



FRANCIS HOLLAND SCHOOL REGENT'S PARK

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Learning and Teaching

Learning is central to a school's life and discussion of learning and teaching should be a high priority and a continuous process. People learn differently and students should be treated as individuals. Moreover it is recognised that physical and emotional well-being as well as self-esteem are critical to the process of learning. Students should feel successful and will flourish where they are treated positively by teachers. Learning will be promoted when teachers themselves are seen committed to their subjects and when students perceive that teachers are learners too.

A Definition of Learning

Learning is individual and it takes place in different ways. It is making personal sense of something. It is an active process and demands that learners do something at a cognitive level. It makes intellectual and creative demands on students. Genuine learning is not simply a transference of information and is seldom rote learning.

Learning involves engagement, challenge, and thinking. It is about understanding and memory, about acquiring, developing, and applying skills, and about analysis and problem solving. Learning takes place in academic, social, emotional and physical areas. Much learning takes place outside the classroom, including in the home and in pursuing extra-curricular activities.

Aims

For the students

- To learn effectively at the cognitive level.
- To be autonomous learners – to be motivated, confident, independent, responsible for their own work, stretched, challenged, questioning, curious, creative, prepared to take risks, knowing when to work as an individual and when in a team.
- To have the tools to be successful in their learning and to acquire skills for future learning.
- To know and understand about different learning styles.

For the school

- To have learning as a high priority, with teachers who talk about learning and keep abreast of research on the subject of learning.
- To have teachers who increase the self-esteem and confidence of students by treating them as individuals and by having a positive approach.

To recognise that there are different learning styles and that teaching methods must be varied and that this variety makes a difference.

Procedures

Teachers talk about learning and share good practice

- Departments should discuss the specific issue of learning in their meetings at least every term. This might involve individual students as well as more general learning strategies. The Academic Deputy Head receives minutes of all department meetings.
- Some INSET days are used for developing understanding of learning.
- All staff join 'Collaborative Enquiry Groups' that focus on specific aspects of educational research such as, 'Improving the Quality of Student Talk' and 'Cognitive Load Theory'. The seven research groups meet every half-term and their findings are

published in a Teaching & Learning e-newsletter during the summer term, co-ordinated by the Assistant Head of Teaching & Learning.

- Learning is discussed in staff meetings and teachers who have gone on training courses can inform the rest of the staff of matters concerned with learning.
- The Curriculum Committee is chaired by the Academic Deputy Head and meets regularly to discuss learning and teaching strategies in addition to curriculum matters. The Academic Deputy Head reports back to the Senior Management Team and then when appropriate, to the Heads of Department and the rest of the staff. The Curriculum Committee is made up of a core group of teachers, but is extended to other staff to discuss specific aspects of learning or year groups e.g. learning and teaching in the sixth form.
- The teacher in charge of learning enhancement informs the staff about learning, with reference to those with specific learning needs and those that are gifted and talented.

Departments' focus on learning

- Departments have a section in their handbooks on Learning and Teaching. This will include reference to how they challenge students in their learning, stretch the very able, support the weak, encourage independent learning and differentiate between abilities in their teaching strategies and work set.
- Departments produce guidance to help students in their learning e.g. topic sheets to help students see where their course is going, revision sheets, a sheet explaining what marks mean, grade criteria etc.
- Teachers are expected to write meaningful comments on work produced so that girls can improve and move towards targets, rather than simply putting a mark.
- Departments should evaluate how successful their methods are for making students effective learners e.g. homework, methods of assessment, individual targets.
- Heads of Department should encourage their staff to review the success of individual lessons and homework set, in fulfilling the aims of the lesson and in achieving the desired outcomes and modifying schemes of work and lesson planning when required. Work schemes and lesson plans should include suggestions for stretching and challenging the most able, as extension work, optional tests etc.
- Departments use their teaching rooms for displays which enhance effective learning.
- Statistical evidence from tests, assessments, and examinations is used to inform teaching and increase effective learning.
- Departments are encouraged to use ICT to develop learning strategies.

PSHE is used to develop effective learning in students

- The students learn about learning in PSHE from the Thirds (year 7) to the Upper Fourth (year 9); additionally the Lower Sixth (year 12) have sessions on styles of learning and effective learning.
- Pupils with specific learning difficulties are identified and their progress is monitored.

The Academic Deputy Head, Assistant Head of Teaching and Learning, and Head of Learning Enhancement work closely together to promote effective learning in the school. They also work with Heads of Department to identify those very able and to coordinate programmes designed to stretch and challenge these individuals. These are detailed in the Stretch and Challenge Booklet which is updated annually. Initial identification of both those with learning needs and gifted students is done via MidYIS testing on entry to the school as well as the results of continuous assessments throughout a pupil's school career. More details of the school's provision for able, gifted and talented students is provided in the Curriculum Policy.