

# Learning and Teaching Policy

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# Freemen's

Learn, lead and make a difference

## Our Mission:

We want children at Freeman's to learn, to lead and to make a difference.

## Our Aims:

**We will do this by** nurturing a community of learners – adults and children – who are ambitious about what they might achieve in and out of the classroom;

- providing relevant opportunities for pupils to expand their horizons intellectually and socially; athletically and creatively; emotionally and spiritually;
- establishing an environment at Freeman's where everyone involved in the community is respected, trusted and supported;
- encouraging responsibility and capability; honesty and reliability; pride and passion;
- promoting determination and innovation; flexibility and adaptability; kindness and consideration;
- fostering in our pupils the confidence, curiosity, independence and wisdom to succeed in the next stages of their lives.

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## To learn, to lead and to make a difference: Freemens Learning and Teaching strategy 2018-2021

### PURPOSE

Freemen's must offer an exciting, broad, balanced, academic curriculum to all students staffed by passionate specialists in all subject areas.

### VISION

We want children at Freeman's to learn, to lead and to make a difference

### VALUES

Community

Opportunity

Respect

Trust

Responsibility

Innovation

Independence

Curiosity

## Learning and Teaching

Learning and Teaching is our core business. Despite a changing educational context we must maintain our focus on improving classroom quality, teaching innovation, rich educational experiences and student-centred learning. Ultimately an education at Freeman's should inspire a life-long love of learning

### Strategic goals 2018-2021

#### Learning spaces - provide learning spaces of excellence and inspiration

- Teach pupils the IT skills they will need for the world beyond Freeman's
- Support parents in how they can encourage the correct type of learning at home
- Where possible, provide opportunities for staff to complete research projects or further qualifications such as a Masters or Chartered Teaching qualifications
- Create a purposeful and rewarding environment for mobile technology
- Establish new ways for our students to contribute to their own and their peers' educational experience, via the use of flexible and creative work spaces
- New learning spaces built and IT facilities installed which are fit for purpose and designed to deliver high quality Learning and Teaching experiences

#### Glass walls culture - staff are confident to provide and receive developmental feedback regarding teaching practice

- Create a new format for lesson observation and professional development
- Introduce Learning walks and Blinks throughout the school
- Create a Student Learning Team that supports the development of Learning and Teaching in the classroom from a student's perspective
- Improve home learning across the school so that it makes a striking impact on learning inside the classroom
- Gain an understanding of staff skill set in order to plan for rewarding and personalised continued professional learning experiences
- Create staff working parties to support Learning and Teaching
- Ensure there are exceptional lessons being delivered consistently across the school, ensuring every teacher meets Freeman's expectations

#### Professional development - ensure staff are making the biggest possible difference

- Create the excellent habits of a teacher at Freeman's and introduce a framework for monitoring teaching effectiveness across the school
- Staff work with colleagues on research projects of their choosing.
- Staff engage in CPL sessions in areas of their choice to develop their own teaching practice
- Combine the development and training of teachers, unqualified staff, graduate assistants, NQT's and NQT+1s into a "Develop Freeman's" staff training program
- Encourage purposeful, professional dialogue on all aspects of Learning and Teaching through the delivery of effective CPL sessions, fortnightly teaching themes and the Learning and Teaching newsletter

#### Innovation – use a variety of pedagogical tools to fundamentally redefine the nature of the classroom

- Implement a new digital learning strategy which builds upon of the whole school digital strategy
- Nurture a staff body that is confident to take risks and embrace different styles of pedagogy through INSET, drop in sessions and other in school opportunities
- Improve IT systems across the school in order to develop and encourage further staff commitment to, and competence in, the use of IT for learning and teaching through a planned programme of staff training
- Use research and evidence, alongside feedback from staff and student surveys in order to inform any new policy and guidelines that are introduced

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## Learning and Teaching - Make a Difference

"I hope the world is a better place because we teachers make a difference to our students; after all, that is what teaching is all about" (Brewer, 2002). To make a difference, we expect all our staff to deliver high quality, stimulating and dynamic lessons, where all students are supported and challenged to make good progress in their learning. Staff at Freeman's do this by having a passion for their subject, making it interesting and lively and, very importantly, build positive relationships with their students.

Learning and Teaching is central to our work as educators and it stems from the school's aims, ethos and vision. Learning at Freeman's is exciting, full of opportunities for independence, achievement and enjoyment. We have a strong focus on ensuring every student under our care receives the best educational experiences possible, which not only leads to fantastic results, but that students leave with the skills that will allow them to succeed in the dynamic modern world.

## What makes great teaching?

"Great teaching is defined as that which leads to improved student progress" (Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, Major, 2014). We want all our teaching staff to have deep knowledge of the subjects they teach, which enables them to be aware of how students may interpret new information, so they can address common misconceptions. Strong subject knowledge must be coupled with excellent quality of instruction, through effective use of questioning and feedback as a formative method of identifying student progress. Teachers must set high expectations, promote challenge and constantly demand more from the students, valuing effort, resilience and grit. The classroom environment that is created by our teachers is a crucial element to student engagement in the learning process and at Freeman's, this environment should be collaborative, putting the student at the heart of every lesson (Sutton Trust, 2014).

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The success of learning and teaching relies on reflection and feedback. The implementation of this document will be monitored at several levels, with an encouragement for teachers to conduct peer-to-peer classroom visits and ask for feedback wherever possible. The ethos behind learning and teaching is one which is positive, and one which provide opportunities to share best practice across the school for the benefit of staff and pupils.

## An excellent learning environment at Freeman's is one where -

- the learning environment is secure, stable and stimulating;
- the learning builds on prior knowledge and understanding;
- success criteria are explicit, and models are provided;
- learning is centred on pupil learning rather than teacher performance;
- learning is collaborative and cooperative, and mutual respect is evident between the pupil and the teacher, and among all the pupils;
- independent learning and thinking are facilitated and encouraged;
- pupils take responsibility for their own and other learning;
- pupils have opportunities to transfer skills, knowledge and understanding to other contexts;
- formative assessment is embedded throughout.

## Students learn best when -

- They are happy;
- They are valued and treated with respect;
- There is a culture of high expectation and praise;
- They are able to build upon existing knowledge and/or skills;
- They find the work challenging and enjoyable;
- They are encouraged to think creatively and critically;
- They understand that making mistakes can be an important step towards greater understanding and learning;
- They are prepared to take risks and ask questions;

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- They are given time to reflect and self-evaluate;
- Feedback and strategies for improvement are given frequently;
- The curriculum is well planned and differentiated;
- They are supported and given the self-confidence to think for themselves;
- They are actively encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning;
- They are aware of the need to be respectful of those around them and the environment in which they learn.

In order to deliver excellent learning and teaching experiences, we follow the Freeman's 6. We have agreed six principles that should feature in every classroom, irrespective of the subject, age or ability range. For teaching staff and school leaders, it is a reminder of what should be happening every lesson, every day to ensure that our students get the very best classroom experience. We believe that when the six principles are implemented, students at Freeman's learn well, have high aspirations of what they can achieve and in doing so develop into confident and resilient learners. This is what our six classroom principles combined with staff expertise aims to do; however, these must be contextualised to different curriculum areas.

## 6 classroom principles for excellent Learning and Teaching



- Challenge – the driving force of teaching, so that students have high expectations of what they can achieve. Only by giving our students work that makes them struggle, can teachers have the highest possible expectations of their capacity to learn This will move students beyond what they already know and can do.
- Questioning – so the students are made to think hard with breadth, depth and accuracy. Questioning is a master art which has a range of purposes: ultimately, we know that students learn when they are thinking.
- Feedback – so that students further develop their knowledge. Students need to know where they are going and how they are going to get there. Without feedback, practice becomes little more than ‘task completion’. We give students feedback to guide them on the right path, and we need to receive feedback from students to modify our future practice.



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- High expectations - the most reliable driver of high student achievement. Even in students who do not have a history of successful achievement, high expectations have been proven to make a considerable difference to learning in the classroom
- Creativity – take a risk and try something new. We want teachers to feel safe doing so, try out new strategies and then share and discuss these new approaches openly with others.
- Student-led learning – keep pupils at the heart of the lesson. Lessons should provide students with the confidence and tools to tackle problems with less dependence on the teacher, through explanation, modelling, feedback, discussion and practice.

## Embedding formative assessment into the Freeman's classroom

Formative assessment is a process, it “encompasses all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged” (Black and Wiliam, 1998). The bridge between teaching and learning is assessment, for without assessment we cannot decide what we teach or what the students have learnt.

In order for formative assessment to be used effectively at Freeman's, the evidence of learning should be used to adjust instruction, adapting to the learners needs. In order for this to take place five key strategies of formative assessment can be used (Leahy, Lyon, Thompson & Wiliam, 2005)

- Clarifying, sharing and understanding learning intentions – it helps to be clear about where students are going, what counts as good work and what the overall success of the task looks like. There are no rules here, it is up to the teacher to use their professional judgement to decide what is appropriate.
- Eliciting evidence of learning – simply find out what students know, whether that be at the start of the lesson or during it. The lesson should be equally as engaging for all students using a range of teaching approaches and careful planning.

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- Provide feedback that moves learning forward – Feedback should cause the student to think, creating desirable difficulties. It should be focused and linked to the learning intention, making students the owners of their own learning.
- Activating learners as instructional resources for one another – harness the power of collaborative learning, allowing students to learn more by teaching each other or through peer assessment
- Activating Learners as owners of their own learning – only learners can create learning, through their awareness of metacognition, self-regulation or motivation. This takes time, but the better the learner becomes at learning, the more learning will take place and the easier the classroom environment becomes

**(Embedded formative assessment, Wiliam, 2018)**

## Teachers at Freeman's (in addition to "Expectations of a Freeman's teacher)

The quality of teaching is the responsibility of the teacher in the classroom. Each teacher achieves this by:

- understanding how to 'Make a Difference' in their classroom;
- using the six principles of classroom teaching effectively in their subject area, ensuring there are high expectations, appropriate levels of challenge, creativity, student-led learning, feedback and high level questioning;
- being passionate when demonstrating appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
- making a special effort to establish good working relationships with all pupils, treating them with kindness and respect in the class;
- being willing to try new activities, including the use of new technologies, to enhance pupil learning;
- providing high quality, dynamic and stimulating lessons;
- planning for individual, small group and whole class activities that promote independent learning;
- challenging students and supporting them to achieve their best;

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- providing meaningful home and online learning;
- making links with the learning that students do outside the classroom and provide the skills and attributes they will need to live and work in tomorrow's global society;
- ensuring procedures for providing feedback, recording and reporting on pupil progress are implemented and are in line with departmental and school policies;
- attending and being reflective of learning and teaching CPL and INSET opportunities;
- being learners in their subject, by being open to feedback and seeking opportunities to collaborate with colleagues and engage with relevant research;
- through planning excellent lessons that fit within the scheme of work and deliver them using an appropriate range of pedagogies.

## Curriculum Leaders (in addition to and inclusive of "Expectations of a Head of Department")

Heads of subject departments are responsible for the effective teaching of their subjects, the evaluation of the quality of teaching and the monitoring pupils' progress. Each Head of Department achieves this by:

- championing learning and teaching in their subject area;
- ensuring teaching and learning is an item on the agenda at all department meetings;
- modelling excellent practice in line with the Expectations of Staff at Freeman's;
- ensuring learning and teaching is an item on the agenda at all departmental meetings;
- ensuring curriculum coverage, continuity and progress for all pupils;
- evaluating the teaching of their subject and the planning of lessons;
- ensuring curriculum coverage, continuity and progress for all pupils;
- ensuring that department procedures for assessing, marking, recording and reporting on pupil progress are implemented consistently and are in line with departmental and whole school policy;
- analysing and interpreting data on pupils' performance against school expectations and other comparative data;

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- monitoring pupils' work and progress by regular sampling of classwork and home learning through book looks as well as assessment data;
- ensuring teaching and learning targets are incorporated into targets set each teachers professional development aims;
- carrying out informal 'learning walks' each term, and providing feedback;
- carrying out classroom visits with a clear focus of all subject teachers, with feedback, each year;
- promote a collegiate culture for teaching and learning where colleagues freely share their practice, carrying out informal 'learning walks' each term, and providing feedback;
- supporting and develop colleagues' range of teaching and learning styles to create an exciting and creative learning culture.

## Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership team is responsible for the overall quality of learning and teaching across the school. This is achieved by:

- strategic planning of teaching and learning priorities in conjunction with Heads of Department;
- supporting the running of the Teaching and Learning Committee;
- supporting individual departments through line management meetings;
- ensuring that the plan for school improvement places a high priority on learning and teaching and that structures are put in place to support these priorities;
- monitoring the quality of learning and teaching across the school through activities such as lesson observations, learning walks, Blinks, book looks and department reviews.

## Continuing Professional Learning

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“If we create a culture where every ever teacher believes they can improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better, there is no limit to what we can achieve” (Wiliam, 2011). Freeman's teachers have a responsibility to reflect on their practice, and enhance and update their professional knowledge and skills. This is to ensure that consistently high standards of learning and teaching are maintained, meeting the “Expectations of a Freeman's teacher”. The Freeman’s CPL programme will provide opportunities for all staff to participate in a variety of activities in order to support the individual professional needs of staff and build whole school capacity. These sessions will run via INSET, twilight and drop in sessions scheduled throughout the school year.