



Derby
Grammar
School

Where you belong

Teaching and Learning Policy 2025-2026

Scope:	Whole School including EYFS
Release date:	Autumn 2025
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Author:	Deputy Head Academic
Reviewer:	Head
Approval body:	Education Committee

Linked documents

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- Professional Standards for Teachers
- EAL Policy
- SEND Policy
- Most Able Policy
- Remote Learning Policy
- EYFS Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Acronyms

- SEND Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- EAL English as an Additional Language

Aims

The aim of this policy is to:

- Explain how we establish an environment of high expectations where pupils are empowered to achieve academic excellence within our supportive community.
- Summarise expectations to make sure all staff have clarity and understanding about what excellent teaching and learning looks like across the school and in their own subject specialism.
- Ensure all members of our school community recognize the importance of excellent teaching and learning and that a robust and consistent approach is our most powerful tool to achieve excellence for all our pupils.

Principles

Our school has four distinct values which shape our community and culture: kindness, courage, respect and ambition.

Our vision is that of an ambitious school with a kind heart, and we inspire our pupils to be the best version of themselves. Our teachers are talented and bring education to life for all our pupils, offering knowledge, experience and enthusiasm in abundance which stimulates pupils' desire to learn.

Our small community is one of our biggest strengths as it allows all teachers to get to know pupils individually. We empower pupils and having a supportive environment is central to achieving this. A wide range of co-curricular opportunities serve to enhance pupils' learning experience.

Our belief is that excellent teaching facilitates learning, which enables pupils to reach their full potential. Our role is to support all of our pupils to succeed irrespective of their starting points. We are committed to giving pupils whatever support they need to ensure they make the progress necessary to get the successful outcomes that they deserve.

Learning is not always easily measurable, and we use pupils' starting points as indicators of progress. As teachers, we see that pupils are learning when we see:

- A permanent change in long term memory as pupils recall information over time and link to their established schema;
- Pupils' increasing ability to make connections between concepts and phenomena and apply their knowledge to new contexts;
- An increased fluidity in pupils' skills, such as being able to perform a task independently without the initial scaffolding.

We believe in the development of wider skills, including:

- Creativity
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Critical thinking

It is important to us that pupils own and understand their own learning priorities and achievements, and that we ensure the progress of every pupil irrespective of their starting point and barriers to learning. We are all responsible for the pastoral development of pupils as well as their academic progress.

Teaching and Learning Aims and Ethos

Our ethos is based upon our vision of what a Derby Grammar School pupil can be and can do. Our teachers developed the following graphic to summarise our ethos.



Responsibilities

Teaching and learning in our school is a shared responsibility, and everyone in our school community has an important role to play.

Teachers at our school will:

- Follow the expectations for teaching and professional conduct as set out in the [Teachers' Standards](#)
- Follow the expectations as set out in this policy
- Update parents/carers on pupils' progress through termly reports on progress, according to the school's assessment and reporting schedule.
- Take responsibility for their professional development, identifying and discussing development opportunities and needs with their line manager and colleagues.

Teaching Assistants at our school will:

- Know pupils well and differentiate support to meet their individual learning needs
- Support teaching and learning with flexibility and resourcefulness
- Meet the expectations set out in this policy

Heads of Department and Subject Leaders will:

- Develop a well-sequenced, broad and balanced curriculum that builds knowledge and skills
- Sequence lessons in a way that allows pupils to make good progress
- Use their budget effectively to resource their subject, providing teachers with necessary resources for learning
- Drive improvement in their subject, working with teachers to identify any challenges
- Monitor and develop teaching and learning in their subject through work scrutiny, lesson observations
- Moderate and/or standardise progress across their subject by, for example, systematically reviewing progress against a range of evidence and reviewing performance data
- Improve on weaknesses identified in their monitoring activities
- Encourage teachers to share ideas, resources and good practice

Senior leaders at our school will:

- Have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality education to all
- Celebrate achievement and have high expectations for everyone
- Hold staff and pupils to account for their teaching and learning
- Plan, implement, and evaluate strategies to secure high-quality teaching and learning across school
- Manage resources to support high-quality teaching and learning
- Provide support and guidance to other staff through coaching and mentoring
- Input and monitor the impact of continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to improve staff's practice and subject knowledge
- Promote team working at all levels
- Address underachievement and intervene promptly

Pupils at our school will:

- Take responsibility for their own learning, and support the learning of others
- Meet expectations for good behaviour for learning at all times
- Attend all lessons on time and be ready to learn, with all necessary equipment
- Be curious, ambitious, engaged and confident learners
- Know their targets and how to improve
- Put maximum effort and focus into their work
- Complete homework activities as required

Parents and carers of pupils at our school will:

- Value learning and encourage their child as a learner
- Make sure their child is ready and able to learn every day

- Support good attendance
- Participate in discussions about their child's progress and attainment
- Communicate with the school to share information promptly
- Encourage their child to take responsibility for their own learning
- Support and give importance to home learning

Advisory Board Members at our school will:

- Monitor that resources and funding are allocated effectively to support the school's approach to teaching and learning
- Monitor the impact of teaching and learning strategies on pupils' progress
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation
- Monitor the impact of this policy on the overall strategy of the school.

Planning

Planning is a process not a product. It has one purpose: to enable high quality delivery which enables all pupils to learn.

All teachers need to be clear and precise about the knowledge/skills they want pupils to learn in every lesson.

Planning is about hard thinking, not form filling. Teachers should spend time thinking about what they want pupils to learn first before they give consideration to what they want them to do.

The questions teachers need to ask when planning a lesson are:

1. Where are the pupils starting from?
2. Where do you want them to get to?
3. How will you know when they are there?
4. How can you best help them get there?

Learning Objectives

It is important that teacher, pupils, and teaching assistants are all clear about the key learning that will take place in a lesson.

Teachers should make learning objectives explicit to pupils. There is no expectation that they need to be written down but all pupils should be able to explain what the key learning of the lesson is.

Long term planning

Schemes of work must be in place to support teachers' individual lesson planning, and should be saved in the Teaching and Learning drive so that it is accessible to all staff in the department.

Schemes of work should be identified on the Subject's Curriculum Map.

When planning a lesson, teachers should be clear where this fits into their subject's overall curriculum.

Short term planning.

We do not expect teachers to produce individual lesson plans but we do expect to see evidence of short term planning e.g. in teacher planner or electronic equivalent.

Planning to meet the needs of all pupils

Knowledge of the pupils, their prior attainment, and specific needs is a key part of planning. Every class must have an annotated seating plan..

Teachers are expected to know the profile of the pupils they teach by looking at pupil data, including academic data, the SEND register, One Page Profiles, and the More Able and Talented Register.

High quality teaching is the first wave of intervention for meeting the needs of SEND pupils.

Differentiation should be planned over time to ensure a quality first approach which meets the needs of all pupils and groups and maximises the use of any additional adults in the room.

When planning, teachers should consider the different pedagogical approaches we use to engage, motivate and challenge all learners, so that most pupils find a learning fit most of the time.

Teaching

"Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better." (Professor Dylan Wiliam)

Teachers must be explicit about the key knowledge and vocabulary that all pupils must use. Pupils must know the knowledge and key skills you want them to learn and the language they are expected to understand and use.

We are all teachers of literacy. The quality of both pupils' and teachers' language, through instructions and questioning, are significant determinants of progress.

High quality teaching strategies

High quality teaching strategies allow all pupils to access learning and succeed with even the most challenging content if scaffolded appropriately.

What a "typical lesson" will look like will vary from subject to subject and individual teachers may utilise a variety of strategies based upon their professional judgement and knowledge. However, it is expected that the following high-quality teaching strategies are used effectively in the majority of lessons.

Challenge

We should have high expectations of *all* pupils *all* of the time.

It is good for pupils to struggle just outside of their comfort zone.

All pupils must be working harder than the teacher over time and should begin learning as soon as they arrive in the classroom and for the whole lesson

Explanation

Teacher instruction should be planned with awareness of demands on pupils' cognitive load, by presenting new material in small steps.

1. Limit the amount of material pupils receive at one time.
2. Give clear and simple instructions and explanations.
3. Think aloud and model steps.
4. Use more time to provide explanations and provide many examples.
5. Re-teach as necessary.

Modelling (I do)

Teach to the top with expert instruction and modelling.

To learn how to do something, pupils need to watch and listen to experts guide them through the process, step by step, before they make an attempt themselves.

Modelling supports explanation and can help pupils to make abstract ideas concrete, e.g.

1. Demonstrate the worked activity in front of pupils, e.g. using a visualiser
2. Think aloud to show the thought process.
3. Show it is ok to make a mistake and empathy, e.g. 'I found this bit challenging too.'
4. Integrate quick fire questioning e.g. 'Why am I doing this now?'
5. Provide model answers

Guided practice with scaffolding (we do)

Worked examples and scaffolding used to all support pupils to demonstrate their learning e.g. sentence starters, key word definitions, procedural steps visible. Effective class discussion and questioning can happen at this stage.

Independent, deliberate practice (you do)

Pupils should be provided with the time they need to practise new material in a number of ways in order to master it. Scaffolding should be reduced or removed for the majority of pupils.

This is the component that will look the most different across curriculum areas, but all practice should be careful, deliberate and ideally just outside of the pupil's comfort zone.

Responsive Teaching (Assessment for Learning)

Teachers should ensure that learning has stuck by checking for understanding. All teachers should confidently and accurately use teaching techniques to gather a secure overview about whether the key learning has actually been learnt. If learning is not yet secure for pupils the lesson should be adapted or retaught differently

For responsive teaching teachers can use:

Questioning

Effective teachers ask a large number of questions skilfully, as questioning is our main tool to probe, check and extend pupil understanding.

Teachers should ask lots of questions, to lots of pupils, and then use what they learn from this process to adapt and reshape teaching within and between lessons

Majority of questions should be done through cold calling, with targeted questioning used to support and challenge pupils.

Whole class responses to questioning can be done effectively with mini whiteboards, hand gestures etc

Retrieval Practice

Retrieval is a learning strategy that should be used regularly in lessons to support pupils with retrieving material that they have previously learnt from their long-term memory. It should be low stakes, completed without access to notes and used in a spaced manner.

When used at the start of a lesson as a “Do now” activity it can help to recap prior knowledge needed for today’s lesson and support teachers with understanding prior learning of the class.

The school provides all teachers and pupils with access to [Carousel Learning](#) as a retrieval platform.

Effective feedback

Feedback exists in many forms (e.g. teacher marking of exercise books, whole class marking sheets, verbal feedback, peer and self assessment), but what matters is what pupils do with it. Effective feedback should:

- Be frequent and timely
- Always generate action and should be more work for the recipient than the donor.
- Be specific and focused on the most prominent areas to improve.
- Be accompanied by support in how to be successful and the next step
- Allow time for DIRT (dedicated improvement and reflection time) to cultivate an environment of redrafting work.

Assessment and Feedback

Marking and assessment have two purposes.

1. Assess and record pupil progress, achievement and attainment in ways that enable learners to reach their full potential.
2. Provide pupils with clear feedback, both verbal and written, in order to inform planning by teachers and to ensure pupil progression.

Effective marking should be meaningful, manageable and motivating for the recipient whilst simultaneously being manageable and sustainable for the teacher.

Please refer to the school’s Assessment and Feedback Policy for more detail.

The Learning Environment

In order for there to be excellent learning behaviour there needs to be the right classroom conditions, where all pupils feel safe, supported and valued. To ensure all pupils are confident in knowing what is expected of them in terms of work and behaviour, all teachers are expected to have:

High expectations – teachers should always have high expectations for learning and behaviour for all their pupils

- Teach to the top, with necessary scaffolds to support those who need it
- Promote active engagement not just compliance
- Establish a growth mindset culture, mistakes are celebrated, use language of “not there yet”
- Focus praise on effort, value the “struggle of learning”

Teachers build positive relationships with all pupils through positive behaviour management

- Welcome all pupils into your class by greeting them at the door
- Use positive framing to remind pupils of expectations and learning routines
- Use meaningful praise and rewards as much as possible e.g. commendations
- Provide pupils with the opportunity to change their behaviour, before sanctions are applied. Continuing with poor behaviour and accepting the resulting sanction is a “choice they have made”.
- Have restorative conversations when necessary, e.g. after a detention
- Demonstrate that consequences are temporary, e.g. new lesson, fresh start.

Teachers have clear and consistent routines and procedures– so there is a safe, orderly learning environment and learning time is maximised

- Meet and greet pupils at the door
- Learning begins immediately, every minute matters
- pupils sit in a seating plan
- Have consistent classroom rules and expectations which are fair and reasonable, so that all pupils know exactly what is expected of them when they enter your classroom.
- Always challenge pupils when rules and expectations are broken. Follow up all behaviour issues.

Homework

Homework will support pupils to further develop their learning outside of the classroom. It will be planned, meaningful and set in accordance with the homework timetables compiled by the Heads of Year.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Teaching and Learning

We will monitor teaching and learning across the school to make sure that all our pupils make the best possible progress from their starting points Aims of monitoring and evaluation:

- To make secure judgements of teaching and learning across the school
- To monitor and evaluate the progress of pupils

- To evaluate the performance of individual teachers against the Teacher Standards and check that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained
- To identify training needs across the teaching and support staff and drive the CPD programme

Senior Leaders, Heads of Department, and Subject Leads will monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching on pupil's learning through:

- Conducting learning walks
- Book scrutinies
- Review of termly progress checks
- Gathering input from pupil voice and teacher questionnaires

Continuing Professional Development

All staff at Derby Grammar School should engage with high quality researched based CPD and be open minded, reflective and proactive at continually trying to improve their teaching practice.

Teaching and Learning CPD will be focused around what will make the biggest impact to teachers and pupils, and staff will be given time to work collaboratively in subject specific teams to implement it. The aim is to ensure all CPD is embedded, reviewed and evaluated.

CPD at Derby Grammar School is:

- Focused on improving educational outcomes for our pupils
- Underpinned by the Teaching Standards
- Developmental
- Research Informed

Lesson observations will follow a coaching model and are part of the teacher's CPD.