



# Weald of Kent Grammar School

## Teaching and Learning Policy July 2022

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### The Weald Student

Everything we do at Weald of Kent aims to develop a culture of learning underpinned by our values: individuality, integrity, good manners, tolerance and resilience. By the time they leave Weald of Kent at the end of their secondary school life, we wish our students to:

- Be happy, positive, responsible, ambitious and proactive.
- Lead a good life.
- Demonstrate resilience and emotional awareness.
- Be compassionate and listen to others.
- Value modern democracy.
- Show great ability, knowledge and skills.
- Endeavour to become a life-long learner with transferrable skills.
- Respond effectively and positively to challenges.
- Aim to do well.
- Think hard.
- Get ready for post-18 life in a global and diverse world.

In short, to achieve academic excellence and personal success.

### Intent

The Weald curriculum is designed to:

- Ensure that all our students, whatever their background, aspirations and starting points, acquire the substantive, disciplinary and procedural knowledge and cultural capital needed to take advantage of the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.
- Enable all our students to experience academic excellence and personal success by creating an aspirational and high achievement environment while offering targeted support and additional challenge to ensure all students progress in line with their starting point.
- Develop metacognitive strategies to enable students to think explicitly about their own learning and to become active and motivated participants in their academic progress by reflecting on their learning, acting upon feedback and learning from mistakes.
- Offer all our learners the opportunity to experience a broad and balanced range of subjects and experiences, through carefully sequenced curriculum lessons, whole school and extra-curricular activities that are representative of the diverse world we live in.
- Provide students with the opportunity to develop the oracy skills required to enable successful discussions, inspiring speeches and effective communication by understanding and developing physical, linguistic, cognitive, social and emotional skills.
- Prepare our students for the world that awaits them outside of school by enabling them to become confident, resilient, articulate, courageous, thoughtful, kind, creative and responsible leaders.

### Implementation

#### The Weald Student as a learner

Students are expected to take ownership of their learning, play an active role and demonstrate an attitude to study conducive to excellent progress by:

- Arriving at lessons on time, ready to learn and with the correct equipment required by the subject.

- Meeting deadlines.
- Being organised.
- Displaying interest and a thirst for acquiring new knowledge and skills.
- Engaging well in the learning and demonstrating high levels of commitment.
- Behaving and working well, both independently and collaboratively.
- Acting upon guidance provided on how to improve their progress.

## **The Weald Approach to Curriculum and Pedagogy**

### **1. Curriculum**

Classroom teachers and Heads of Department/Faculty are empowered as experts in their own discipline and classroom, therefore, there is no prescriptive way of teaching. Delivery of the curriculum is consistent across Departments and Faculties, and is based on these fundamental principles:

- **Why** is this lesson being taught?
- **What** is the intended learning within it?
- **Where** does this lesson fit into the bigger picture? (prior knowledge, sequencing...)
- **Why** is it important for students to know and master what is taught in the lesson?
- **What** difference would it make to learning if this lesson were not taught?

### **2. Quality First Teaching**

*“The best available evidence indicates that great teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve pupil attainment. Ensuring every teacher is supported in delivering high-quality teaching is essential to achieving the best outcomes for all pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged among them.”* Education Endowment Foundation (2021)

Quality First Teaching at Weald uses a wide range of pedagogical tools and techniques to ensure high quality learning, including but not limited to:

- Rosenshine’s Principles of Instruction.
- Metacognition and self-regulated learning.
- Raising aspirations by teaching to the top.
- Using a wide range of Assessment for Learning (AFL) strategies, including formative and summative assessment, learning from mistakes and addressing misconceptions.
- Questioning including through ‘cold calling’.
- Modelling.
- Explicit teaching of new vocabulary and subject terminology.
- Clear, fair and consistent behaviour management strategies, including the modelling of positive behaviour.

### **3. Remote Learning**

Utilising technology is an integral part of delivering remote education in the case of full or partial school closure. The approaches to delivering curriculum content need to remain flexible enough to respond to a changing context.

To maintain high standards and ensure students keep on knowing more and remembering more, there is an emphasis on academic rigour. We have a hybrid system of live lessons, recorded resources, independent work and homework, and aim to deliver a 50:50 teaching ratio (virtual vs. independent learning) of the same length of time as the school day.

Remote teaching at Weald consists of an engaging, carefully selected and sequenced curriculum designed by the Heads of Department/Faculty. It uses a wide range of pedagogical tools and techniques to ensure high quality learning, including but not limited to:

- Teams meetings or webinars, including audio and video functions.
- Assignments set via Teams.
- Uploading resources to our school YouTube channel.
- Microsoft Forms.
- Padlet, Pear Deck and Near Pod.

#### **4. Homework**

Homework is set at Weald for the purpose of consolidating learning, re-visiting prior learning and/or preparing for future learning. It is the Head of Department/Faculty's responsibility to ensure that homework set is timely, purposeful and includes reading beyond/around the subject.

The school has no homework timetable in order to:

- Avoid setting homework for the sake of it.
- Reduce students' stress levels.
- Ensure that lesson planning includes consolidation of prior learning.
- Develop students' organisation, planning and ownership of learning.

However, students should receive:

- Key Stage 3 (Years 7,8,9): a 30-minute piece of homework per core subject including MFL per week and once a fortnight for all other subjects, with a one-week completion time.
- Key Stage 4 (Years 10,11): a 30-minute piece of homework per subject per week.
- Key Stage 5 (Years 12,13): it is at the discretion of subject teachers in line with the relevant department/faculty policy.

#### **5. Assessment for learning**

The Four Pillars of Assessment\* details the key principles which underpin the Weald assessment strategy. Assessment is used to generate information on which decisions are made about students' learning needs and to provide high-quality information fit for the intended purposes. The four pillars of assessment are described as follows:

- Purpose: to ensure clarity on what assessments are intended for and how the information will be used.
- Validity: to ensure assessments allow for inferences to be made which are valid.
- Reliability: to ensure that the marking of the work is consistent and accurate as well as being free from discrimination and bias.
- Value: to ensure that the information collected from assessments enables accurate decisions regarding next steps of learning and, therefore, progress.

When used effectively, assessments help students to embed knowledge and use it fluently, as well as assist teachers in producing clear next steps of learning. The school advocates continuous and cumulative assessment which provides all teachers with information relating to students' progress across a range of skills. Heads of Department/Faculty are expected to take these principles and develop their department/faculty specific policy and procedures to develop and deliver quality assessment.

\*<https://evidencebased.education/>

#### **6. Teacher feedback to improve learning**

*“Rather than thinking about feedback as an isolated event, feedback is likely to be more effective if it is approached systemically, and specifically, by adopting three fundamental principles: careful groundwork before the feedback is given, providing well-timed information that focuses on improvement, and also taking into account how learners receive and use that information”.* Dylan Wiliam (2021) Emeritus Professor of Educational Assessment, Institute of Education, UCL

One of the school priorities is: “To improve the consistency across the curriculum of implementing formative assessment strategies in all lessons, so that gaps in learning are identified at the earliest point and closed before learning is progressed further and teachers are adopting evidenced-based practices that have been proven to improve students’ progress.”

The key principles of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) guidance report entitled, *‘Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning’* underpins the expectation that departments/faculties undertake continuous and cumulative assessment in relation to the skills relevant to their subjects. Students must be given feedback on these assessments in a timely fashion. Feedback must: inform students on the strengths and areas for development of their work; allow students to learn from mistakes, correct and improve their piece of work; and allow students to take ownership of their learning and make outstanding progress.

As feedback is specific information given to the learner about their performance relative to learning goals, it should aim to (and be capable of) producing improvement in students’ learning. Therefore, providing effective feedback is challenging. Research suggests that it should:

- i) Be specific, accurate and clear (e.g. “It was good because you...” rather than just “correct”).
- ii) Compare what a learner is doing right now with what they have done wrong before (e.g. “I can see you were focused on improving X as it is much better than last time’s Y...”).
- iii) Encourage and support further effort and be given sparingly so that it is meaningful.
- iv) Provide specific guidance on how to improve and not just tell students when they are wrong.
- v) Be supported with effective professional development for teachers (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/>)

	Where the learner is going	Where the learner is	How to get there
Teacher		Engineering effective discussions, tasks, and activities that elicit evidence of learning	Providing feedback that moves learners forward
Peer	Clarifying, sharing and understanding learning intentions	Activating students as learning resources for one another	
Learner		Activating students as owners of their own learning	

*Adapted from Leahy, Lyon, Thompson, & Wiliam (2005)*

## 7. Directed improvement and reflection time

Once feedback has been given, students need to be enabled to respond. When giving feedback, therefore, we should offer students time to reflect critically on how to craft and improve their work and then to develop new techniques to put their feedback into practice. A dialogue is opened up with students about their feedback and we offer time and space for this to happen. For ease of reference and the sake of consistency, we can label this time and space within our lessons Directed Improvement and Reflection Time, or DIRT.

Effective use of DIRT to develop more disciplined learners:

- i) Reflect critically – we expect students to spend approximately twice their time reflecting on their feedback as we have devoted to giving it. This is most effective when done individually, in silence.
- ii) Developing techniques – although DIRT is about independent reflection, teacher guidance is crucial. We model and scaffold to exemplify the feedback we have given and show students how to improve.
- iii) Crafting and improving – As well as encouraging students to critically reflect on their feedback, DIRT can also be effectively used for crafting and improving work. This allows students to immediately apply their feedback and put the techniques into practice.

To support this process and comply with the school policy, all Heads of Department/Faculty are expected to develop their subject-specific marking, feedback (WWW, EBI) and DIRT process and exemplify the principle of effective feedback within their discipline. This must be shared with all relevant colleagues and used to quality-assure standards. The timing and frequency of marking/feedback is the responsibility of each department/ Faculty and lesson time on feedback and improvement of work by students should be planned for. In line with the Weald Wellbeing Approach, a piece of work should not be re-marked.

## 8. Reporting and Assessment

At Weald, data which is collected on students' progress must reflect their overall progress in a subject, and not solely the outcome of a standalone assessment set in advance of data collection.

The timing of the data collections is therefore determined to ensure that a range of assessments, which cover knowledge, skills and understanding, can be completed before a data entry. Heads of Department/Faculty are expected to keep a centralised record of these continuous assessments. This record should include students' prior attainment so that it can be determined if a student is making an expected rate of progress. These core principles and the assessments taken provide the required information to generate progress and attitude to learning reported for students in Key Stage 3 as well as the grades reported in Key Stage 4 and 5.

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