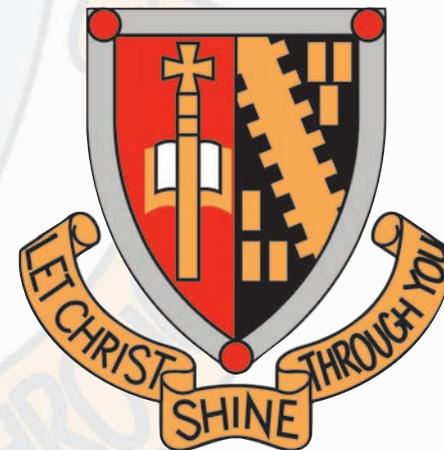


St Mungo's High School

St Mungo's . . . helping create confident individuals,
responsible citizens, successful learners
and effective contributors.

This is one in a series of booklets on Learning and Teaching.
For other booklets please contact the school office.



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Falkirk Council
Education Services



Pace of Learning

What is pace of learning?

Pace of learning is about class teachers knowing the pupils they teach and providing them with appropriate work and supporting them to allow them to reach their full potential.

A rather simple definition but beneath it lies a number of very important points that if used effectively in the classroom can ensure that pupils are working hard, get the support they need and perform well in exams.

Teacher expectations

Research has shown that that if teachers have high expectations of their pupils, they will do better.

Pupils learn best when –

- Teachers have high expectations and show belief in their pupils.
- Teachers are clear in what they want pupils to do and achieve.
- Teachers communicate this belief to pupils and praise them for what they do well.



Knowing pupils

- Class teachers should be aware of pupils' prior learning. Teachers have access to reports from previous years and can access information on pupil progress from all subjects at any time during the session.
- At the beginning of every session pupils are set a Target Grade for the subjects they are studying. Class teachers and pupils have an input into these Target Grades. The Target Grade is an indication of potential and allows the class teacher to monitor performance throughout the session. Based on performance against the Target Grade, the class teacher can give specific advice to pupils who need extra support.



Learning and Teaching

Learning and Teaching is about how class teachers and pupils relate to one another and the work and support that goes on in the classroom.

➤ Careful Planning

- Lessons (including homework) have to be carefully planned. There is a need to acknowledge prior learning and build on previous lessons.
- The class teacher needs to think carefully of the learning outcomes and how these can be achieved, the resources and methodology that is to be used and how the lesson is to be kept at a brisk pace.

Assessing how well pupils have met the success criteria is crucial – good questioning techniques can allow this.

➤ Differentiation

- It is essential that the lesson is differentiated. All pupils need to be set achievable yet challenging tasks.
- Within the class there will be pupils of different ability. The class teacher should consider different tasks, a range of resources and different levels of support (eg traffic lighting) to support pupils of different ability.



- When setting pupils to work some thought should be given, not only to the tasks, but also the composition of groups or pairs of pupils. Peer support and traffic lighting can be very effective

➤ Pace

The pace of the lesson should be brisk but should also be varied – tasks should be challenging and demanding but achievable.

➤ A stimulating classroom

Pupils need to find the lesson relevant and interesting. It also has to be enjoyable and challenging –

- Variety – tasks that pupils undertake should vary. Pupils should be given the opportunity to learn in different ways. Lessons should also be enjoyable and fun. We all know how easy it is to get switched off by tasks that are routine and repetitive!
- Choice – pupils should have some degree of choice over what they are asked to learn and the task.
- Open questions allow for discussion and pupils have the opportunity to express an opinion. This is a great way of judging depth of knowledge – pupils may be asked to justify a particular point of view, provide solid arguments to back up what they think or show working they used to arrive at a particular answer.

“
Pace of learning is about knowing individual pupils and their performance and progress very well and adjusting activities and targets to these
 ”

HMIe

“
The surest way to make it hard for a child is to make it easy
 ”

Eleanor Roosevelt



Parents

- Parents want to be involved in their children's learning.
- Parents want to know early if there are any problems with their child's progress. Pupils should be targeted appropriately and early warning letters should be sent out for underachieving in assessments, especially National Qualifications.
- Working with a parent, and getting their support, is crucial if a pupil is to respond positively to the support and advice we provide.
- Pupils should note support and advice in their Student planner and parents should sign this.



➤ Formative Assessment

- Research has shown that pupils learn best when they :
 - ❖ Clearly understand what is expected of them.
 - ❖ Know the quality of work they need to produce to achieve the grade they are aiming for.
 - ❖ Are given feedback that highlights what they are doing well but also what they need to do to make it even better.
- Formative Assessment is about pupils and teachers working together to ensure learning and teaching is effective. Class teachers are able to monitor progress and provide feedback to pupils on how to improve performance which should help raise attainment.
- Pupils should be informed about what it is they are expected to know (Learning Outcomes).
- Pupils need to know the standard of work they need to produce to achieve a good grade (Success Criteria).
- Appropriate questioning techniques engages pupils and forces them to think and helps them to develop a deeper understanding of the topics they are studying.
- Feedback should be prompt. Pupils should be praised for what they are doing well. Teacher comments should re-direct pupils and support them to improve performance.



- Class teachers should expect pupils to act on support and advice given. Pupils could be asked to re-do a piece of work or be given a similar exercise that informs the teacher if the pupil has understood the support and advice that has been offered.

Target Setting and Tracking

- Pupils need to be set achievable targets.
- Once pupils have embarked on a course, their performance needs to be monitored and advice and support should be offered when needed.
- It is essential for the class teacher, pupil and parents to work together. Parents need to be kept informed about pupil progress.



Homework and attendance

- Homework is an essential part of learning and teaching. It can take many forms and should be given regularly.
- Homework should be recorded in the Student Planner. Once completed it should be marked as soon as possible and returned to pupils.
- Comments should re-direct pupils and help them improve their work. When necessary, pupils should re-do homework or be given a similar piece to allow them to act on teacher comments.

Assessment

- Class tests, end of unit assessments and past paper questions can provide the teacher with a wealth of information.
- Assessments should inform learning and teaching. Analysis of grades can reveal which pupils are not achieving their Target Grade allowing for support and advice to be given. It should also be possible to identify which parts of the course pupils are struggling with by identifying which questions pupils are struggling with or getting wrong. This can allow the teacher to revisit work with the whole class or small groups of pupils.
- If assessments are benchmarked at level C it is essential that pupils are assessed further to identify their true performance. Achieving 100% in an assessment benchmarked at level C is only a C pass! The same grade as another pupil who achieves 50%!

