



Teaching for Effective Learning Policy V2.4	
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## Rationale

At The Bloomington Academy Ajman, we believe that we are the first and best British school in Ajman: we seek to build on a ten-year legacy of excellence in the Ajman emirate. We are a British curriculum, British Schools Overseas (BSO) accredited school serving an international community of over sixty nationalities. Our approach models that of a British school, in the international context of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) while championing the vision and values of the UAE.

We have a clear picture of what learning looks like for our community. Our vision is: 'Creating an inclusive learning community of open minds, happy hearts, sharp intellects and sound character'. Our tagline is: 'Learn, Share, Grow'. We consequently desire to see our students grow in an attitude of enjoying life-long learning through learning together, sharing together, and growing together. Consequently, this policy reflects this same attitude of fostering a collaborative approach to pursuing educational excellence together as one wider learning community of students', educators, parents and wider stakeholders.

## Aims

Before a list of aims of this policy are outlined, this policy starts with the end in mind with the question: 'by the end of their time with TBAC, what does a Bloomington Student look like'? The below 'Bloomington Student Profile' statement has been developed and agreed upon by a collaborative process between students, teachers, middle-, senior-leaders and parents.

### The Bloomington Student Profile:

Our Bloomington Students:

**Know their subjects well.** They have been both supported and challenged by knowledgeable teachers and carefully designed curricula that are well-aligned with British curricula to have a thorough foundational knowledge that fosters future success in their external examinations, and beyond.

**Are included.** All students, regardless of their individual learning needs and starting points, feel supported and challenged and have the right learning experiences carefully created to create the conditions to make good use of their time at TBAC. Groups of students work well together independently to succeed together.

**Are Open minded.** Inspiring teaching, imaginative lessons and the purposeful development of enquiry skills across all learning experiences has created a sense of awe and wonder from our students regarding learning opportunities. Students ask good questions of subject matter, each-other, and their teacher to prosecute lines of their own enquiry and intellectual curiosity and arrive at insightful answers that satisfy these curiosities.

**Are reflective and empowered.** Students are empowered to play a key role in routinely assessing and progressing with their learning. Students know exactly what level they are working at, their weaknesses and strengths and what they need to do to move forward. Consequently, student work is done to a high-standard, reflected in student-notebooks, projects and assessments.

**Have a strong sense of self-efficacy.** Students know that if they work hard, play their part in contributing to an environment that is safe and respectful, and take ownership of their learning inside and outside of the classroom, they can succeed. Consequently, our students exude a sense of shared-success and a 'can-do' attitude which inspires those around them. They are resourceful and feel empowered to take the initiative in launching projects that benefit their communities.



**Have a character of collegiality.** Our students know the wisdom of the proverb that 'two heads are better than one'. They understand the importance of working-well together, developing positive relationships with their teachers, each other, and in and a part of the wider community. Consequently, the school environment is one of mutual-support and success, while Bloomington students are socially responsible in supporting the wider community and environment.

**Enjoy a good, well-pitched, challenge.** Our students have learned to enjoy and appreciate learning experiences that are 'just' challenging enough to be worthy and engaging, while supportive enough to give students a sense of being able to succeed in their learning activity. They appreciate the carefully individualised and grouped differentiated activities that have meant that they have had every opportunity and support to take their learning to its maximum with the time they have had at TBAC based on their starting points and individual learning needs and learning styles.

**Are well equipped with a range of learning skills.** All students have differing strengths and leaning towards certain styles of learning. Yet, at their time at TBAC, through a careful curriculum that provides a range of differing activities and learning experiences that develop a range of learning skills, students have developed in their critical-thinking, problem-solving, innovation and independent learning skills.

**Carry an attitude of 'success' and a positive future.** As a consequence of positive learning experiences that have led to positive outcomes in both their academics and wider extracurricular, social, and environmental activities, students have a strong sense of success and are aspirational about their futures. They have 'grown' to become sources of inspiration for other members of the learning community.

**Have a sound character.** Our students have not just grown academically and intellectually but have grown as young adults with a clear sense of their social and moral responsibility to themselves, community values and their communities. Consequently, students take a high degree of responsibility for their attendance, punctuality, attitudes, social contribution. Our students make wise decisions and help in self-regulating their peers to also make right decisions.

**Are well shaped by UAE and British Values.** Our students appreciate and understand the role, values and rich cultural and heritage offering of the UAE and Islam, while also appreciating the British Values of Democracy, the Rule of Law, Individual Liberty and Mutual Respect and Tolerance for those of differing faiths and beliefs. Students understand and appreciate their own cultures, while understanding

The aim of this policy is to therefore support the growth of our intended Bloomington Student in the profile above. The rest of this policy will now answer the question: how will TBAC bring this about?

### Some definitions:

#### How does TBAC define effective teaching?

As a British school in the UAE context, we bring together the best of the highest standards: for teaching, we work backwards from both the UAE School Inspection framework 2015-2016 and the British Schools Overseas standards for quality teaching in setting the standards for teaching.

Teaching in its simplest should lead to effective learning that leads to good progress. We are pragmatic in our teaching: teaching does not have to be the same in every lesson: only that the strategies employed by teachers always lead to good progress for all learners whether teaching



approaches are modern, creative, 21st century and innovative, or time-and-tested effective methodologies.

### **Teaching supports effective learning in the following ways:**

- It is well-aligned with Cambridge curricula, to develop both subject-knowledge and EYFS, and Cambridge curriculum skills.
- It starts with 'Quality First Teaching' – in which the teacher plans their lesson starting with the individual learning needs of the students in front of them, and work backwards from this to design individualised lessons so that all learners can make effective progress over time.
- Lesson Objectives and Success Criteria are well aligned with Cambridge curricula.
- Teaching starts with an alignment of teachers knowing their students well, knowing their subjects well and knowing their curriculum well.
- Teachers start by getting to know their students well, building positive relationships that foster mutual-success, and an understanding of students' previous attainment in CAT4, CEM, GL PT, ABT, Cambridge Checkpoint and GCSE and AS assessments so as to know how to design a classroom learning environment, and appropriate seating plans that match students learning needs.
- Teachers have the student information, IEP data, G&T data and current progress information from recent student notebook and assessment for learning feedback to pitch lessons so that all students can make progress that meet and goes beyond curriculum standards for the age group. This means that marking is up to date, and feedback from student work and student notebooks informs teachers' practice on a weekly basis. Teachers know their students' individual strengths and weaknesses very well to inform design of lessons.
- Teachers create classroom environments that are warm and facilitate student success. Lessons are grounded on real-world imaginative scenarios and contexts that reflect our British and UAE values and are therefore worthy of student interest. Teachers make effective use of quality classroom resources such as real-life 3D models, and objects to make effective links with student understanding and foster student interest.
- Teachers ensure that the pace of the lesson is effective in using the time well to drive student progress. Teachers are reflective practioners and use real-world feedback from the lesson at hand to speed up or slow down the pace to ensure that all learners make good progress, through use of progress checks, questioning and assessment for learning strategies.
- Teachers made good use of behaviour for learning strategies to motivate students to engage fully with learning and work hard to make good progress.
- Teachers make effective use of questioning strategies to elicit students' interest, create a sense of wonder while stretching and challenging all. Questioning is based on differing levels of Blooms Taxonomy, the learning objectives, and while checking progress, also drives progress by eliciting student thoughts and insight. Teachers make use of questioning to encourage classroom discussion and debate: these discussion sessions ensure all learners are included in the learning experience, while supported and challenged to reflect, make insightful responses and make good progress.
- Teachers make good use of student information to provide differentiation opportunities that well scaffold the students progress through conceptual and skill development. Differentiated success criteria, differentiation by level of challenge, and differentiation by learning style ensure that all learners have opportunities to make good progress, while have a measure of choice as to how they engage with their learning. Differentiation has a measure of challenge and aspiration: differentiation strategies both support but also lead to students to be stretched to reach beyond their current levels of progress.
- Teachers create opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and grow as independent learners. Through quality assessment for learning, assessment and learning



becomes a dialogue between the student and teacher in which all students know what level they are working at and what they need to do to progress to the next level. Assessment for learning activities represent a range of self-assessment, peer-assessment, group-assessment and teacher assessment which encourages reflection and insightful thought through classroom dialogue.

- Teachers plan in a 'split screen' fashion: they plan not just for the grasping and consolidation of new conceptual understanding but also for the development of differing learning skills based on Cambridge curriculum requirements and the UAE school inspection framework. Consequently, lessons are purposeful for not just developing subject knowledge understanding but developing a range of student skills over time.
- Teachers make good use of the school's curriculum review process to ensure students have a balanced range of learning opportunities to develop critical thinking, problem solving, enquiry, enterprise, innovation and independent learning skills.
- Teachers plan for opportunities that are 'to me, to you'. Lessons reflect a balanced mix of a range of activities that include times of 'to me' teacher-directed instruction, but also 'to you', enquiry, collaboration and the facilitation of learning. Teachers make use of planned activities that purposefully encourage collaboration, teamwork and enterprise from students. Lessons are planned so that students may demonstrate their learning in a range of ways, that allow room for student creativity and innovation in the way that they demonstrate understanding of acquisition of new knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Teachers make good use of a range of tried and tested collaborative learning strategies such as Kagan strategies that purposefully facilitate student' interactions, communication, classroom dialogue, reflection and independent learning.
- Teachers make effective use of instructional technologies, and online platforms that support student' learning. They are very careful and purposeful in choosing the right tools that effectively support student learning and progress. Use of instructional technologies is frequent yet balanced against activities in which a device is not always needed. Teachers are strategic in the way that encourage student devices at times, celebrate their use, while at the same time, ensure they are safely away from learners when not required if they are to pose as a distraction.

### **How does TBAC define effective learning?**

Effective learning takes place when students are continually aware of where they are now in their learning, where they need to go to, and most importantly, how best to get there. Assessment for learning thus serves as a junction between effective teaching, assessment and student' learning skills that gives the students the empowerment to make progress based on the learning opportunities and experiences afforded to them at TBAC.

When all learners develop skills and concepts at high levels and believe that they are capable of learning anything given the right amount of effort, high-quality teaching has occurred. This means that students take responsibility for their learning and can work independently and collaboratively. They reflect on their own work and reflect on the outcomes; they are thus stimulated, inspired and challenged to work towards targets set by them by their teachers.

### **Effective learning occurs when:**

- Students are motivated and enthused by what they are learning.
- Is an active process – a product of doing rather than receiving.
- Builds on prior knowledge.
- Is supported by both the teacher and other students, and takes the form of interaction, collaboration and teacher intervention.



- Is centered on the learners' responsibility for their own learning. They are able to exercise choice, develop goals, plan their approach and work independently.
- Is reflective and enables learners to monitor and review the learning.
- Is where students make progress with their learning.
- Is when students display a strong desire to contribute the effort and concentration required to match the teacher's passion for learning.
- They make progress through the acquisition or development of new knowledge and skills.
- They are productive and work at a good pace.
- They are motivated to learn.
- They work with increasing concentration, confidence and independence.
- They are able to apply strategies they have learned in the classroom and transfer their learning to other subjects and situations.
- They show enjoyment and engagement in their learning.
- They understand what they are learning, how well they have done and the next steps that they need to take in their learning.
- They are moving towards taking responsibility for their own learning.

## What is required for quality (first) teaching for effective learning to take place?

### 1. An empowered, effective inclusion team:

The inclusion team are the powerhouse that ensure that both teachers and students are fully equipped so that the right conditions are in place for every child to make good progress according to starting points.

This means that:

- The inclusion team continuously collects student data and works with parents and wider stakeholders to produce individualised support plans (IEPs) and Gifted and Talented plans are provided for all identified students.
- The inclusion team champion our students individual learning needs. Consequently, all teachers are aware of wave 3, 2, and 1 SEN students and their individual needs and in parallel, the needs of our G&T students.
- The inclusion team take ownership to work alongside MER performance management processes, visit classrooms and quality control the provision available for our students.
- The Inclusion team champion 'pull-out' and 'push-in' sessions working in partnership with teachers who know how to support their students to reap the maximum success from their time with inclusion practioners. When required, sessions may be 1:1 or grouped, depending on the individual student' needs.
- Support teachers, through coaching, PD, and production of detailed documentation that enables all teachers to well-understand the individual strengths and weaknesses of our students, and how best to support and differentiate for their individual learning needs.
- The inclusion team work alongside the Assessment Department to ensure that student-data is up-to-date and relevant.

### 2. A calm, purposeful and inspiring learning environment:

Heads of Sections, Section Supervisors and Heads of Departments work together to support the maintenance of a calm, purposeful and inspiring learning environment.

Teachers are encouraged to take ownership of their classroom environment through the motto: 'My classroom. My rules. My behaviour'.



Teachers are empowered to expend the fullness of strategies available to them according to the Behaviour for Learning Consequences Ladder, and TBAC Rewards for Learning Ladder.

### 3. Frequent, accurate and appropriate assessment data:

The examinations department works alongside middle leaders to ensure that accurate and recent assessment data is provided for all teachers.

Teachers have access to recent CEM, CAT4, GL PT, Cambridge Checkpoint and ABT data. Teachers well-understand how to interpret CEM, CAT4, GL PT, Cambridge Checkpoint data to produce student profiles that help teachers understand how to differentiate for the needs of all students.

Internal assessments, such as a baseline test serves as an Internal starting point for teachers.

### 4. A continuous process of Monitoring, Evaluation and Review (MER):

A termly MER schedule is produced and published to teachers that includes a regular cycle of:

- Informal and formal learning walks.
- Informed formal lesson observations.
- Book Scrutinies
- Student Voice

This MER process ensures that accurate and up-to-date information is provided for Middle Leaders and Senior Leaders to effectively ensure that this TBAC policy on Teaching for Effective Learning is implemented, while students experience the very best provision that that the school has to offer.

This MER process is supportive, collaborative challenging: it draws out the very best from all of our teachers, and ensures that teachers are confident, competent and successful classroom practioners.

### 5. Through effective performance management:

Learning comes first. The needs of our students come first. We provide a highly supportive coaching and professional development program to ensure that our teachers are continuously developing in their classroom practice. We also seek to recruit the most able teachers for our students.

We also do not compromise on the quality of provision for our students. The following support process (Table 1) is provided for all of our teachers:

**Table 1: Flowchart of TBAC's Professional Development Support Process based on Performance Management processes:**

Has the teacher achieved a minimum of 'Acceptable' (Term 1) or 'Good' (Term 2) in their recent formal lesson observation?		
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	
The teacher is encouraged to continue with the Teacher Passport Professional Development program and may be invited onto the Teacher Champions group to support the professional development of other teachers.	The teacher will be re-observed within a two-week window. Teachers will be coached by their Head of Department in this time to act on any key feedback.	
	Did the teacher meet minimum standards 'Acceptable / Good' in the re-observation?	
	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	The teacher returns to the Teacher	The teacher, after a performance management review, will enter into our



	Passport Professional Development programme.	Teacher Support plan pending HR and SLT review.
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### 1. Through consistency in our planning:

Teachers make use of agreed standardised templates for lesson planning. These lesson plans, standardised powerpoints, worksheets and homeworks ensure that all lessons have the basic structures and elements that support a 'good' lesson. The non-negotiables of all lessons are that:

- They have a clear visual resource such as a PPT or equivalent.
- The lesson is based on clearly communicated learning objectives.
- The lesson has a range of engaging activities and tasks.
- The lesson makes use of quality resources such as worksheets, handouts and online activities.
- The lesson has a clear, purposeful structure that has a starter, main tasks, and plenary, that is designed to progress the student from a starting place to an end place in their learning during that lesson time.
- The lesson has a clear support-, challenge- and homework-task.
- The lesson has a number of clear progress checks/ assessment-for-learning tasks that inform the direction of the lesson, and the ones to come.

### 2. Parents are engaged as learning partners:

TBAC values its partnership with parents. Teachers ensure that parents are well-informed of the progress, attainment and learning attitudes of their children. This means that praise is given when it is due; this means that when students have underperformed against curriculum standards in assessments, parents are informed immediately so that patterns can be identified, and student Raising Attainment Plans (RAPs) can be developed and agreed through HOD meetings with HOSs and parents.

RAPs will give measurable and attainable targets to students; they will be carefully monitored by HODs and HOSs. Students will be involved in the process and encouraged to take responsibility and accountability for the improvement of their progress and attainment.

### 3. Curriculum modification and review:

It is expected that teachers take part in planned and scheduled times of curriculum modification and review. This curriculum modification should articulate horizontally and vertically. It should also take into account the individual learning needs of SEN and G&T students. The curriculum will thus be adapted so that each student is given the most optimum learning conditions for their learning and progress.