

### **Children as Independent Learners**

Learning to learn is an integral and vital part of our ethos. We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to take risks, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way they learn and to reflect on how they learn – what helps them learn and what makes it difficult for them to learn. They are also expected to identify the standards they are aiming for, become involved in peer and self-assessment and set targets. These areas are expected to be integral parts of lessons. Following assessments, we have DIRT (Directed Independent Reflection Time) where pupils understand how to improve and where their gaps in knowledge are. In addition, pupils receive a 'learning Journey' or a half termly overview at the beginning of a topic, this allows them to navigate through their learning and sets the aspirational goal for them to achieve and strive for.

### **Effective Teaching Strategies**

Downe House Riyadh has the highest expectations of pupils and teachers take this into account when planning lessons. Work is planned to stimulate and motivate the children, building on the skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. Teaching is based on the knowledge of the children's level of attainment. The prime focus is to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding as well as fostering the appropriate attitudes to learning. When planning teachers ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability and provide pace and appropriate challenge.

In order to achieve outstanding lessons and for pupils to make the expected progress we believe very strongly in setting the correct climate for learning. We expect teachers and, where applicable, other members of staff, to:

- Greet pupils at the door to ensure a prompt and orderly start.
- Check that pupils are wearing the correct uniform and enter the room in an appropriate and purposeful manner.
- Differentiate and structure learning activities to ensure that all pupils can engage with the activities and be successful.
- Take full responsibility for the progress of all pupils in their class.
- Have consistently high expectations of all pupils in all areas of their learning and school life
- Ensure that all learning styles are catered for in a sequence of lessons.
- Treat all pupils equally regardless of issues such as colour, race, religion or

- gender.
- Follow all school policies, e.g. marking, assessment and homework.
- Communicate constructively and regularly with parents. Keep them informed about their son/daughter's progress, inform them of concerns and, most importantly, do not forget to communicate the good things!
- End lessons so that pupils leave in an orderly manner when it is time to leave.

## **The Learning Ethos**

### **We believe that learning occurs when pupils:**

- Can see its purpose and value
- become effective self-learners
- Know the learning objectives and outcomes
- Are actively involved through a range of learning and teaching styles
- Feel safe to fully participate in all activities
- Feel supported in transferring new learning
- Are given challenging experiences
- Are given opportunities to reflect and make improvements to their work
- Are praised for engaging in learning encouraging pupils to take risks with their learning even if it results in making mistakes
- Take responsibility for their own learning and aspire to be better

### ***Lesson starters***

To ensure optimum conditions for good learning to exist, staff must not underestimate the importance of the **opening moments** of welcome.

- Has the previous lesson been packed away' BIG question' and outcomes on display?
- Stand at the door ready to receive the pupils; smile and have a quiet word with individuals when necessary. How do pupils feel as they approach your classroom? Assess pupils' emotional state and readiness for learning, making a mental adjustment to your plan if necessary.
- Ensure they know the routines and expectations of the environment.

We believe an effective start to the lesson is important because:

- Pupils engage fully in learning from the outset.
- They exploit the prime learning time at the beginning of lessons when pupils are often at their most receptive and concentration levels are high
- They gain an understanding of the objectives and purposes of the lesson.
- There is a sense of pace.
- Pupils spend most of their time on-task and focused on learning.
- There is an appropriate level of challenge that enables pupils to make good progress in their learning.

Teachers can ensure their lessons have an effective start by:

- Planning effectively, deciding the specific purposes of the starter in relation to either lesson objectives or longer-term learning objectives.
- Using a repertoire of interactive teaching strategies and techniques to inject pace and ensure activities are engaging and challenging.
- Being aware of the techniques required to teach the lesson as planned as well as those which are useful to have 'at your fingertips' to shape and develop the learning as the lesson progresses.

Engagement activities are particularly effective when they become part of the agreed routine of each lesson. Pupils arrive at the lesson expecting to begin work immediately, and the stress created by discipline issues (such as late arrivals and homework not being handed in) is reduced. A well-balanced starter allows pupils to work without intervention from the teacher for some of the time, but also includes direct and specific teacher input. This involves directing the learning and moving it on, differentiating the level of challenge and ensuring that the main teaching points are conveyed clearly.

Pupils' ability to engage in learning is also influenced by their emotional state. Engagement is maximised in high-challenge, low-stress situations. This means that certain activities, for example handing in homework, are better deferred to later in the lesson.

### ***Challenge***

All lessons should have appropriate challenge to meet the learning needs and to stretch all pupils in the class. The relationship between challenge and engagement is an important one. If the learning activity is too easy, pupils become bored; if it is too hard, frustration reduces motivation.

We recognise that our most able pupils have particular needs, which we should meet if they are to realise their potential. Tasks are designed to take account of levels of existing knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers need to plan for higher order learning and questioning and to incorporate tasks, which develop strategies for learning. There are planned extension opportunities or open-ended tasks. There is access to higher tier assessment opportunities. (See Gifted and Talented Policy)

### ***Pace***

Teachers should consider the pace of their lessons. Pace does not mean simply moving quickly through the lesson. It is about moving the lesson forward purposefully with the minimum number of distractions and amount of off-task time.

### ***Sharing Learning Objectives and Outcomes***

At Downe House Riyadh, we believe that a significant feature of a lesson should be the sharing with pupils of both learning objectives and outcomes in a clear and explicit way. The teacher should make it clear that the learning objective is what the teacher intends the pupils to learn, and that the learning outcomes define how achievement can be demonstrated by the pupils. From Year 9, teachers should use

the 1-9 assessment scales to focus pupils on the progress required and expected. In Years 1-5, the National age related expectations should be used and shared with pupils as Learning Objectives and Learning outcomes.

Objectives should be linked to appropriate year group expectations/grades to ensure appropriate levels of work and progression for all pupils. Pupils also need to know and recognise the standards they are aiming for. It is essential that teachers are clear about their expectations and communicate these to pupils. Differentiation strategies should be planned to ensure progress is made by all pupils. Learning Journeys and assessment criteria should be shared with pupils routinely.

When the learning objective is made explicit, then it should also be made clear what the learning outcomes for a task or set of tasks should look like. The learning outcome will specify what is expected from the pupils as a result of a task or an episode within a lesson. It will explain the criteria for success. This can be accomplished in a number of different ways, for example;

**Remember:** objectives and outcomes have most impact when they are shared in pupil- friendly language to help formulate questioning and focus the plenary.

### ***Interventions and support for learning***

We plan interventions that will support pupils and move them on in their learning. These are determined by accurate knowledge of pupils' previous learning and our high expectations of their progress. We know the impact that we expect these interventions to have and we evaluate them with regard to the difference that they have made to pupils' learning.

We believe that differentiation is important in supporting pupils' learning because:

- Each pupil has different learning needs
- Pupils have different learning styles
- Pupils learn at different rates
- It enables all pupils to engage in the learning process

Differentiation is defined by OFSTED as 'The matching of work to the differing capabilities of individuals or groups of pupils in order to extend their learning'. In practice, differentiation means creating learning experiences that work at different levels, enabling pupils of all abilities to engage at a level and pace that is appropriate for them.

Able, Gifted and Talented pupils have different learning needs and require increased challenge in lessons and at home.

Teachers are expected to use a number of strategies as appropriate to ensure that learning matches the needs of all pupils including SEN and Most Able and Talented, boys, girls, pupils whose first language is not English (EAL), different ethnic groups. These might include:

Differentiation by task



- Must, Should, Could
- Individualised learning through self-study resources and ICT
- Resources
- Specialist input/support; one to one tutorials or mentoring
- Grouping strategies such as 'jig sawing'
- Differentiation by Teacher / LSA input
- Differentiation by outcome

Teachers must incorporate differentiation into all aspects of their teaching, from the planning stage through to the evaluation and reflective processes used when measuring success. Differentiation cannot be ignored, as pupils deserve the best service possible.

### ***Personalised Learning***

We support the principle that personalised learning helps to develop the learning of all pupils. Personalising learning simply means making the teaching appropriate for the learner. It does not mean differentiating for each individual pupil each lesson.

We expect teachers to be aware of the unique ability, attainment and learning style of their pupils, as this will help them to teach in a way that enables each and every one of them to learn in the way that suits them best. It will also enable teachers to make their lessons stimulating and challenging.

### ***Questioning***

We believe that questioning is fundamental to good and outstanding teaching and learning. All teachers instinctively question pupils but to do it well needs planning and an understanding of how to engage and push pupils' thinking and not simply using questioning to check knowledge.

- The way questions are asked is central to their effectiveness. Pupils respond well to teachers who show an interest in them and in their opinions and ideas;
- be clear about why you are asking the questions.
- plan sequences of questions that make increasingly challenging cognitive demands.
- Big or main questions that will be used in a lesson should be indicated on the lesson plan and should be linked to lesson objectives.
- It does not matter how good and well-structured your questions are if pupils do not respond. Response will be enhanced if:
- There is a classroom climate in which pupils feel safe to take risks and know they will not be criticized or ridiculed if they are wrong.
- Prompts are provided to give confidence to try an answer.
- There is a "no hands" approach to answering, where you choose the respondent rather than have them volunteer.
- Wait time is provided before an answer is required. Research suggests that 3 seconds is about right for most questions - more complex questions may need longer.

### ***Plenaries – not just for the end of the lesson***

Learning episodes should always end with an opportunity for reflection. It is expected that a 50-minute lesson would have at least 2 of these. Planning for reflection and providing adequate time for it throughout the lesson is important for three main reasons:

- It is the moment when the pupils reflect on what they have done.
- It enables the teacher to be diagnostic, assessing individual and collective progress. It is this diagnosis that must inform lesson planning. If pupils have not understood a key point, it must be revisited, for either the whole group or specific individuals, in the next part of the lesson or in a subsequent lesson. There is, therefore, an absolute link between learning objectives, learning outcomes, plenaries and lesson planning.
- It prepares the class for a calm and punctual dismissal.

### **Three areas of questioning should be considered:**

- What did we do?
- How did we do it?
- How might this learning be useful outside of school or in other lessons?

We must make sure that time is put into formulating the best questions to link to the learning outcomes shared at the start of the lesson:

*'When pupils are merely reproducing or memorising given facts and information; accepting ideas and information passively; not being required to look for principles or patterns or to reflect on goals and progress - then they are only engaged in surface learning.'* (DfES: Pedagogy and Practice, 2005).

### **Learning Tools**

There are a number of learning tools at our disposal to make it clear that the pupils are making progress. Please ensure that you encourage the pupils to use this throughout the lesson and use their feedback to alter planning if necessary.

- **Mini white boards** – Used throughout the lesson to gauge understanding and spot common misconceptions.
- **iPads/digital technology**– Used to support learning by allowing pupils to independently assess their own work through internet based research or through the use of subject specific APPs.

**Marking and Feedback** –refer to **Marking and Feedback** policy for further clarification

We have an agreed Marking and Feedback policy which considers its' frequency, content and depth. We plan regular opportunities for pupils to respond to written feedback so that it improves their learning. We give ongoing verbal feedback to individuals and to groups of pupils throughout the lessons. Our feedback includes positive features of a pupils' work. It is sharply focused on the learning and how to

improve. The purpose of our feedback (verbal, written, peer and setting new challenges) is to give pupils precise and motivating information about how well they are doing and how to improve. See the Feedback policy for more detail. We use the 'Correct and Perfect' strategy to ensure pupils make progress following written feedback in the Prep and Senior school.

### **Assessment for Learning**

We use a range of techniques to systematically check our pupils' understanding throughout each stage of the lesson. We should anticipate the most likely areas of misunderstanding and prepare planned interventions and support that will address these. However, we should also be ready to adapt our approach spontaneously when we meet unexpected misconceptions or difficulties

**Homework** –refer to Homework policy for further clarification

We recognise the importance of pupils learning at home. We believe that it helps to extend and consolidate school learning. Our homework policy outlines the arrangements that we make to plan regular and appropriate homework at each stage. We evaluate the effectiveness of our homework by the impact that it has on pupils' learning. All pupils are encouraged to use TEAMS to access homework tasks, revision tools and research projects. Teachers are expected to set regular Homework on TEAMS that will either pre-empt the following lesson, or consolidate prior learning. It is expected that Homework is printed by the pupil and handed to the teacher or returned electronically via the Class notebook (Year 7 and beyond only).

### **Support for teaching and learning**

Downe House Riyadh is committed to improving teaching and learning through various monitoring and support procedures.

Monitoring takes place through regular Quality Assurance processes details of which can be found in the Quality Assurance policy.

All staff are encouraged to participate in developing their teaching and learning skills but when a particular issue has been identified, staff may be approached to participate in a specific support procedure to address their need.

### **Displays – refer to Display and Learning Environment for further clarification**

Working walls are displays for literacy and numeracy which support children's learning. Working walls make use of a visible display outcomes, modelled examples and success criteria. This approach enables children to know what they are learning

and how this learning process develops over a period of time.

**In classrooms working walls are created to:**

- support children's learning towards the curricular targets
- model the learning processes and learning steps
- visibly display outcomes, modelled examples and success criteria
- provide for children a visible exemplification of their curricular targets and how their learning towards this is developed
- support teachers to strike a balance between work in progress and a focus on the information that may be needed throughout the year

**An effective Working Wall should:**

- show the teaching sequence (planning into practice)
- show progression over time, being added to by both teacher and children
- link current work to previous skills taught to embed learning
- identify and support prior learning needs
- include teacher and child WAGOLs (What A Good One Looks Like)
- display success criteria agreed by and with children
- have concise and relevant success criteria which are used by children be used for self and peer evaluation
- show methods and steps visually
- have elements which link to a permanent maths or literacy display e.g. calculations methods
- display removable vocabulary which children are expected to use when giving full answers

**Planning**

Learning Activities should be

- Planned based on systematic and accurate assessment of pupils' prior learning and knowledge of pupils' needs.
- Planned to enthuse and engage all learners
- Designed to encourage pupils to learn and do well at differing levels of ability
- Chosen to and effectively planned to ensure that Learning Objectives are delivered and met
- Designed to provide stimulating and varied experiences, fit for their purpose
- Designed to challenge pupils of **all abilities** through the use of planned differentiation
- Used to provide formative and summative assessment
- Used to give effective and bespoke verbal, written and peer feedback
- Discussed and agreed with all teachers and support staff
- Resourced with high quality learning materials
- Designed to develop independent learning skill

- In pre-prep and prep provide a solid grounding to build learning on
- In the Senior school, develop and apply skills and knowledge in a coherent journey and sequence of lessons.
- In the 6<sup>th</sup> form, challenge and apply deep learning to complex scenarios through differentiated resourcing and techniques.

We use the following to inform our planning:

- The National Numeracy Strategy
- The National Literacy Strategy
- The National Curriculum/QCA
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, published on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012 and revised in September 2021.
- ISEB syllabuses for 11+
- GCSE examination criteria for year 10-11 planning

### ***Long Term Planning***

Long Term plans provide an overview of what is taught over the course of the year to each year group and detail Programmes of Study.

### ***Medium Term Planning***

Medium Term Planning details:

- Learning objectives in each curriculum area
- References to the National Numeracy Strategy, the National Literacy Strategy, the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, National Curriculum Levels, EYFS Objectives or ISEB syllabus as appropriate

### ***Short Term Planning***

Teachers meet weekly in year group teams to plan. Short Term plans detail:

- Learning objectives
- Learning objectives to be shared with pupils
- Links to prior learning
- Success criteria to be shared with pupils
- Direct teaching including key questions and vocabulary
- Pupil activities including reinforcement and extension activities
- Resources
- ICT
- Activities for Teaching Assistant and other Adults
- Opportunities for assessment
- Foundation Stage planning based on Foundation Stage Profile Objectives
- Notes for next teaching sequence

### **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**

All our teachers and teaching assistants reflect on their strengths and weaknesses

and are encouraged to discuss and plan their professional development as part of their on-going professional development programme. Downe House Riyadh supports teachers' needs for in further professional development. In-service activities are offered during the year either by using the expertise of existing staff, bringing in outside speakers or attendance at external courses. A programme of exchange is planned with our sister school in the UK.

At Downe House Riyadh, CPD is delivered regularly and there is a rotation of sessions including whole school focus on areas for development, pedagogical research into action, Learning quads (teacher peer support and development), pastoral focus and academic team development. The quality of education is monitored (See QA policy) and the standards by which we measure this are set out in the Appendix.

## Policy History

Date of adoption of this policy	August 2022
Date of last review of this policy	August 2024
Date for next review of this policy	August 2025
Policy owner (SLT)	Deputy Head Academic
Policy owner (Chair of the Board)	

## Appendix: Teaching Standards

The UK Department for Education Teacher Standards introduced on 1 September 2012: the following guidelines on teaching are contained within the standards, which state that a teacher must;

### ***TS1: Set High Expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge***

- Establish a safe and stimulating environment for pupils, rooted in mutual respect.
- Set Goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions.
- Demonstrate consistently the positive attitudes values and behaviour which are expected of pupils.

### ***TS2: Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils***

- be accountable for pupils' attainment, progress and outcomes
- be aware of pupils' capabilities and their prior knowledge, and plan teaching to build on these
- guide pupils to reflect on the progress they have made and their emerging

- needs
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this impacts on teaching
- encourage pupils to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study.

***TS3: Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge***

- Have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings.
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas and promote the value of scholarship
- Demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject.
- If teaching early reading, demonstrate a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics
- If teaching early mathematics, demonstrate a clear understanding of appropriate teaching strategies

***TS4: Plan and teach well-structured lessons***

- Impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time.
- Promote a love of learning and pupils' intellectual curiosity.
- Set homework and plan other out-of-class activities to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding pupils have acquired.
- Reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching.
- Contribute to the design and provision of an engaging curriculum within the relevant subject area(s)

***TS5: Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils***

- Know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively.
- Have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn and how best to overcome these.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of pupils and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils' education at different stages of development.
- Have a clear understanding of the needs of pupils including those with special educational needs; those with EAL; those with disabilities and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.

***TS6: Make accurate and productive use of assessment***

- know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum

- areas, including statutory assessment requirements
- make use of formative and summative assessment to secure pupils' progress
- use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons
- give pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback.

***TS7: Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment***

- Have clear rules and routines for behaviour in classrooms and take responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour both in the classroom and around the school in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.
- Have high expectations of behaviour and establish a framework for discipline with a range of strategies using praise sanctions and rewards consistently and fairly.
- Manage classes effectively using approaches which are appropriate to pupils' needs to involve and motivate them.
- Maintain good relationships with pupils exercise appropriate authority and act decisively when necessary.