

## THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM



### SCHOOL POLICY DOCUMENT 74

# Teaching and Learning Policy

Date updated by the school:	14/05/2026
Next review due:	Academic Year 2028 - 2029
Policy review cycle:	Every 3 years
Policy Owner:	Staff Development Lead

#### **Vision Statement**

'Together we aim high, discover talents, and build a brighter future'

Thomas Mills High School is an Academy and a company limited by guarantee incorporated in England & Wales under number 7605059

**Teaching and learning at Thomas Mills High School should inspire, challenge and create a love of learning for its own sake. It values each pupil as an individual and regardless of ability or background, enables them to flourish through hard work and commitment.**

*'Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better.'* Dylan William

## **Effective Teaching at Thomas Mills High School**

### **All Teachers Should:**

- Know their students. A clear knowledge of the individual needs of each learner is key to ensuring that they are able to maximise their progress. Students are also much more likely to make progress when they know that the teacher has a genuine knowledge of them as an individual, but they also see that teacher goes the extra mile and is prepared to do something different on occasion to engage them in their learning. Teachers must be aware of the barriers for learning of every pupil that they teach.
- Lesson should be adapted to facilitate the progress of all students in the class. Careful and strategic adaptive teaching enables students across all abilities and backgrounds to maximise their achievement and so going forward in working towards 'closing the gap'. Done correctly, this acts as a clear support mechanism and breaks down barriers to maximise student progress and engagement.
- Plan for and teach with misconceptions in mind. Teachers should be aware of common misconceptions and plan lessons to ensure that pupils know what these are and avoid having them.
- Inclusion is key: Ensure that all disadvantaged pupils are kept at the forefront of your teaching. You should ensure that these pupils are keeping up with everyone else. Even better if they are going beyond this.
- Challenge the learners. Lessons should encourage pupils to extend and consolidate skills and knowledge as well as creating an environment where students wish to take on challenge and are not afraid of stepping out of their comfort zone. This may mean going beyond what is considered the standard curriculum level and even going beyond the classroom.
- Carefully plan lessons with a clear focus on what the students need to achieve. Teachers focus on solo taxonomy. They know where their students are, where they need to be and scaffold this process through carefully planned lessons. The key to this being successful is the flexibility to respond and adapt as the lesson is being taught to learner reactions, while keeping focus on the objectives.
- Give effective and timely feedback. This should be both verbal and written feedback with formative comments and levels in line with the school marking policy and level criteria. Teachers should also employ DIRT (Directed Improvement and Reflection Time) style marking across all years, where appropriate, to ensure that pupils are able to reflect and make use of the feedback as part of continual progress.
- Show mastery of their subject. It is imperative that teachers demonstrate enthusiasm and clear expertise in their field. This is not only through subject knowledge but through subject pedagogy. This has a huge impact on progress, as well as ensuring that the students are engaged, enthused and inspired in each subject area.
- Use a variety of questioning strategies effectively. These should be appropriate to the age, ability and content being taught and used to not only measure progress but also to engage and inspire.
- Lessons and learning should embed deep knowledge using appropriate retrieval techniques. Students should develop increasing understanding in metacognition.

- Create a safe and purposeful learning environment in which students feel safe, respected and able to flourish to the best of their ability. Teachers should employ timely and appropriate behaviour for learning techniques that encourage students to be active participants in their own learning. This enables students to build resilience, ask questions and develop their own commitment to success.
- Create an inspiring environment for the learners. Every classroom should be bright and engaging, with displays that aid learning and showcase student work.
- Use research to inform their teaching and are aware of cognitive theories and their approach to learning. Use of meta-cognition and retrieval theories give a relevant and evidence based foundation for knowledge retention.

All teachers should be delivering lessons in line with the departmental curriculum scheme of work.

### **Monitoring Review and Evaluation**

QA, QI and Professional Learning Conversations (from sept 2026) are used to monitor. These include whole lesson visits, as well as learning walks, pupil trails, drop-ins with a variety of focuses to ensure that teaching is developing across the school. The professional conversations allow staff to reflect on their skills and areas for development while considering where the CPD they have accessed is having an impact on teaching and learning.

Learning walks take place frequently and are an opportunity to get a good sense of what is happening.

The QA team meets every half term term to feedback and evaluate the process as well as flag up key areas for development of teaching and learning within the school.

Whole Staff Continual Professional Development meetings take place a number of times each year. There are range of sessions that target key teaching and learning topics as well as areas that have been raised though the QA process. The aim is to help teachers ensure that every pupil in their classes is maximising their progress regardless of their need or barriers to their learning. This is combined with a culture of regular information sharing to help teachers have practical techniques on which to build their practice.

QI allows for a more departmental/subject specific focus, to help to ensure that there is a focus on subject disciplinary literacy as well as marking and feedback, and sequencing.

'The best available evidence indicates that great teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve pupil attainment.' Educational Endowment Foundation 2021.