**Create Your World**

# Cardiff West Community High School

# Teaching & Learning Policy

# Updated January 2024 – F. Mitchell
# Review: July 2026

1. **Rationale**

Teaching & learning are the core purposes of our school. The essence of our approach towards teaching and learning is that the role of the teacher is to facilitate the learning of the students, so our students become ambitious and resilient learners. As reflective practitioners, we expect our teachers to engage individually and collectively in constant review and enhancement of pedagogy which continually advances the quality of teaching and learning at Cardiff West Community High School.

2. **Aims**

1. To create a common philosophy of learning and teaching for all students, regardless of ability.

2. To use the Learning Rainforest principles in the planning and review of all lessons. This includes several teaching and learning focus points that are split into three parts:

   ▪ **Establishing the conditions -** A culture that fuels the learning environment: embraces the joy of it; celebrates challenge and excellence; rewards effort and persistence.

   Teachers should:

   *Foster the attitudes and habits needed as a basis for students to achieve excellence: have high expectations, teach with rigour whilst also inspiring awe and making the whole process joyful.*

   *Establish effective behaviour routines and develop relationships that support students' self-esteem, motivation and crucially, their engagement with teacher feedback.*

   *Design a curriculum where the knowledge and skills are structured in a way that supports long-term retention, builds confidence and allows connections to be made.*

   ▪ **Building the knowledge structure -** Core learning building very secure knowledge that goes deeper rather than wider.

   Teachers should:

   *Use effective instruction methods to build students' knowledge explicitly and deliberately: explaining, modelling, questioning in various ways and develop routines for practice.*

   *Use effective formative assessment and feedback methods that make teaching highly responsive and support students to continually improve.*

   *Teach for memory in an explicit fashion, using a range of methods for learning by heart,*

*making this a positive and joyful part of the learning process.*

- Exploring the possibilities - Learning activities that build on prior knowledge, allowing students to explore and connect ideas, broaden their experience and extend their capabilities.

  Teachers should:

  *Provide some opportunities within the overall curriculum for hands-on, authentic learning experiences, group activities and project work, with open-ended outcomes.*

  *Use resources (including online tools and digital technology) to support students as independent learners with opportunities to lead learning based on their own knowledge.*

  *Give speech activities a high profile as experiences in the enacted curriculum.*

  *Celebrate excellence in all its forms.*

"The classroom is part of an exciting, complex rainforest made up of individuals with their own needs, individuality, prior knowledge, experience and ambitions, capable of expressing their learning in multiple forms." (Tom Sherrington, The Learning Rainforest)

3. CWCHS Literacy and Numeracy Keys and appropriate elements of the DCF should, where relevant, be skilfully incorporated into lessons to enhance the learning experiences of students and allow regular opportunities for all students to make continued progress in these areas.

4. New technologies should be used to engage learners and promote independence and collaborative learning experiences.

5. Every teacher should ensure all pupils are aware of targets and goals for progression through clear, diagnostic feedback, both verbal and written.

6. The conditions for good learning should be established through good working relationships with pupils' behaviour effectively managed in line with the school's behaviour policy.

7. Every lesson should be prepared within the context of a well-written scheme of learning which is appropriately planned to build towards essential GCSE skills.

8. Lessons should be prepared within the context of the Curriculum for Wales and our planned curriculum should hold the 4 purposes at its heart. The 4 purposes should be the starting point for all experiences, supporting our students to be:
   - Ambitious, capable learners ready to learn throughout their lives
   - Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work.
   - Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the World
   - Healthy, confident individuals ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

## 3. CWCHS Consistencies

There are 3 core 'consistencies' at Cardiff West Community High School. These should be common practice in all lessons. The purpose of these consistencies is to ensure there are clear routines and common approaches across all lessons. As we believe this consistent approach is fundamental to the success of lessons at Cardiff West CHS. All teaching and learning focus from the Learning Rainforest can be incorporated and used alongside these 3 core consistencies.

## Relentless Routines - Our Consistencies

### 1. Strong Start to Lessons
Be on the door, inside and out. Establish a personal connection with your students. Efficient and established routines for seating plans/equipment/books/uniform/phones/CWCHS slides/Do Now starter which create a culture of high expectations from the very beginning and ensure the pupils begin their learning promptly.

### 2. Circulate
Maximise the benefits of moving strategically around the room during all parts of the lesson to effectively differentiate, challenge, engage and manage behaviour. Maximise teaching time and minimise distractions by using the least invasive tactic to correct off-task students.

### 3. Strong Finish
Explicit assessment of your objective to evaluate success. Every minute matters activities. Ordered, smooth routines for pack up. Calm and orderly teacher-led dismissal.

## 4. Sharing Good Practice

Sharing good practice is crucial to ensuring that ideas and strategies are communicated and disseminated across the school. The school acknowledges (formally through its CPD programme and informally on a day to day basis) the importance of pooling the wealth of expertise across the school.

Effective practice is shared in a number of ways, which include:

- Teaching and learning focus group (To be established Spring term 2024)
- CPD training sessions.
- Departmental exemplar portfolios
- Departmental teaching and learning meetings
- Observations – formal (observations) and informal (coaching)
- Professional dialogue including action research sessions.
- Transition projects with primary feeder schools
- Creative Briefings

## 5. Schemes of Learning

Schemes of Learning should be present and available from all Areas of Learning Experience. Schemes of Learning should:

- Utilise the teaching and learning departmental focus of the Learning Rainforest and allow opportunities for this to be developed.
- Embody the curriculum for Wales and have the four purposes at is heart.
- Ensure appropriate challenge for all pupils and allow for appropriate progression for all.
- Be a framework to allow all staff, including those teaching outside their subject specialism, to deliver effective and successful lessons that provide opportunities for all pupils to succeed and progress.

Schemes of Learning should be planned with the end in mind.
We focus on this concept in two ways:

1. Teach the skills and knowledge necessary for success at GCSE and beyond. Learners need to be prepared for the highest academic success. The skills needed at GCSE must be taught from Year 7 onwards.

2. Assessment is necessary to gauge progress and learning of what has been taught over a certain period of time.  It is necessary that assessment criteria has been agreed before teaching of a given unit commences.

The results of the assessment will be used to measure the success of teaching and learning and judge pupil progression.

## 6. Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning

At CWCHS we will monitor and evaluate the effective implementation of this policy using the following methods:

- Area/Subject leader monitoring
- Lesson observations
- Departmental reviews
- Pupil voice interviews
- Department and Area reviews and self-evaluation
- Work sampling
- SOL/Exemplar portfolios/Assessment portfolio scrutiny
- Standardisation and moderation activities
- Data analysis
- Departmental meetings
- Line management meetings
- Standards Improvement Group (SIG) meetings
- Performance Management

## 7. Lesson Planning

The primary purpose of lesson planning is to ensure teachers plan highly effective lessons as part of an overall sequence of lessons. It is not a requirement to use the CWCHS lesson plan template for every lesson. It is, however, essential that planning is evident for all lessons. Use of the CWCHS lesson plan template will be required for formal observations and at the direction of the SLT.

All lesson planning should begin with high expectations of all learners.

At CWCHS we expect all teachers to plan every lesson. Each lesson should include:

1. A **seating plan** with a clear rationale behind it that **considers pupil data**.
2. A **'Do now' starter activity** that pupils can work on independently as they enter the classroom. The starter should connect students to previous learning.
3. **Clear and measurable learning objectives**. Learning objectives reflect what students will learn not just describe what students do.  Lesson objectives and success criteria should follow the CWCHS format. "Today I will… I am successful when…."  It is important that every learning activity supports the student in achieving their learning objective. Objectives should be made explicit to all students and reviewed during the lesson.
4. A range of **engaging and challenging learning activities** planned to deepen thinking and build knowledge and skills. These should be planned to ensure they stretch and challenge all pupils. These are the processes that enable students to meet their learning objectives.
5. Regular opportunities to **measure progress** towards learning objectives throughout the lesson.
6. A **plenary** at the end of the lesson reviewing progress.
7. **Differentiation** should be used in a range of ways to ensure all students are challenged to achieve highly.
8. **Extension** and scaffolding work ready and planned for each lesson.
9. Specific opportunities to develop **literacy** within every lesson. This should include a focus on either oracy, reading, writing or a combination.


## 8. Lesson Observations and Follow-Up Procedures

At Cardiff West Community High School, we are constantly evaluating the quality of teaching and learning so that we can ensure that all students make the best progress they possibly can.  As part of this process we regularly monitor the quality of classroom practice to ensure that it is consistent with whole school priorities and identifies good practice.

At Cardiff West CHS we aim for all teaching to be good or excellent and use the results of classroom observations to evaluate our success in fulfilling this aim, provide professional development, identify good practice, and develop learning targets within a department and throughout the whole school.

Our CPD regularly relates to The Learning Rainforest and other current teaching and learning pedagogy. Lesson observation and planning paperwork relates to our school priorities for teaching and learning.

Our lesson observations are non-judgemental.  We observe in order to:

- Support staff as they develop their knowledge and skills in striving for professional excellence;
- Allow for the sharing and dissemination of good practice;
- Play a vital role in assessing the impact of teaching and learning on students' attainment.
- Inform and facilitate the monitoring of the School/Department Development Plan;
- Inform the ongoing development of the curriculum;
- Help to identify priorities for staff development.
- Provide information for the self-evaluation process.
- Inform the performance management process.
- Know strengths and areas for development of teaching.
- Support agreed consistency through the school/area/department.

**Feedback and reflection**

Effective feedback is a professional dialogue between observer and teacher and is a critical element of the process of observation.

- Oral feedback from observations will be given at the earliest opportunity.
- CWCHS standardised paperwork is used in all observations to ensure consistency.
- An appropriate time should be organised between reviewer and reviewee to enable quality discussion on the outcomes of the observation.
- When writing the feedback, the observer should write up the key points of the observation and summarise key points within 'areas of excellence' and, when necessary, 'areas in need of significant support'.

Where areas of excellence are identified these approaches can be shared with staff via our ongoing CPD. Where areas in need of significant support are identified, the Line Manager and/or SLT link will devise a bespoke programme of support. This will include; mentoring, joint planning, peer observations, individualised training.

## 9. Responsibilities

**The student:**
- To engage in, and take responsibility for, their own learning by participating fully in learning activities in the classroom and beyond.
- To take ownership of their own learning by shaping and reviewing their own learning through reflection.
- To reflect upon their own progress towards attainment targets and set interim steps towards achieving these.
- To contribute to purposeful peer assessment and moderation activities.
- Students should be respectful to the learning environment, their peers, their teacher and their classroom.
- Students should value and respect the views of others involved in the learning process.

**The subject teacher:**
- To plan lessons which consider prior attainment, specific learning needs and different learning styles to allow all students to access the curriculum.
- To provide reflective opportunities (DIRT time) to allow students to consolidate their learning and to reflect upon the cognitive process.
- To ensure that students make progress during lessons using accurate and appropriate assessment techniques.
- To use high quality, higher order questions which provide stretch and challenge to all learners.
- To report, at regular intervals throughout the academic year, on pupil progress, attainment and efforts in lessons.
- To be committed to learning themselves as reflective practitioners who strive to keep up to date with knowledge and pedagogy.
- To manage behaviour to ensure that the learning environment is safe and conducive for learning.
- Have high expectations of all students.
- To ensure they are up to date with school priorities for teaching and learning and wider developments at a local and national level.

**The Department**
- To identify the teaching and learning strategies which would be best suited to delivery of curriculum content and material.
- To plan schemes of learning which incorporate opportunities for learners to access the curriculum in line with the policy recommendations.
- To contribute to the department resource and assessment portfolios and relevant website sections.
- To contribute to area data collection, moderation and standardisation processes.

**Area Leads**
- To ensure consistent processes and teaching methodologies are implemented across the Area.
- To ensure that the school/area policy is in operation through lesson observations, work sampling and pupil voice interviews and that whole school priorities are shared through subject plans.
- To ensure there are appropriate departmental resources and portfolios available for all team members.
- To ensure there are appropriate schemes of learning and that the content and impact is regularly evaluated and updated. To ensure these are available for all team members.
- To ensure the relevant website sections are populated and updates.
- To monitor the progress of all pupils within their area, considering a range of information including assessment outcomes and quality of work produced.
- To encourage and make time for necessary training and facilitate appropriate CPD ensuring the ongoing development of all team members.
- To encourage the sharing of good practice and professional dialogue.

**The Leadership Team**
- To provide a whole school focus and vision for teaching and learning.
- To ensure teaching and learning is a key part of whole school self-evaluation.
- To create and develop a teaching and learning working group to lead and drive teaching and learning at CWCHS.
- To provide and evaluate the provision of staff training through a planned CPD programme within the school to enhance their knowledge of and practice in employing appropriate and effective teaching and learning strategies.
- To encourage the sharing and dissemination of resources and good practice across different curriculum areas.
- To support liaison between partner primary schools to allow progression in learning from year 6 to year 7.

**Parents/Guardians:**

At Cardiff West CHS we believe that parents and carers have a fundamental role in helping students to learn and progress. We will ensure that parents are informed of their child's learning progress using the following methods:

- Sending annual, diagnostic reports that inform parents on how best to support their child with their learning.
- Sending interim data reports on a termly basis.
- Publishing an annual report to parents.
- Publishing a school newsletter.
- Holding parents' evenings where parents will be able to speak to their child's teachers to understand their child's progress and achievements.
- Holding parental workshops and target intervention evenings.
- Maintaining the school website up to date with learning outcomes.

**Governors:**

Our governors determine, support monitor and review our school policies on teaching and learning. In particular they:

- Support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively.
- Monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies through the analysis of student data.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning policy through the school self-evaluation processes.