DOWNSEND SCHOOL

PREP SCHOOL CURRICULUM:

TEACHING & LEARNING POLICY

September 2017

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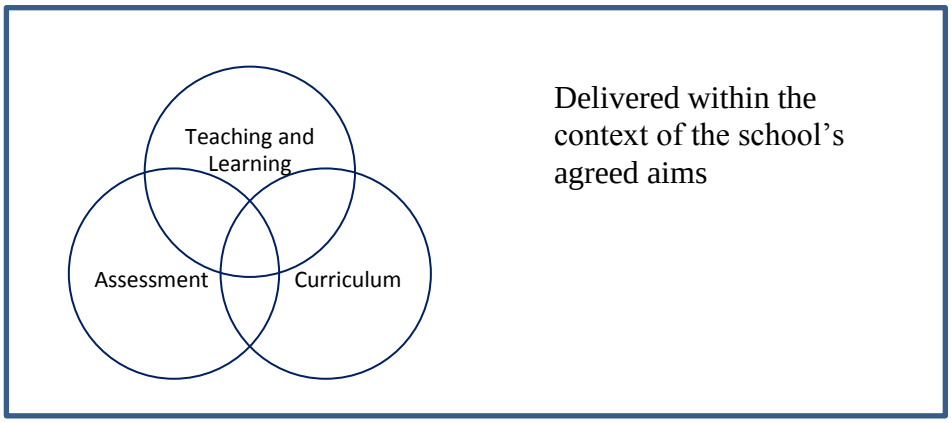
1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to support the implementation of high quality teaching and learning.

We see teaching and learning as part of our core business in order to ensure that all children make the best progress possible and attain high standards. Effective teaching and learning is part of a whole school pedagogy informed by the effective implementation of:



2.0 Effective teaching and learning

We are committed to providing a learning environment in which all students are challenged through high quality teaching, supported by excellent pastoral care. We believe that a truly excellent school is about more than academic achievement: it is about developing a passion for learning, a capacity for independent and critical thinking, self-awareness and resilience, self-confidence and genuine interests that extend beyond the confines of the classroom.

Effective teaching and learning:

- Enables students to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills;
- Fosters self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
- Involves well planned learned sequences and lessons utilising effective teaching methods, activities and management of time;
- Shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainment of students; ensuring that these are taking into account when planning learning;
- Demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
- Utilises effective classroom resources of good quality, quantity and range;
- Implements effective assessment strategies to inform teaching and impact on student progress;
- Develops meta-cognitive strategies;
- Utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging students to act responsibly;

- Supports the promotion of British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; and
- Promotes diversity and equality.

The impact of quality teaching and learning is ultimately tested through the progress that students make and the outcomes they achieve.

Through an excellent education we aim to:

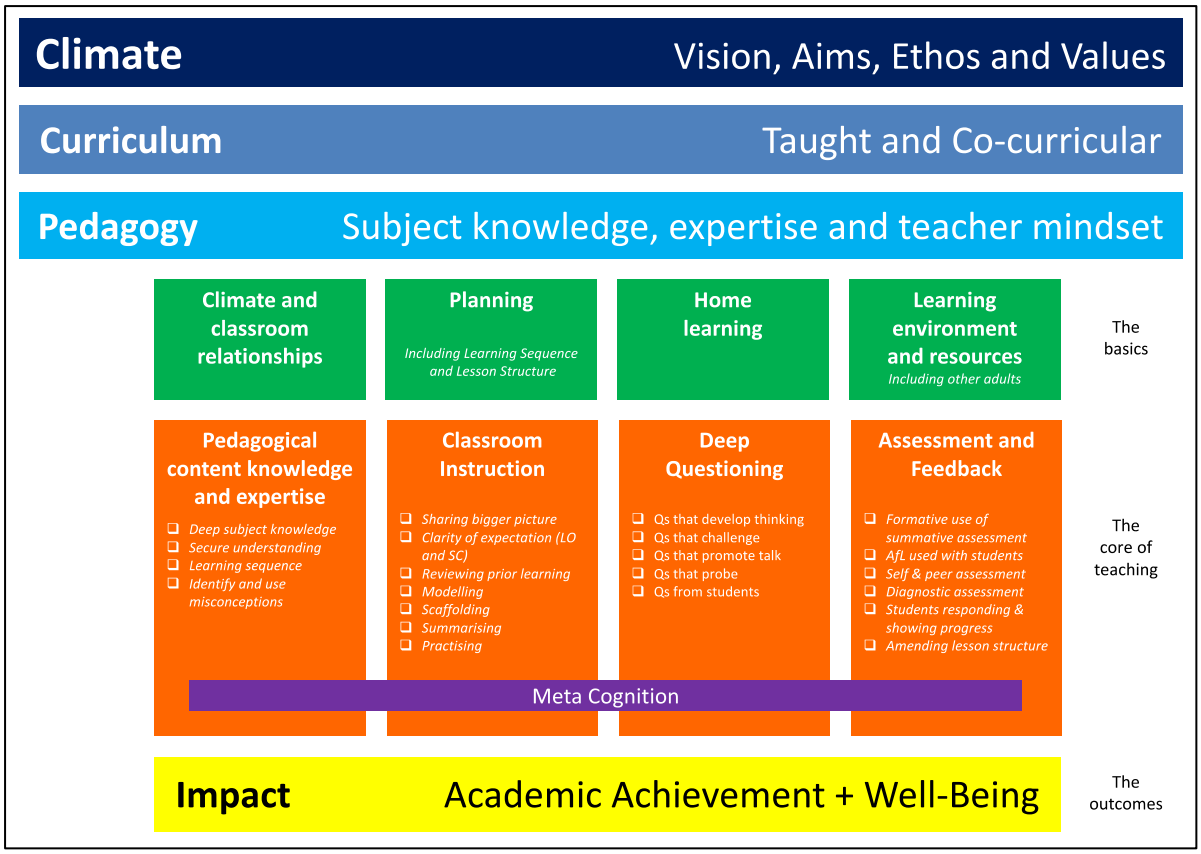
Deliver Academic Excellence	Develop Character	Nurture a Global Perspective
Deliver excellent academic outcomes through outstanding teaching	Develop the character traits that enable every student to achieve in a range of contexts	Prepare students for an ever changing world, with a global mindset and a respect for diversity

3.0 Teaching Standards

We have defined Teaching Standards which apply to all teaching colleagues. The Teaching Standards and Early Years Teaching Standards outline expectations.

4.0 Teaching and learning model

Our model of teaching and learning (below), is a simple way of articulating what works based on a broad base of research and evidence. The model is a construct rather than a prescription of how to teach.



5.0 Teaching Strategies

Our teaching is based on our knowledge of the children's level of attainment and therefore we ensure that teaching and tasks set are appropriate to their level of ability. Planning takes into account the differing requirements of pupils, particularly the more able and those with identified special needs.

Teachers differentiate carefully to adequately provide extension for the more able. Teachers are sensitive to the pace of their lessons so that all pupils feel challenged and their motivation is not diminished.

We set academic targets for the children, sharing these targets with children and their parents. We regularly review the progress of each child and set revised targets.

We ensure that we use a variety of teaching methods, setting work in a variety of formats – extended writing, shorter tasks and independent research.

Our teaching strategies include:

- questioning and discussion are used effectively for communication
- activities are differentiated and made stimulating and challenging
- the teacher has a sound and confident subject knowledge
- well planned lessons with clear aims and objectives
- opportunities for children to show initiative and independence
- high expectations, encouraging children to take a pride in their work and achieve the highest standards of which they are capable
- valuing children's opinions and provide effective feedback
- effective use of discipline, with a consistent and fair approach to behaviour management

6.0 Teaching Groups and Organisation

Lower School:

In Year 2 and 3, children are taught in their mixed-ability form groups. Their Form Tutor is responsible for the delivery of the core subjects - English, Mathematics and PSHEE. The wider curriculum will be taught by their form tutor or by a subject specialist.

From Year 4 to Year 8 children are set across the year group in English and Maths as well as being set in Science in Year 5. In Year 4, the wider curriculum will be taught by their form tutor or by a subject specialist. From Year 5, the children will continue to study the wider curriculum in their form groups, taught by subject specialist teachers.

Upper School:

Children transfer to the Upper School at the end of Year 5 and pupils then have specialist teaching based in subject classrooms. To ensure effective differentiation for all the pupils, children are set in English, Maths and Science with Languages setting introduced in Year 7.

The wider curriculum including the Humanities, Creative Arts, Computing and PE/ Games are taught in mixed ability groupings known as the academic groups. In Year 7 and 8 a small number of children will be selected for the scholarship class based on their academic ability.

At the end of Year 6, a minority of pupils leave Downsend, either by successfully passing the 11+ entrance examinations to one of the local independent schools or by moving into the maintained sector.

Timings of the Downsend School Day

Period Number	Time	Lower School Years 2 - 5	Upper School Years 6 - 8
1	8.45-9.15		
2	9.15-9.45		
3	9.45-10.15		
4	10.15-10.45	**BREAKTIME**	
5	10.45-11.15		**BREAKTIME**
6	11.15-11.45		
7	11.45-12.15		
8	12.15-12.45	**LUNCHTIME**	
9	12.45-1.15		
10	1.15-1.45		**LUNCHTIME**
11	1.45-2.15		
12	2.15- 2.45		
13	2.45-3.15		
14	3.15-3.45		
15	3.45-4.15	**LATE CLASS** (optional)	

7.0 Responsibility

All staff are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented and acted on. When evaluating the use and impact of this Teaching and Learning Policy, our school leaders will evaluate the extent to which there is evidence of:

- The impact of teaching on academic attainment and progress; and
- The impact of teaching on pupil engagement and passion for learning, capacity for independent and critical thinking, self-awareness and resilience and self-confidence.

8.0 Evaluating the quality of teaching

Every teacher is expected to evaluate the impact of their teaching in order to continue improving as a reflective professional.

We support the view that the very best teachers constantly seek improvement and want to continually develop their skill as expert teachers.

Knowing about the whole-school quality and effectiveness of teaching is a core responsibility of school leaders. Ultimately, this responsibility rests with the Head. The evaluation of teaching is undertaken through the involvement of a range of leaders and teachers. In evaluating, the following questions are asked:

- How effective is teaching? How do we know?
- What impact is teaching having on learning and progress?

  What is our evidence?
- What do we need to do next to improve further?

Any evaluation of teaching takes account of the impact of 'teaching over time', utilising a best fit approach drawing on a range of evidence, e.g. work scrutiny, lesson observation and lesson drop-ins, analysis of data, feedback from students, etc.