



Teaching and Learning Policy

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Mission Statement

'To educate young people to meet the challenges of life courageously, to use their talents to the full and to live the values of Christ's Gospel'

Aims:

Thornton College is committed to delivering a broad and balanced education in line with our mission statement. It seeks to provide a secure and challenging learning environment that enables pupils to acquire new knowledge, increase their understanding and develop their skills. It has a commitment to develop each pupil's fullest potential, to extend their horizons and raise their aspirations and their levels of achievement.

Enabling Progress:

Teaching throughout the school enables *all* pupils to acquire new knowledge, increase their understanding and develop new skills. Lessons are planned and taught to ensure that all pupils are actively pushed towards *increased* achievement, thereby making good progress according to their ability.

The following registers and tracking systems enable teachers to have a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils so that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons:

- More Able and Talented register – held on iSAMS
- SEND register – held on iSAMS
- Dashboard (Prep School)
- SISRA (Senior School)
- Intervention Log (Senior School)

See Assessment, Reporting and Recording Policy.

Fostering Motivation

Debate and discussion are fostered in all aspects of the curriculum and pupils are encouraged to question, form and articulate their own opinions, thereby maintaining self-motivation and through this, good behaviour and a positive learning environment for all.

Discrimination

Teaching at Thornton is inclusive and does not discriminate in relation to protected characteristics. In relation to disability discrimination especially, assessment of pupils and planning of lessons ensure that teaching enables all pupils to make progress. Furthermore, where required and so far as reasonable, adjustments are made to include pupils with disabilities on school trips and in after-school clubs. This may include providing support through a Teaching Assistant, working with parents/guardians to establish a support network, training staff.

Differentiation

To ensure that each individual pupil makes good progress according to their ability – and that they are encouraged to achieve - planning and teaching at Thornton College will incorporate differentiation. Differentiation will involve a range of resources, approaches, strategies and delivery based on an understanding of the individual differences and needs within the class and an understanding of how pupils learn.

Teaching staff are able to seek guidance on strategies and resources from NACE (National Association for Able Children in Education) and Thornton's Learning Development Department.

More Able and Talented (MAT)

Thornton College is a member of NACE (National Association for Able Children in Education) and works with the charity in its aim to improve provision for more able learners and raise achievement for all.

The definition used by Thornton is that used by NACE and included in definition used by DfE.

Definition of More Able and Talented (MAT): Learners who have the potential or capacity for high attainment and demonstrate high levels of performance relative to their peers.

Thornton College recognises that there are pupils who have a very high level of ability across the curriculum and/or who have a talent in a specific area. These pupils are identified through assessment so that they are challenged and supported. Their attainment is tracked by teachers and Form Tutors so that they make progress in relation to their level of ability.

The school believes that effort is a key characteristic of being a high attainer – as opposed to innate ability/talent. Thus, we use the term MAT to encompass pupils who show more ability or exceptional talent in their work in one or more subjects. This reflects our belief that a girl may improve and develop their ability in a subject area over time. It also captures the fact that some girls are performing at a level over and above their age-related peers, but that this situation is flexible; most MAT pupils will have to work hard to maintain this advantage, while other students can become MAT pupils through improving their performance.

Identification:

A range of data is used to identify girls who are more able and talented. This may include:

1. PUMA 126+ (Prep)
2. PTE 126+ - where supported by classroom evidence (Prep)
3. CATS 126+ (Prep)
4. MidYis 126+ (Years 7-9)
5. Yellis 126+ (Years 10-11_and/or GCSE predictions)
6. GCSE Results
7. Alis
8. Teacher Nomination – based on assessments and observations

Common characteristics of more able pupils (which teachers may use to identify pupils as MAT) include (but are not limited to):

- Question readily
- Persevere when motivated
- Think divergently
- Synthesise information
- Communicate fluently
- Analyse
- Show creativity
- Engage with complexity
- Perceive patterns
- Grasp new ideas rapidly
- Take risks
- Spot illogicality's or inconsistencies
- Make links

The MAT register is located on iSAMS and includes girls who have baseline data that suggests high ability and/or teacher nomination. In keeping with the ethos of the school, that all girls are equally valued and have the opportunity to reach their potential, individuals are not notified of their place on the register and opportunities for the more able are not exclusive.

Students are entered onto the register which is reviewed regularly through staff consultation, observation and data analysis. The register is accessible to all staff and is used to inform planning.

Strategies:

The MAT register, as well as tracking documentation, enables teachers to plan lessons and incorporate teaching and learning strategies to ensure MAT pupils make good progress. Strategies may include the following (but are not limited to):

- Having tasks or examples that require higher-order thinking skills
- Using differentiated or open-ended questioning
- Exploiting the power of the follow-up question: 'What makes you think that?'
- Having a range of tasks based on the same text or focus
- Having differentiated expectations

- Involving students in presenting examples if appropriate
- Asking able students to articulate explanations and principles
- Making it possible for able students to enter tasks at a higher point
- Recognising that able students are entitled to teacher time
- Ensuring that there are times when the ablest students work together
- Giving able students roles in group work that reflect their abilities
- Having group/student targets, not just class targets
- Promoting self-evaluation
- Expecting 'different' rather than just 'more'
- Focusing on qualitative outcomes
- Planning to engage with higher-order learning skills
- Instilling the habit of reflection on learning

Enrichment opportunities

Outside of lessons, the school's VLE, Firefly, hosts an Enrichment Page containing further resources and competitions across all curriculum and co-curriculum subjects. This page is open to all pupils and MATs especially are encouraged to seek further reading and learning opportunities here.

The school organises a programme of lunchtime and after school activities which are of benefit to all pupils but are particularly apt for ensuring that pupils who have potential are given opportunities to develop their skills including:

- School clubs and activities
- Music /drama/sporting competitions, examinations, and performances
- Opportunities to work with talented adults for example, coaching sessions and specialised workshops
- School trips and residential visits
- Opportunities to complete qualifications, e.g. the Higher Project Qualification

Sixth Form:

Pupils identified as more able are supported to explore a range of pathways. This includes guidance for those wishing to apply to Oxford, Cambridge, and Ivy League and other International Universities, and/or for post-18 courses such as Medicine and Veterinary Medicine.

SEND:

Thornton College recognises that there is a broad spectrum of ability and differing educational needs and talents. All pupils may have additional needs at different times and therefore a wide variety of strategies are used to meet these needs as they arise. The school believes that meeting the special educational needs of individual pupils is not a peripheral or external activity but the responsibility of each teacher and therefore teaching strategies need to be responsive to the needs of individuals.

See SEND policy for further details and strategies.