Abbot Beyne School

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy 2026-2027

The quality of learning and teaching is the most important aspect of any school. We are committed at Abbot Beyne School to providing the best possible learning experiences for all our students. Similarly, we strive to ensure that our teachers are on a continuous journey of self-improvement. We have ensured that our CPD provision is derived from research-based best practice. Similarly, the content of this policy is based on a range of research from Robert Coe (and Evidence Based Education) and Dylan Wiliam and his work on formative assessment.

What is learning?

'Learning happens when people have to think hard' - Robert Coe

'Memory is the residue of thought' - Daniel Willingham

'The primary goal of instruction should be to facilitate long-term learning—that is, to create relatively permanent changes in comprehension, understanding, and skills of the types that will support long-term retention and transfer.' - Nicholas Soderstrom and Robert Bjork

Our goal as teachers should therefore be to provide the conditions whereby our students are encouraged to think hard, retain knowledge and apply it in different contexts.

'Cognitive Load Theory is the single most important thing for teachers to know' - Dylan Wiliam

We should therefore be conscious of how we structure our lessons in order to maximise the cognitive benefits of the learning tasks and processes.

Great teachers at Abbot Beyne School:

- Know their subjects inside out and have a passion for teaching that subject
- Use a range of research-based best practices that enable students to learn effectively
- Build good relationships with students to enable them to learn effectively
- Instil effective routines for learning that support all students to achieve
- Use technology to support and stretch students while enriching their learning experiences

Consequently, our framework for learning is based around the following five areas:

- Content knowledge
- Pedagogical knowledge
- Relationships
- Behaviour for learning
- Technological knowledge

Planning of lessons

Lessons should be derived from the Schemes of Learning. The Framework for Planning sets out the principles behind what should be taught and how it should be taught. There is no desire to have a top-down one-size-fits-all approach to planning and teaching across the school - teachers should have the freedom to deliver lessons in their own way. However, there are elements which we expect to see across the curriculum and these are laid down in the Planning and Learning Frameworks.

Assessment and Feedback

By assessment, we mean the formal and informal judgements made by teachers and students about their standard of work. Assessment should involve both formative and summative methods. Formative assessment describes all those processes by which teachers and learners use information about student achievement to make adjustments to the students' learning that improve their achievement. Summative assessment records the overall achievement of a pupil over time. Its methods are supported by testing and also by synthesising a range of formative assessments. Our own participation in the EEF's national research project on assessment has demonstrated the power of formative assessment. Similarly, our work on the Assessment Essentials course has demonstrated the importance of generating 'multiple inadequate glances' (Coe).

Assessment should be treated as an ongoing process - it is in essence just 'teaching'. It is not an isolated event.

Effective assessment should consider the 4 pillars of assessment:

- Purpose - the quality of assessment tasks must be high. Exam style questions are fine if you want to practice those style of questions, not if you want to achieve something else.
- Validity - to what extent does the assessment do what we want it to do? To what extent does the test provide valuable information? Validity can be affected by poorly worded questions.
- Reliability - the accuracy and consistency of the information generated.
- Value - assessment has opportunity cost - is the value of an assessment at least as much as cost?

Testing our students too soon after teaching may lead us to making claims about progress that are based on what is held in students' working memory rather than long term memory. It is therefore essential that all teachers engage in regular low-stakes testing of students.

There is little in the way of evidence that peer and self-assessment is effective. If it is to be used then students need significant training and preparation in order to undertake it effectively. This is different from students building up a knowledge of how to improve their work from regular feedback on a lesson by lesson basis. The only effective feedback is that which is actually used.

Feedback should align with the purpose it seeks to serve. Does the purpose aim to increase the accuracy of a response from a learner or does it seek to improve their approach in the long term?

"…too many teachers focus on the purpose of feedback as changing or improving the work, whereas the major purpose of feedback should be to improve the student." - Dylan Wiliam

Feedback needs to be perceived as useful by the students and students should be taught strategies for using that feedback. Feedback should be delivered without a grade - research has shown that when feedback is provided with a grade, students are much less likely to read and act on the feedback. Feedback can be written or verbal; it can be directed at an individual student or the whole class.

The type of feedback students get on their work will vary according to the subject. In drama, PE, art and music for example, much of the feedback will be verbal. In fact, much of the best feedback in all subjects is verbal whilst the students are working. Departments should consider the role of verbal feedback in their departmental policies. There is no expectation that a teacher uses a particular method of feedback. However, there is an expectation that every student receives feedback every lesson. There is no requirement for written feedback to be undertaken unless specified in a departmental policy. There is no requirement to provide evidence that verbal feedback has taken place.

Consideration of Generative AI in Learning, Teaching, and Assessment

Please refer to the school AI policy for details on how AI should be used inside and outside the classroom. The following excerpt is most applicable to this policy:

Acceptable Use of AI in Learning and Teaching:

- ***For Students:*** *With iPads universally available, students are encouraged to use approved AI tools to:*
    - *Support Research and Idea Generation: Utilise AI as a starting point for inquiries, to brainstorm ideas, and to explore different perspectives on a topic.*
    - *Enhance Writing and Creativity: Employ AI tools to improve grammar and style, generate creative prompts, and assist in the drafting process. However, all submitted work must be the student's own.*

    - *Develop Digital Literacy Skills: Learn to critically evaluate AI-generated content, understand its limitations, and use it in a discerning and responsible manner.*
- ***For Staff:*** *Teaching and support staff are encouraged to use approved AI tools to:*
    - *Reduce Workload: Automate administrative tasks such as generating lesson plans, creating resources, and drafting communications.*
    - *Differentiate Instruction: Use AI to create tailored learning materials that cater to the diverse needs of students.*
    - *Enhance Professional Development: Explore new teaching methodologies and stay abreast of technological advancements in education.*

Academic Integrity and Assessment:

Abbot Beyne School is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic honesty. The unattributed use of AI-generated content in student work is a form of academic misconduct and will be treated as such, in line with existing policies on plagiarism. Students will be explicitly taught how to appropriately acknowledge the use of AI tools in their work. Teachers will continue to play a crucial role in assessing the authenticity of student submissions. When assessing work where AI tools may have been used, teachers will focus on the student's understanding, critical thinking, and the application of knowledge, rather than solely on the final output. The emphasis of assessment remains on long-term learning and the development of comprehension and skills.