

# Teaching and Learning Policy

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### 1. Aims of the School

*Wadebridge School aims to create a caring and stimulating environment in which high standards of learning and teaching are promoted and in which all students can achieve success.*

*We aim to develop in all students a sense of self-esteem, responsibility and mutual respect. In a rapidly changing world we aim to equip each student with a range of adaptable skills and the ability to make informed decisions.*

### 2. The Curriculum

The curriculum is all the planned events that students experience in school. It can be considered as consisting of two parts: a formal curriculum which is delivered through structured activities taking place in the normal school day; a *hidden* curriculum which finds expression in the complex pattern of life at Wadebridge School and the richness of experience this affords to all.

The statements which follow are concerned only with the formal curriculum.

The school aims to provide a curriculum which contains enough breadth, balance and relevance to provide all students with a good general education, which is cohesive, progressive and differentiated so that it meets the needs of all children regardless of ability, race or gender. This curriculum should leave students well placed, with the appropriate qualifications to go on to further and higher education or into employment and training. In order to ensure that this is the case the school will attempt to ensure that:

- Curriculum Area Leaders see that these issues are reflected in the relevant schemes of work and departmental handbooks;
- an appropriate amount of time is devoted to each subject in the school timetable taking account of National Curriculum guidelines (see Curriculum Plan);
- regular review and modification of the curriculum takes place which takes account of changes to statutory requirements as well as other factors;
- the whole curriculum contains well-structured P.S.H.E., Careers Education, Citizenship and Sex & Relationship Education programmes;

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- all students develop the key skills of literacy, numeracy, and ICT within and across the curriculum;
- all students with special educational needs, including those of exceptional ability, are provided with a curriculum to suit their needs;
- staff receive appropriate professional development and training to deliver the curriculum effectively and to keep up to date with new educational practice;
- students are placed in teaching groups which best allow the implementation of the curriculum, taking account of age, ability, staffing, accommodation, and subject requirements;
- each class is taught in the best available accommodation which meets the demands of the curriculum;
- all students will be regularly assessed and appropriate information fed back to students and reported to parents;
- during Year 8 students and parents are provided with details of the alternative pathways and options available in Key Stage 4 and are provided with guidance on making choices for Years 9, 10 and 11 (see Key Stage 4 Prospectus);
- during Key Stage 4 students and parents are provided with details of the various options available post-16 and are provided with impartial guidance on making their choices;
- where appropriate external agencies and other community stakeholders are utilised;
- the work done in class is supplemented by the setting of appropriate homework;
- students' work is valued, feedback is provided promptly and constructively according to the school assessment policy;
- at appropriate points during each Key Stage students take the relevant internal and external examinations, the results of these are collated and analysed to help track pupils' progress, plan appropriate interventions and to evaluate performance;
- all students are expected to present work appropriately in all subjects, taking account of spelling, punctuation and grammar;
- lessons are managed so that the classroom environment is such that students feel safe and effective learning can take place.

### **3. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC)**

SMSC across the curriculum is about how the school enables students to grow and flourish and become confident individuals so that they can appreciate their own worth and that of others. The climate and ethos of the school is key as well as the range of opportunities offered to students to develop their resilience and confidence.

The school has encouraged social skills development, particularly with the implementation of Personal Learning & Thinking Skills (PLTS) across the curriculum. PLTS is now an explicit element of lessons and is incorporated into the Key Stage 3 tutorial programme. Students do have a strong sense of values and respect towards peers and those from the local community (Food Bank Appeal and Art workshop with Studio 61).

Dilemma based enquiry forms the basis of enrichment activities across the curriculum as well as the core curriculum. Students are encouraged to think about the rights of others' and how accepting and respecting others benefit the community as a whole (Cooling Conflict workshops with Year 9).

Students engage with people from other cultures when the opportunity arises (GSF Beacon School Conference 2012) and value the needs of those less fortunate than themselves (Food Bank Appeal/Studio 61 workshop/GSF conferences/Fairtrade School). Students need to be educated further so that they are ready to live and work in a country of diverse cultures, beliefs and social backgrounds.

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Personal insight and spiritual development is implicit within the school curriculum; all key areas promote self-awareness and reflection and spirituality is about open-mindedness, awareness, respect and understanding as well as being emotionally involved in an activity.

### 4. Personal Learning and Thinking Skills

“The missing key to effective educational reform is thinking how to narrow the gap between the way learning is “done” in schools and the way it is done in the outside world.”

(p. 94 What is the point of school? 2008)

Students are hungry for responsibility, respect and what’s real; choice, challenge and collaboration. Personal learning and thinking skills (PLTS) is one way Wadebridge School encourages students to be creative, reflective and independent.

- <b><u>TEAM WORKERS</u></b>
Need to work confidently with others Take responsibility for each other Listen to & take account of different views Form constructive relationships Resolve issues to agreed outcomes
- <b><u>CREATIVE THINKERS</u></b>
Generate ideas & be original Try different ways to tackle problems Work with others to find solutions of value
- <b><u>SELF-MANAGERS</u></b>
Organise themselves Show responsibility, initiative, creativity & enterprise Show commitment to learning & self-improvement Embrace change Cope with challenges & look for opportunities
- <b><u>EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATORS</u></b>
Actively engage with issues Play a full part in school life & the wider community Take responsible action to bring about improvements for others as well as themselves
- <b><u>REFLECTIVE LEARNERS</u></b>
Evaluate strengths & limitations Set realistic goals Monitor own performance & progress Invite feedback from others
- <b><u>INDEPENDENT ENQUIRERS</u></b>
Process & evaluate information Plan what to do & how to go about it Take informed & well-reasoned decisions Recognise that others will have different beliefs & attitudes

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### 5. The Curriculum Model

Curriculum Model

Key Stage 3

Year 7

English 14%	Maths 14%	Science 10%	Languages 8%	Geography 8%	History 8%	EPR 4%	DT 8%	PE 8%	Music 4%	Art 4%	PHSE 4%	IT 6%
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Year 8

English 14%	Maths 14%	Science 10%	Languages 10%	Geog. 6%	History 6%	EPR 4%	DT 8%	PE 8%	Music 4%	Art 4%	PHSE 4%	IT 6%
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Key Stage 4

Year 9

English 16%	Maths 16%	Science 16%	PE 8%	EPR (RE) 8%	PHSE 4%	Option 1 8%	Option 2 8%	Option 3 8%	Option 4 8%
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Year 10

English 16%	Maths 16%	Science 20%	PE 8%	EPR (RE) 8%	Option 1 8%	Option 2 8%	Option 3 8%	Option 4 8%
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Year 11

English 14%	Maths 14%	Science 20%	PE 6%	EPR 6%	Option 1 10%	Option 2 10%	Option 3 10%	Option 4 10%
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### 6. The Learning Environment

Learning can happen in any of three contexts: lessons, routines and events.

- **Lessons** – these are planned experiences when learners are under the care and direction of teachers or other adults and work through a pre-determined scheme of work towards specific, often personalised learning goals. The vast majority of lessons will be planned, organised and delivered by fully qualified teachers, however, it should be noted that some lessons will be taken by adults other than teachers, e.g. guest speakers, trainee teachers, HLTAs, cover supervisors [see the School's policy on Cover Supervision].
- **Routines** – these are regular occurrences in school when youngsters go about their school life whilst being influenced by the place and people they find themselves with, e.g. assemblies, tutor time, moving around the school, accessing the school library, doing homework.
- **Events** – the School arranges events such as music and drama performances, Year Group residentials, Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, environment days and other curriculum enrichment days, sporting fixtures, field studies, work experience. All of these create opportunities for students to learn both curriculum content and / or develop personal qualities and attributes.

In each of these contexts young people learn well when the environment in which they find themselves is well ordered and well managed, where there is discipline, expectations are well defined and where there is clarity of purpose. Specific environments at school will vary depending on the curriculum content or characteristics that are being developed but each and every learning environment must be carefully planned in order to create a climate that it is safe and which maximises learning. Learning is a human process and relationships are pivotal for effective learning, learners must feel challenged but comfortable in expressing their own views, a climate for learning should be created where there is an ethos of mutual respect.

At Wadebridge School staff work hard to ensure that learning takes place in circumstances where:

- relationships are of the highest quality, individuals are respected and learners feel comfortable to offer their views and discuss issues with their teachers, other adults and their peers;
- facilities are well maintained and equipped with appropriate, modern learning apparatus and resources;
- Health & Safety issues are paramount and that both teachers and learners operate in a safe and secure environment;
- attention is paid to the physical environment to ensure that it is stimulating, this includes strategically displaying students' work together with other materials in order to enhance the learning environment;
- careful thought is given to the use of space and the arrangement of furniture;
- as far as possible the physical and emotional needs of all learners are accommodated.

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### **7. Behaviour and Attitudes of Learners**

If we want children to work for different purposes, with different audiences, using different skills and different approaches, then it becomes obvious that appropriate rules and behaviour have to be expected in each of the range of environments in which students learn.

At Wadebridge School we believe that an effective discipline structure should promote positive behaviour in order to encourage students to be responsible for their own behaviour and to become increasingly responsible for their own motivation and learning. All members of the school community have high expectations of the standards of behaviour. Expectations are clear and applied fairly and consistently. A comprehensive rewards system applies to all learners. We work in partnership with parents and carers encouraging them to take an active role in the learning process.

The school operates in an atmosphere of mutual respect where learners are expected to arrive at school and to lessons ready and eager to learn.

[See the School's Policy on Behaviour Management for more details]

### **8. Learning**

There is a reasonable research consensus that information is received, processed and stored by the brain in two main forms: a word or linguistic form and a visual or imagery form. There is strong evidence to suggest that when learners use both their linguistic and visual processing powers, information is dual processed and therefore understood and recalled better. Furthermore, the creation of visual forms of representations is known to increase brain activity. Traditionally classrooms have been places where new information is presented mainly in a verbal or linguistic form. Activities can be designed to enhance the creation of non-linguistic representations, such activities include:

- Creating graphical representations;
- Making physical models;
- Generating mental pictures;
- Devising mind maps or concept maps;
- Drawing pictures or pictograms;
- Engaging in kinaesthetic activity.

At Wadebridge School teachers and other professionals understand that individuals are likely to learn most effectively in a variety of different ways. We recognise that learning can manifest itself in many forms and lessons are characterised by the variety of learning activities employed. Learning activities are selected to challenge and support learning of the students and may include:

- Investigation
- Experimentation
- Listening
- Observation
- Talking and discussion
- Asking questions
- Practical exploration and role play
- Retrieving information
- Imagining
- Repetition
- Problem-solving
- Making choices and decision-making

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### 9. Personalizing Learning

Wadebridge School shares the Government's view set out in the 2010 White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, that 'education allows individuals to choose a fulfilling job, to shape the society around them, to enrich their inner lives. It allows us all to become the authors of our own lives.' If this is the case then every pupil - gifted and talented, those with additional needs, struggling or who are of average ability - should have the right to a personalized education in order to maximize their achievements. The school is committed to identifying and providing for the needs of *all* children in a wholly inclusive environment. This will include young people who have statements of special educational need, others with less severe problems but still needing additional support, others who have a particular flare for one subject, others who may have abilities significantly beyond those of their peers in all subjects. Providing an appropriate education for these individuals is a question of equality - as with all students, they have a right to an education that is suited to their particular needs and abilities. They need to be presented with work that challenges, stretches and excites them at the right level, on a daily basis and in an environment that celebrates success.

#### Questioning and Challenge

Choosing appropriate questions helps to engage, challenge and interest the students:-

- It's important to stimulate recall and the use of existing knowledge and experience in order to create new understanding and meaning.
- Extend student thinking from the concrete and factual to the analytical and evaluative.
- Promote reasoning, problem solving, evaluation and the formulation of hypotheses.

#### Closed questions

These usually elicit fact and the questioner controls the conversation. This is very good for recall or review and testing current knowledge.

#### Open questions

These deliberately seek longer answers and forces the student to think and give reasons (justify). This is very good for exploring opinions and ideas.

#### Minimal encouragers

These encourage the students to keep talking; such questioning is non-judgemental implying no agreement or disagreement. This is very good for extending thinking and prompting further clarification.

#### Socratic questions

These aim to unearth misconceptions and contradictions; students are forced to question themselves. This is very good for challenging first responses and assumptions.

It's very important for students to engage in their learning, accept that it's ok to make mistakes and recognise listening skills as being just as important as responding. By focusing on challenge and questioning it also makes the teachers value student opinions.

"Emphasis should be less on the questions teachers ask, and more on the manner with which teachers react to pupils' responses to questions." (Higgins & Smith, 2006)

#### Shallow, deep and profound learning

In order to personalize learning effectively it is useful to consider learning that can be shallow, deep and profound and to understand that effective personalization seeks to promote deep and profound learning for all learners.

The essential characteristics of each mode of learning may be summarised as follows:

- Shallow learning: focused on the memorisation and replication of information; uncritical acceptance of facts; rote learning; seeing information as unrelated and isolated themes;

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learners are passive; emphasis on coverage of content; assessment is summative; content is quickly forgotten. Shallow learning is controlled by the teacher with the learner compliant and dependent.

- Deep learning is focused on the creation of knowledge through the demonstration of understanding; the analysis and synthesis of facts to create conceptual models and frameworks; integrating prior learning and cross-referencing to other themes and subjects; learning is active and based in relationships; emphasis on depth; assessment is formative and negotiated; content is remembered and codified. Deep learning is controlled by learner, who understands the learning process with the teacher as facilitator, mentor and co-creator of knowledge.
- Profound learning is the situation where knowledge becomes wisdom, that is, intuitive and fundamental to the identity of the person; the capacity to create new meaning in changing situations and contexts; developing a holistic awareness of the relationship between themes, subjects, principles and practice; assessment is through personal authenticity and integrity. The teacher becomes the guide, inspiration, friend and counsellor.

Profound learning has many manifestations, from learning to talk in childhood to the artistry of the concert pianist; from the skills and compassion of the nurse to the great scientific discovery; from the skill of the joiner to the creativity of the painter.

Shallow learning is playing the notes; deep learning creates the melody; profound learning enables the great performance. Shallow learning gives access to vocabulary and the rules of grammar; deep learning allows conversations; profound learning enables engagement with poetry, ideas and thinking.

Profound learning is the characteristic of the F1 driver, the mentor, the highly successful learner and athlete. Profound learning moves us from religious observance to spirituality.

### Supporting the deep and profound learner

There appear to be a range of strategies that support the development of deep and profound learning. In no particular order of priority, these might include:

- a clear understanding of learning styles, aptitudes, dispositions and motivation supported by regular review and the development of strategies to enhance and sustain personal learning effectiveness
- teaching which is based on challenge, problem-solving and relevant decision-making
- the widespread use of coaching and mentoring and the facilitation of small group and team-based strategies
- a high emphasis on the social dimensions of learning
- the development of emotional literacy across the school
- the use of personalized learning pathways with negotiated learning outcomes and assessment for learning strategies to ensure relevance and potential application.
- the curriculum as a personal construct
- a focus on the 'whole' learner, recognising the role of the family and community in supporting access to effective learning
- systematic review and reflection.

On the basis of these propositions, it is possible to identify the characteristics of the learner and teacher engaged in deep and profound learning:

- The **effective learner** has a thirst for knowledge and knows how to learn. She can identify, on her own, and /or with others, a problem, analyse its components and then marshal the resources, human and non-human, to solve it. She continuously questions herself and others as to whether she is employing the best methods. She can explain the processes of her learning and its outcomes to her peers and others, when such a demonstration is



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required. She is able to organise information and, through understanding, convert it into knowledge. She is sensitive to her personal portfolio of intelligences and continually reviews her development as a learner. She knows when it is best to work alone, when with a mentor and when in a team, and knows how to contribute to, and gain from, teamwork. She sustains a sharp curiosity and takes infinite pains in all she does. Above all, she has that security in self, built through a wide and deep set of relationships and through her own feelings of worth fostered in part by others, to be at ease with doubt, and to welcome questioning and probing of all aspects of her knowledge.

- The **effective teacher** has a deep understanding of the neurological, cognitive, emotional and social aspects of learning. She balances this knowledge with the ability to access subject information and the strategies to convert it into personal knowledge. She works through challenges, posing problems and setting questions ensuring that they are appropriate to the individual learner and that the learner has the skills to respond to them. She creates a sense of emotional security by building trust and confidence and working in an interdependent manner. She has a deep respect for the identity and integrity of every learner. The effective teacher works primarily as a facilitator and mentor. She is skilled in negotiating learning strategies, understanding the learner's motivation and has a passionate belief in the potential of every learner. She recognises, reinforces and celebrates achievement and ensures that there are abundant opportunities for the learner to experience valid and appropriate success. She is highly sensitive to the student's social context. Above all, she models learning, reviewing her own practice, deepening her understanding of the learning process and engaging in networks with other teachers.

### 10. Assessment for Learning

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning at Wadebridge School and is essential to effective personalization of learning. It is an open process shared between student, teachers and parents using criteria which make clear what is required for each student to progress. It serves to inform long, medium and short term planning. It is often useful to divide assessment into the two categories of '*formative*' and '*summative*'. Each plays a key role in helping pupils to raise their achievement and in guiding teachers in their lesson planning.

Assessment for Learning is more than simply marking and feeding back grades. It involves teachers in identifying the next steps for learning as well as responding to the errors students make and the difficulties they experience. Good quality assessment serves many purposes. It supports learning, improves standards, makes a positive impact on students' attitudes, improves motivation, provides diagnostic feedback, assists the teacher in evaluating the teaching programme and identifies subsequent action required to be taken by both the teacher and the student.

Essential to good Assessment for Learning are:

- The sharing of learning objectives with students
- Students' self and peer assessment
- Feedback to students to inform the next steps for learning
- Good planning - teachers start with what they want students to learn and then decide what strategies and activities will best enable that learning. Planning should be learning led and not activity led.
- Lesson planning that helps teachers make clear to students what they are trying to learn, the relevance of the learning, the standards they are aiming for and how they can demonstrate achievement
- Lessons that have a clear structure so that students have opportunities to reflect on their learning and support each other as active learners

For further details refer to the School's Assessment Policy

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### 11. Teaching

At Wadebridge School we recognise that teachers are not the only adults who help facilitate learning. Teaching Assistants play a vital role in many classrooms and have a very significant impact on the learning of many individuals. In order to ensure that best use is made of other adults in the classroom the class teacher should always coordinate and manage the work of any other adult employed in the classroom.

Evidence from a variety of sources, e.g. Secondary National Strategy, indicates that students learn more when learning contexts are well structured and sequenced, when learning objectives are made clear to learners. Researchers have identified a number of different approaches that can promote different types of learning but each has a defined sequence of episodes that should give a particular structure to a lesson. Different subjects have a strong leaning towards a particular approach because of the nature of the content. The choice of pedagogic approach or teaching model will depend on the learning objective and teachers will draw on a range of strategies in order to maximise learning. Such strategies may include:

- Modelling – this is an active process and involves *experts* demonstrating how to do something and making the audience explicitly aware of the thinking involved
- Questioning – when learners engage with the learning process by actively composing responses
- Explaining – where learners glean a deeper understanding from another person
- Guided learning – where teachers support and challenge learners by intervening in a sustained and proactive way bridging the gap between whole class teaching and individual learning
- Group work – where learners can practise, learn from each other, develop a sense of empathy and to understand the views of others.

At Wadebridge School effective teachers promote effective learning in a culture of high expectation and lessons should:

- engage all learners in activities which promote effective learning
- have a clear structure and learners should be aware of what it is they are supposed to be learning
- have an effective starter activity which allows students to review and practice what they have learned previously
- involve employing a variety of new technologies
- see a variety of questioning techniques employed by the teacher with a balance of *open* and *closed* questions being used to check prior knowledge and understanding and to develop higher order thinking skills
- contain opportunities for reflection and review where the main learning points are summarised by the teacher or, preferably, by the learners themselves
- encourage students to develop meta-cognitive skills (*thinking about thinking*) where learners are required to identify how they are going to approach tasks and evaluate their progress

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