



The Birtenshaw Group

Transforming Lives

Birtenshaw Education Services Teaching and Learning Policy

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This policy should be read in conjunction with the Curriculum and Assessment Policies.

Rationale:

The aim of Birtenshaw's Education Services is 'Transforming Lives'. In order to achieve this aim, pupils/learners accessing these services need to feel safe, happy and supported in their learning. We believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the idea that both adults and students learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun. Through our teaching we equip pupils/learners with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences *"brighten lives and build futures"*.

Birtenshaw seeks to ensure, by the implementation of this Teaching and Learning policy that all pupils/learners receive lessons which meet their needs, are challenging and ensure effective learning takes place.

Aims:

- To ensure that all pupils/learners are challenged in their learning and helped to become autonomous and independent learners for life.

- To ensure consistency in all lessons in terms of approaches and methodology and expectations of pupil/learner performance.

Objectives:

- To raise levels of attainment
- To foster a culture of high expectations
- To encourage a love of learning and enable pupils/learners to become more independent learners for life
- To ensure high standards of behaviour
- To ensure that pupils/learners are highly motivated to achieve their personal best.

Approaches:

We acknowledge that people learn in many different ways and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow all pupils/learners to learn in ways that best suit them. We take into account that pupils/learners have a preferred learning style when planning schemes of work and lessons. Given the complex learning needs of our pupils/learners it is especially important that learning is accessible to each individual pupil/learner.

Opportunities for pupils/learners to learn in different ways include:

- investigation and problem solving;
- group work;
- independent work;
- use of the computer;
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- creative activities;
- interactive ICT work;
- debates, role-plays and songs
- sensory activities;
- designing and making things;
- participation in athletic or physical activity;
- learning in the community;
- learning during work experience

We encourage pupils/learners to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way they learn, and to reflect on how they learn – what helps them learn and what makes it difficult for them to learn.

We know that pupils/learners with autistic spectrum conditions are happiest and achieve most when their routine is clear and when their learning opportunities build on their particular skills and talents.

When planning work for pupils/learners, we take into account information and targets from the Statement of Special Educational Needs, Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and Personal Educational Plans. We have high expectations of all pupils/learners, and will challenge young people both academically and socially to ensure they reach their full potential.

Within the planning for each pupil/learner there may be targets around behaviour, communication, emotional development, sensory needs as well as the academic curricular targets.

All lessons/sessions are planned with clear learning objectives, learning is differentiated to pupil level and broken down into manageable chunks.

Learning opportunities take place in the community as well as within the school or college environment and whenever possible, cross-curricular links are made explicit. For example, ingredients might be planned, costed, bought and then weighed and measured in a food technology lesson to reinforce numeracy.

Whenever off-site learning takes place, activities are subject to risk assessment to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

Responsibilities:

Each Head of Service is responsible for:

- supporting the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
- ensuring that the school/college buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning;
- monitoring teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations;
- monitoring how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising expectation and attainment;
- ensuring that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching;
- monitoring the effectiveness of the school/college's teaching and learning policies through the School Evaluation Form and College Self-Assessment Form.

The class teacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that planning is carried out in accordance with Birtenshaw's Education policies.
- Ensuring that all staff working with a particular pupil/learner are aware of their individual learning needs and targets and that they are familiar with their ILP.

The link between learning and behaviour

Conditions Likely to Generate Positive Behaviour:

- **High Expectations**
There should be a clear sense of purpose in a lesson/session. If pupils/learners understand the appropriately pitched challenging demands in a lesson, they are likely to respond.
- **Clear Routines**
This is especially important for those pupils/learners on the Autistic Spectrum. They should understand what is happening and what is going to happen via the use of “Now, Next, Later” boards to reduce anxiety and increase emotional well-being.
- **Pace and Challenge**
Tightly structured lessons/sessions in which there is little “slack” will give fewer opportunities for pupils/learners to indulge in behaviour designed to annoy/distract.
- **Constructive Praise**
Pinpoints and reinforces good behaviour and learning.
- **Regular feedback on performance**
If pupils/learners know they are doing well they are encouraged to continue to do so. Lack of feedback allows individuals to drift off task.
- **Apply rules and expectations consistently**
Pupils/learners are happier when they know where they stand. Rules should be applied consistently between one lesson and the next and one pupil/learner and the next.
- **Differentiation**
Ensure that tasks are suitably differentiated to ensure that all pupils/learners are appropriately challenged. Pupils/learners will switch off if they perceive that the work is either too easy or too hard.

The link between planning and progress

Planning for progress at Birtenshaw uses a simplified version of Bloom’s Taxonomy:

Bloom’s taxonomy shows the hierarchy of thinking skills. Understanding this hierarchy helps teachers to plan for progression.

Remembering/Knowledge

This is the easiest and most basic level. Here pupils/learners are simply asked to identify, recall, list or describe things to show what they have remembered.

Understanding/Comprehension

This involves understanding information and making sense of ideas by making meaningful links between related concepts. Here pupils/learners are required to explain and interpret what they know at a basic level, to distinguish between things and summarise what they know. In order to complete tasks at this level, pupils/learners must first know the information at the first level.

Applying

This requires pupils/learners to make use of what they know by applying their knowledge in a practical way. They can experiment, sketch, make a model of construct and apply rules, principles and formulae to a new problem. Pupils/learners must first know and understand information before applying it.

Analysing

This involves pupils/learners breaking down what they know into component parts so that they can see the relationships between them. Here pupils/learners may group or categorise information, compare and contrast, analyse, research or survey. They can distinguish between fact and opinion, a fact and an inference, an advantage and a disadvantage, a cause and an effect and a good reason and a poor reason. Pupils/learners cannot analyse without having remembered, understood and applied information.

Evaluating/Synthesis

Synthesis and evaluation are equal levels of thinking. Synthesis involves pupils/learners in thinking creatively, seeing new ways of doing things, linking concepts in unusual and flexible ways, or developing something that is original. Before creating something new, pupils/learners must have and understand the information and have applied and analysed the component features of the idea, issue or topic.

Creating

This involves discriminating between ideas and making judgements about value based and reasoned arguments. Evaluation requires pupils/learners to think critically: to assess the relevance, reliability, truth, accuracy and effectiveness of information or products. Before pupils/learners can critically evaluate, they need a good knowledge and understanding of the content as well as experience in applying and analysing what they know.

Resources:

Resources are allocated in line with the priorities indicated in the Service Development Plan.

CPD:

All staff are provided with opportunities for professional development and training in line with the Service Development plan and the organisational training needs analysis and strategy. Training needs will be linked to the Service's performance management process.

Equal Opportunities:

Birtenshaw supports the rights of all pupils to equal access and opportunities regardless of age, culture, religion, gender, ability, disability or sexuality. Birtenshaw promotes an ethos of respect for everyone.