PRIORY SCHOOL
EDGBASTON

TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT POLICY

(SENIOR SCHOOL – YEARS 7 TO 13)

(STATUTORY)

Trustee Committee:	Education	
Date Approved:	March 2026	
Next of Review:	March 2029	
Member of Staff Responsible:	F.Guiver, Deputy Headteacher	
Trustee Overseer:	P. Skrybant	
Intended Audience:	Employees, Parents and Pupils	
Relevance:	Seniors	Yes
Access:	Website	Yes
	Internal	Yes
	Restricted	No

Our Mission Statement

Priory School is a thriving, co-educational independent school founded upon a rich Catholic heritage which welcomes those from all faiths and none.

In partnership with parents and guardians we provide a nurturing, family-based ethos, alongside high-standards of teaching and learning, enabling all pupils to achieve their potential.

We embrace diversity and interfaith understanding alongside awareness of environmental and global issues, in response to the needs of our time.

Generic Policy Statement:

The Governors and staff at Priory School are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors, regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional or cultural needs.

The Governors, staff and pupils are committed to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils and staff.

To meet the needs of our school community, all our policies, including this policy, can be made available on different formats such as different font sizes or styles, colour, or alternate languages.

The Governing Council understands it has responsibility for ensuring the effective oversight of this policy and will assess, evaluate and review as necessary.

Reviewed and Revised by F. Guiver – February 2026

TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT POLICY – FOR SENIOR SCHOOL

1. Purpose and Vision

This policy is under constant review by the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Council.

The policy exists to provide a coherent and exciting strategy to ensure that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds may benefit from a first-class educational experience. That experience is expected to bear fruit with both GCSE and A level outcomes, but also through pupils' wider spiritual, intellectual, personal, emotional, social and physical development.

We seek to be an outstanding school that enjoys above and significantly above average performance and attendance amongst all groups of pupils. These outcomes will be rooted in all pupils encountering quality first teaching, learning and assessment experiences in every classroom, every day - in addition to experiencing and acknowledging a strong sense of belonging to a school that celebrates community and individual identity. In all things, attention will be given to thinking about and then articulating the best ways for us to provide a first-class educational experience. This includes how we teach, how they learn, how we all learn from assessment, how we build rapport and the sense of belonging.

At all times, the adults will become more skilful and confident as a result of open, frank and continuous dialogue that both challenges and supports. We shall all hold one another to account because we know that our own endeavours are limited or magnified by the simultaneous effectiveness of our colleagues.

As a teaching body, we believe that when we are aligned with common pedagogical principles and practices then we can become greater than the sums of our parts and can achieve more together than we can alone on behalf of our pupils. *Please see section 3 for more information.*

2. Curriculum Foundational Principles

How we teach, how pupils learn, and how assessment is used are the means to a more significant end – the curriculum. Therefore, it is important that at all times we remain conscious of the curriculum goals that exist across the Senior School at Priory School Edgbaston:

"All pupils must experience a broad and balanced curriculum that nurtures a joyful, compassionate, inclusive and hopeful vision of humanity and the future.

Our curriculum must be ambitious for all children. It must follow a carefully laid pathway that sequences and accumulates the knowledge and skills that fuel curious minds. We want all pupils to be lifelong explorers and creators of undiscovered knowledge. We believe this will happen if they possess the confidence to remember and the determination to make connections of their own.

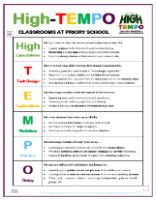
The creative expression of our pupils' uniqueness will be seen in the things they say, write, compose, design, create or perform. This will secure the education and qualifications of courageous young people who have the freedom to choose their own future. In short, we seek to nurture young adults who will have the freedom to choose their own oaths in life: professionally and socially."

For more information, please refer to the "Curriculum Policy – Senior School".

3. Teaching, Learning & Pedagogy

3a. High-TEMPO Teaching, Learning and Assessment Framework

High expectations, alongside task design, teachers' explanations, comparative modelling, structured practice, and oracy are the key features of the High-TEMPO framework. The poster below, provided to all parents on an annual basis, provides greater insight into the way we think about learning, teaching and assessment at Priory School.



High-TEMPO

CLASSROOMS AT PRIORY SCHOOL EXPLAINED FOR PARENTS

High **Expectations**	**We try to create calm classrooms where everyone can learn by…** - Having **routines** that all pupils and teachers follow. - **Rewarding** and **praising** breakthroughs and achievements. - Ensuring **strong silence** so that everyone can concentrate.
T **Task Design**	**We try to help your child improve their memory and recall by…** - Identifying **key facts and words** in "**knowledge organisers**". - Regularly running **fact checks** and **multiple-choice quizzes**. - Designing tasks that ask your child to **think hard** and aid **memorisation**. - Anticipating and planning for tricky ideas and common misconceptions.
E **Explanations**	**We encourage teachers to be the experts in the room by…** - **Explaining** new and complex ideas with great care. - Choosing words and language that adds **clarity**. - Avoiding introducing **too much information too soon**. - **Checking for understanding** before they move on.
M **Modelling**	**We show your children how to be successful by…** - Demonstrating **how to do** it and how to do it well. - Naming and listing the **steps to success**. - Showing examples of **secure** and **exemplary versions**.
P **Practice**	**We encourage mastery through practice by…** - Expecting all extended work to be completed in **strong silence**. - Providing **sentence starters** and **golden language** to **scaffold** responses. - Gradually **building up** demands towards more **complex** outcomes.
O **Oracy**	**We nurture talking with confidence and impact by…** - Identifying the **golden words and phrases** that enable great speech. - Leading inclusive **debates and discussions** that are **carefully planned**. - Think > pair > share activities to encourage **independent**, **pair** and **small group** talk.

3b. The Rationale for a Framework

The best schools in the country are driven by the best teachers. Becoming and then remaining a great teacher is an enormous challenge for us as individuals. Our pupils rely on us to be at the top of our game and to be the very best in our field.

From a learner's perspective, teachers must be kind, memorable and unique in order for rapport and engagement to flourish. However, learners must also experience a sense of psychological safety through familiar routines that determine how they are taught, how they learn, and how they are prepared for internal and public examinations. Their right to a wonderful education overrides any desire we might have to teach through trial and error. Pupils do not exist as a training ground for our mastery as an educator.

This is why the very best schools commit to a philosophy of 'aligned autonomy'. Aligned autonomy emphasises the need for there to be common principles and practices that exist in every classroom, every day, with every teacher. Nevertheless, those principles are never so constraining as to stifle the uniqueness and character of individual teachers.

Alignment is not simply about raising standards of teaching, learning and assessment, it is also about teachers' wellbeing and competence. Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985), illustrates that in order for adults in their workplace to have positive wellbeing, strong levels of performance and high levels of motivation, then there needs to be three elements in place and in balance:

- ***A is for AUTONOMY:*** Having sufficient agency to make decisions whilst 'buying-in' to a broader set of principles or values.
- ***B is for BELONGING:*** Feeling seen, known, valued, appreciated and part of something bigger than oneself.
- ***C is for COMPETENCE:*** Being able to do one's job well and to know that one is doing a great job.

A framework for teaching, learning and assessment provides teachers and school leaders with a shared language that enables us to work as a team to continually drive up standards.

3c. The Evidence Base for the High-TEMPO Framework

High-TEMPO is a distillation of age-old common sense that every teacher through the ages would recognise.

The rest brings together the most convincing and evidence based research and related practices that stretches from the seminal work of Daisy Christodoulou and Tom Sherrington, to the interpretations of Barak Rosenshine, Peps Mcrea, and many others including the incredibly helpful Education Endowment Foundation's Teaching & Learning Toolkits, and Ofsted's very helpful overview of research.

Combining this research and the evidence of high performing schools and multi-academy trusts, we can confidently identify core features or principles upon which great teaching, learning and assessment rest. High-TEMPO is based on and informed by these principles.

Core works include:

- *Why Don't Pupils Like School?* - Dan Willingham
- *Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction* - Tom Sherrington
- *Seven Myths of Education* by Daisy Christodoulou
- *Making Good Progress?* By Daisy Christodoulou
- *The Learning Rainforest* by Tom Sherrington
- *The Curriculum* by Mary Myatt
- *Motivated Teaching* by *Peps McCrea*
- *Every Lesson Counts* by Shaun Allison and Andy Tharby
- *What Makes Great Teaching?* by The Sutton Trust

3d. Core Principles that Underpin the High-TEMPO Framework

1. **Classrooms must be <u>attentive</u>**: The way that we design our schemes and work and individual lessons must place pupil attentiveness at its heart. Lessons that contain the correct ratios of routines and surprises address pupils' need for certainties and a desire for novelty. If they are bored, disengaged or making little progress, then we need to change our curriculum and lesson planning.
2. **<u>Teachers</u> must provide great explanations**: Teachers are the experts in the room. When imparting wisdom, experts know what to say and how to say it. They use stories, anecdotes, metaphors, data, visuals, models and artefacts to bring their knowledge alive and to share it with great enthusiasm. Experts also anticipate common misconceptions and the boring bits. They avoid assumed knowledge and know the sequence in which new knowledge must be acquired, applied and recalled.
3. **<u>Tasks and activities</u> must be 'high value'**: When we reach the 'off you go' moment with a class, they must all be clear on what they need to do (through 'step-by-step instructions' or 'tick-lists'), but also how to do it really well (secured through comparative modelling). The Litmus test of any activity is the degree to which pupils are absorbed and engaged throughout, especially those pupils with SEND. Most high value tasks involve very strong silence.
4. **<u>Reading</u> must be promoted by all**: Reading is everyone's responsibility. Every lesson must contain some element of appropriate subject specific reading, and substantially so for every subject except mathematics and practical PE. Reading can be used as an integral feature of a lesson in order to impart new knowledge and understanding, or used at the start of lessons or homework to enrich and extend their knowledge and awareness.
5. **<u>Writing</u> must be promoted by all**: Many schools leave writing to chance and the English department. This lets children down and denies them the support to overcome the immense writing demands in every GCSE and A level paper. Through comparative, annotated and deconstructed models, pupils can recognise 'secure' and 'excellent' writing. Through scaffolds pupils of ALL abilities must learn to write with confidence.
6. **<u>Homework</u> must be meaningful and valued widely**: Pupils' attitudes towards homework will depend on the degree to which they recognise the value of what they are being asked to do in 'their' time. Homework can never be 'finishing off' or completing assessments, and instead must be to follow one of the three Rs: reading, research or revision. Reading and research must be strategic and structured. Revision must be highly planned and purposeful.
7. **Classroom <u>behaviours</u> must be well managed**: All classrooms benefit from a combination of explicit school-wide routines and norms, alongside the unwritten and implied expectations of every individual teacher. Whilst successful behaviour management is explored at the end of this framework, every teacher must embrace the philosophy that every lesson must be worth behaving for in the first place.

4. Leading Behaviour and Pupil Engagement

4a: Core Principles

The *Classroom Management Handbook* by Oliver Lovell and Dr Mark Dowley provides helpful common-sense assertions that remind us how to build great relationships with pupils and to promote great pupil behaviour and engagement in our lessons.

Core messages…	**Simple summary…**
1. Cracking behaviour is like cracking a code -it requires curiosity, courage and patience. (pp.17-19)	Each pupil has a code when it comes to behaviour. Once we "crack it" they are much more likely to behave.
2. The best classroom managers have the best habits and routines. (pp.20-23)	To get really good at managing the pupils, we have to develop the right habits through deliberate, intentional practice that occurs everywhere.
3. When we begin with high expectations we are rewarded with greater flexibility over time. (pp.24-25)	Being sensibly strict (and kind) using the right routines from the start is essential for success in the long run.
4. We must be the master of our own behaviours before we can influence the behaviour of others. (pp.26-27)	Being aware of our own internal thoughts, feelings and dialogue allows us to *choose* our own responses and behaviours – even when we feel under pressure.
5. Like algebra, tennis or spot welding, behaviour is a complex skill that must be learned via a curriculum. (pp.28-31)	We have to get better at teaching pupils how to behave much more intentionally. We must ALL explain why it's important, model it, practise it, check for understanding, provide feedback, and revisit continually.
6. Children (and adults) react to what we say AND how we say it. (pp.32-24)	Teaching and supporting young people is a performance - we can learn to perform in a way that will enhance the power of our words. Being kind and strict is possible!
7. When we experience success, it acts as a great motivator for the future. (pp.35-37)	When **V**alue and **E**xpectations are high, and when a learner is prepared to accept the **C**ost of hard work – then they are much more likely to be **S**uccessful.
8. We must see and hear (with our own eyes and ears) what excellent behaviour management is like. (pp.38-40).	As teachers and colleagues, we will continually improve our own behaviour management by exposure to brilliant practice. We need to be given the time and space to see these things and be creative in sourcing examples.
9. Pupils must know that they belong and that you and we will not give up on them (as well). (pp.41-43)	We must guard against a subtext that suggests to that child that they are an unwanted irritation.
10. Positive experiences and interactions put credit in the rapport bank that can be cashed at a later date. (pp.44-46)	Positive relationships are built through positive interactions over time. We should always intentionally plan for this and reward when positive choices are made.

4b. High-TEMPO lessons = Inclusive and Engaging Lessons

High-TEMPO lessons are far less likely to be disrupted because children always feel safer and more likely to be successful in a **High-TEMPO** lesson. When children feel safe and successful their buy-in increases dramatically. ***A High-TEMPO lesson is an inclusive and engaging lesson!***

High-TEMPO SEND Features	[Positive] Impact When Done Well	[Negative] Impact When Ignored
Task Design • Essential knowledge is prioritised. • Low-stakes quizzing and high-value tasks are used to help secure essential knowledge. • Uncluttered tasks, resources & visuals.	"I can do this. The teacher has got it all planned out. I just need to follow their lead. It's hard but it's easy to follow. This teacher has done this before! I'm gonna be okay."	"I'm overwhelmed. There is no way I am going to cope. Does this teacher really think I am going to manage? They are so out of touch!"
Explanations • Explanations that clearly communicate knowledge. • Explanations that make economic use of language and prioritise clarity. • Explanations that communicate enthusiasm for the learning.	"I got that. This teacher understands how to teach me and when to pause and when to stop. I am ready to learn the next thing. The teacher seems to remember what it was like to be a pupil!"	"Am I the only one who hasn't got a clue? So many words, pictures, noises, distractions at the same time. I give up."
Modelling • Pupils are shown how to do something and how to do it well. • The thought processes behind task completion are shared. • Secure and excellent versions of outcomes are explored.	"Right, lots to do but if I follow that order I'll be just fine. Ahh, that's the difference between a good and a great one. I think I know what I need to do to create a better answer than last time."	"I'm not sure what I am supposed to do. I'm not sure I know what the teacher wants me to do."
Practice • Interleaving, spaced repetition and revision organise the learning. • Sustained independent practice takes place in Strong Silence. • Scaffolds and supports are used to lighten the load.	"Thank goodness – I was worried I wouldn't know where to begin or how to get going. The teacher seems to know what I need to build my confidence. This teacher has done this before!"	"Where do I begin? I want to write a great answer but I don't know how or where to start."
Oracy • Pupil talk is structured to ensure high participation. • An academic register is modelled, rehearsed and refined. • Periods of questioning, debate and performance are purposeful, deliberate and low threat.	"I'm comfortable talking in a small group. I am being shown how to say things 'properly'. This teacher seems to know how to help us find our voice."	"There's no way I'm going to speak. I'll be wrong and get laughed at - or get shouted-down by the loud ones."

4c. Positive Relationships Are Everything

At Priory School our basic expectations are centred on safe, respectful and ready-to-learn classrooms. Meanwhile, teachers do not offer themselves as a friend and instead we present ourselves as being a person in a position of trust, who cares, and has an important responsibility for children's education and futures.

It is inevitable (and desirable) that children perceive and experience all of their teachers in very different ways. Rather than leaving these judgements to chance, we need to fill that space and tell them, show them, who we are, and what motivates us to do our jobs.

Pupils' favourite teachers are the ones they believe "really care about us". Children are not always the most incisive judges of who cares most and so we cannot afford to assume that the pupils will in fact notice how much we actually care about them – which means we have to show them, and tell them, that we care with our high regard and high expectations.

- *They should **hear**:* Calm, kind, fair, authoritative and confident adult voices.
- *They should **see**:* A smiling teacher. Attractive resources. A tidy classroom. Marked work.
- *They should **do**:* Activities that lead to progress, success and confidence.
- *They should **feel**:* Known by name and need. Safe to try and safe to fail. Needs are being met.

4d. Diverting, Diffusing and De-escalating Challenging Behaviours

All human beings, but especially children, are drawn into dramas as active agents and participants, or as passive observers and reporters. The smallest thing can electrify a class – a maverick fly, an absurd opinion or sudden winds (both meteorological and colonic). More often there's a human drama – a dispute or argument between pupils or with us as teachers that has the potential to go off on in a number of very different ways. Below are the most widespread strategies endorsed at Priory School to promote great behaviours for learning.

Strategy	**Mini-Scripts**
Empathy: As well as providing a child with a face-saving get out, showing them that you recognise their angst is the first step towards a reconciliation.	"I can see this is becoming difficult for me and you. I think we'll both benefit if I step back a bit and talk later, when we are both feeling okay. Thank you."
Apology: When we have miscalculated or misjudged a situation, it is often very powerful to model how adults express regret and go about resetting or rebooting the situation.	"It is hard to get things right first time all the time, and I can see this isn't working. I am sorry, let's try and again and work this out together. Thank you."
Positive Directions: Describe what you want the pupil to do, rather than telling them to stop doing it.	"It's important that everyone is quiet so that everyone is able to think and to learn effectively. Thank you."
Lose the Battle. Win the War: The fear of appearing weak and undermined in front of other pupils is well understood. As adults we must accept losing face in order to avoid escalation.	"What has just happened is not right. We shall sort it all out at another time. But right now, we are going get back on track so that everyone in this class can learn. Thank you."

Agreement Frames: When we wish to redirect behaviour, we start by observing something we must all agree on before challenging.	"So that we may speak privately and show respect for one another, please step outside for a moment so that we may talk and find out what has happened. Thank you."
Reframing Language: This is the skill of reframing our statements or questions in such a way that suggests difficulties or problems are temporary and solvable.	"Let's find a way together to work out a plan to get back on track and so that we can have a really successful lesson. Thank you."
The Language of Choice: Reframe our expectations so that we clarify what we want and what will happen if we don't secure it.	"If you choose to continue talking, I will have to put you on detention at break time. Thank you."
Presuppositions: This is a statement that contains assumptions which must be accepted if the statement is to make sense.	"You know I will listen to your point of view, but I'm sure you'll agree we can do this much better if you are calmer – what do you think?"
Generous Take Up Time: Rather than stating our expectations and refusing to budge until it is done, we reframe our expectations with greater confidence and presumptuousness - and then move away.	"When I return in a few moments, after I have checked in on other pupils, I am confident you will have made a start and written at least five lines. Thank you."

Also:

- ***Focus on primary and not secondary behaviours:*** Primary behaviours are those which require intervention by a teacher because it is affecting learning (for example: talking out of turn, poking others). Secondary behaviours are those that pupils devise to divert attention from their primary behaviour, for example sighs, grunts, pouts, hair tossing, humming or sniggering.
- ***Tactical ignoring:*** For some pupils, a lack of equipment, slowness to settle, fidgeting or murmuring (for example) is a far greater challenge for them to address than others. Therefore, different expectations have to apply sometimes to achieve the bigger goal. In time, even the small issues will be addressed.
- ***Positive (not negative) reinforcement:*** Focus on the behaviours that you want to see through a whole array of rewards and praise.
- ***Modelling:*** The way we maintain dignity and respect, resolve conflict, treat others, make mistakes, manage emotions and communicate, are all scrutinised and absorbed by pupils.
- ***Catch Them Being Good:*** Teachers that find every opportunity to praise the kinds of attitudes, behaviours and interactions they desire will have good classroom behaviour. By implication a teacher using this strategy is defining their expectations.

4e. Why Some Children may be More Motivated than Others

The Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985), reminds us that adult's motivation *in the workplace* hinges on the levels of their perceived levels of confidence, autonomy and relatedness. But what about school children? There are a number of theories but the one that makes most sense, is easy to convey and sets out some pretty straightforward steps for educators was devised by Peps Mcrea in his book, *Motivated Teaching* (2020). In a nutshell, he says that when a child values education (V) and they expect (E) to be successful, then they are more prepared to pay the cost (C) of hard work and therefore more likely to be successful (S).

Children who come from families that instil the value of education and schooling into their children (V) gift those children a head start. When those children enter classrooms with teachers in whom they trust to help them through difficult topics and assessments (E), then they are prepared to work hard, work late and bounce back from disappointments (C). The net effect is that such children do really well in school (S).

4f. Pupil Voice

Listening and responding to the voices of our pupils helps foster a strong sense of being valued and belonging. Pupils must experience a wide range of strategies that gather their lived experience.

- *Annual Stakeholder Surveys:* Every October, all pupils, parents and staff will be invited to participate in a wide-ranging online survey. The results of these surveys will inform both the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement priorities for the following year.
- *Cold Calling and First Checks:* The most common voice activity is when teachers 'cold call' individual pupils or to approach individual learners, particularly those who are least likely to understand or engage. Pupils have a good radar for those teachers who are on 'transmit only' and those who can switch to 'receive mode'. When we finish an explanation, provide some instructions, or say, "Off you go…", we cannot retreat to our chair and desk and instead the real work of a teacher begins by circulating and checking for understanding.
- *End of Unit Surveys:* When pupils complete a unit of work, they must complete an online and anonymous survey. This must take place no fewer than three times per year and no more than six times per year. The results of the survey should be analysed and evaluated by the teacher alongside their assessment of pupils' attainment and progress in that unit of work. Having such rich data at one's fingertips enables us to fine-tune the most recent scheme for work 'for next time' and adapt our next unit of work to better meet the needs and interests of our pupils. At the end of the survey, pupils should then be invited to add any other comments. This could be advice, or thanks and praise. Or anything that the pupil thinks that the teacher might benefit from knowing.

5. Assessment for Learning

5a. Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is anything a teacher does throughout the teaching of a single lesson or unit of work that helps them evaluate whether their teaching is currently leading to effective learning (or not). Formative assessment can be 'in the moment' or at strategic intervals.

Teachers cannot be passive transmit-only educators with little or no interest in how their teaching is landing with their class. Formative assessment takes many forms and each type can help the teacher 'receive feedback' so that they can establish if their pupils know what they need to do and whether they understand how to do it well.

Teacher Questioning: Old fashioned 'hands up' questioning is a missed opportunity to formatively assess and only provides very superficial feedback on the progress of the class as a whole. Experienced teachers know that when we randomly ask question of a class, we tend to get the same socially confident and more able pupils reassuring us that all is well in the classroom. It is true that the more socially confident and more able pupils benefit from traditional / random hands up questioning (which is great), but when 'hands up' is the only or the main questioning technique used by a teacher then the bulk of most classes are ignored, and some might even feel alienated.

Types of questions: Teachers ask all sorts of questions and must do so in order to gather feedback on how well the lesson is landing with all groups of pupils:

- **Questions to check for knowledge:** They tend to begin with 'what' and require short, closed responses. These questions help a teacher establish if the core knowledge is secure and whether their teaching needs to go back before the learning may go forward.
- **Questions that check for understanding:** They tend to begin with 'how' or why', for instance, and require longer responses. These questions help a teacher establish if the core concepts are secure and whether their teaching also needs to go back before the learning may go forward.
- **Questions that seek to promote creative or speculative thinking:** Such questions might begin with words like, 'what if', or 'what might be the effect of…', for example. Such questions can lead to high levels of awe and wonder but require time for the vast majority of pupils to have time to contemplate. The T>P>>S method is perfect to facilitate creative and speculative thinking exercises.
- **Questions that seek to promote empathy:** Such questions tend to be more common in the humanities and English lessons but are not solely in their domain. We seek to influence hearts and minds and therefore there are times when we invite pupils to think about life from another's perspective.

Questioning ought to be targeted - known as 'cold calling'. A teacher should use their knowledge of the class to choose which pupils ought to be questioned. Whether it is front of the class or quietly crouched down beside a pupil or small group, questions should be targeted so that the teacher can establish if the pupil knows what they are supposed to be doing and if they how to do it well. Pupils who are least likely to understand and make progress must always be our first priority. Great teachers teaching great lessons target their first and last questions at the most vulnerable learners.

Some children think very quickly and bolt their hand up within a split second. Other children need more time to process the vocabulary and concepts that the teacher has used. And then there are others who prefer to invest more time before they speak because they wish to provide a more considered response. All types of pupils deserve a chance to speak and share their own emerging wisdom at a pace that is inclusive. Whenever a teacher asks a question that requires a child to demonstrate their knowledge or understanding then everyone must receive some 'take-up time'. No more than ten seconds is all that is needed for children to absorb the question, trawl their memory and thoughts, and then formulate a coherent response.

At Priory we promote two key methods to receive instant feedback on whether the whole class is moving in the right direction:

- ***Knowledge recall checks:*** Checks of knowledge and understanding can take place at any point in the lesson, but are most logically positioned at the start (to check whether prior or essential knowledge is secure) or at the end (to check how much of the new knowledge has landed). At the start of lessons, knowledge recall checks can take the form of low stakes multiple-choice quizzes (MCQs) or 'First Five' questions that check pupils' medium and long-term memory and recall. At the end of lessons short quizzes (ideally MCQs) can be distributed as 'exit tickets' to leave the teacher with greater clarity on where the next lesson ought to begin.
- ***White boards:*** Once they have got over the novelty factor, they can be used by pupils to provide short responses to closed knowledge-based questions and quizzes, or slightly longer solutions or answers. The teacher scans all of the boards and they avoid drawing attention to those who got it right (or wrong) and instead responds by noting or quickly re-teaching common errors or misconceptions. When used well, the pupil knows that whiteboards are used by a teacher to formatively assess the class so that the teacher can adjust their lesson and delivery.

5b. Summative Assessment and Assessment Weeks

Summative assessments provide an important opportunity for pupils to apply and showcase their knowledge and skills via a standardised end-of-unit assessment. At Priory School our summative assessments are assessment *of* learning and assessment *for* learning.

Every summative assessment is also an opportunity for the teacher and the learner to reflect and learn from the teaching and the learning that has taken place in the preceding weeks. Pupils must receive feedback that is clear and meaningful. Departments must study the assessment results and probe ways to adapt and improve the scheme of work over time.

Summative assessments are a wonderful opportunity to develop pupils' independence, increase their exposure to, and experience of, success, improve levels of motivation, and provide insights into how they can maximise their potential when they take their GCSE and A level examinations.

Summative assessments in years 7, 8 and 9 should avoid the impression that assessment results are a highly precise indicator of ability and potential. Few pupils progress along neat upward flightpaths and we embrace an approach that avoids an excess of certainty until years 10 and 11.

There are up to five assessments per year in each subject (years 7 to 10), each taking place around the sixth week of a seven-week cycle across an academic year.

Each year 7 to 10 summative assessment is made up of a Paper One and Paper Two component.:

- Paper One: This is a knowledge recall paper (AO1) and will involve fifteen (year 7), twenty (year 8) or twenty-five (years 9 and 10) multiple choice questions that can be either paper-based or online (preferable). Pupils must receive their results as a fraction and as a percentage and graded as a 'FAIL' (<40%), 'PASS' (40%+), 'MERIT' (60%+), 'DISTINCTION' (80%+) or 'DISTINCTION*' (100%).
- Paper Two: This is a more familiar kind of paper (AO1, AO2 and AO3) that seeks to assess beyond core knowledge and measures how well pupils can apply their knowledge. Whereas summative assessments in year 10 are very likely to mirror or even be past GCSE papers, pupils in years 7, 8 and then 9 should be more gradually exposed to GCSE-style questions. The questions should be both challenging and accessible for all – remembering that summative assessments ought to reward endeavour and establish the link in pupils' minds between hard work and success. Pupils must receive their result as a fraction, a percentage and graded as 'APPROACHING SECURE', 'SECURE', 'APPROACHING EXCELLENT' or 'EXCELLENT'. See below for more detail on these grade descriptors.

Pupils must receive their marked paper and marking codes used to identify an appropriate dedicated improvement and reflection time (D.I.R.T.) activity that is valuable – for example revisiting an important concept, theory, issue or problem. Pupils must never keep hold of their assessments and instead they must be filed in their assessment folder.

Whilst pupils will receive their marked assessment and complete a meaningful D.I.R.T. activity, feedback ought to be given to the entire class in order that we reduce teacher workload and to draw attention, in the most efficient way possible, to common breakthroughs and misunderstandings.

Rather than issue individual grades to pupils in years 7, 8 and 9, at Priory school we provide one of four descriptors that acknowledges the risks of excessive certainty and provides sufficient leeway for teachers to ensure our assessment is robust and meaningful. The descriptors appear below and the language is common amongst teachers, parents and pupils.

	Years 7 to 11 reports:	*Years 12 and 13 reports:*
Approaching Secure	This means that the standard of classwork, homework and assessments that your child is currently producing is not yet 'Secure'. With increased effort and clarity regarding what they need to do to improve, your child may be able to achieve a grade 4 or 5, at GCSE in this particular subject.	This means that the standard of classwork, homework and assessments that your child is currently producing is not yet 'Secure'. With increased effort and clarity regarding what they need to do to improve, your child may be able to achieve a grade C at A Level in this particular subject.
Secure	This means that the standard of classwork, homework and assessments that your child is currently producing is in line with pupils who typically go on to achieve a grade 4 or 5, at GCSE. With increased effort and clarity regarding what they need to do to improve, your child may be able to achieve a grade 6 or above in this particular subject.	This means that the standard of classwork, homework and assessments that your child is currently producing is in line with pupils who typically go on to achieve a grade C, at A Level. With increased effort and clarity regarding what they need to do to improve, your child may be able to achieve a grade B or above in this particular subject.
Approaching Excellent	This means that the standard of classwork, homework and assessments that your child is currently producing is beyond 'Secure' but not yet 'Excellent'. With increased effort and clarity regarding what they need to do to improve, your child may be able to achieve a grade 7 or above at GCSE in this particular subject.	This means that the standard of classwork, homework and assessments that your child is currently producing is in line with pupils who typically go on to achieve a grade B, at A Level. With increased effort and clarity regarding what they need to do to improve, your child may be able to achieve a grade A or above in this particular subject.
Excellent	This means that the standard of classwork, homework and assessments that your child is currently producing is in line with pupils who typically go on to achieve a grade 7 or above at GCSE. With increased effort and clarity regarding what they need to do to improve, your child may be able to achieve a grade 9 at GCSE in this particular subject.	This means that the standard of classwork, homework and assessments that your child is currently producing is in line with pupils who typically go on to achieve a grade A* or A at A Level.

5c. Reporting to Parents

Depending on the key stage, parents receive up to five Academic Progress Reports (APRs) per year.

Years	No. Reports	Content
Years 7 to 9	5	*For each subject:* • Any concerns around classwork? (Y/N) • Any concerns around homework? (Y/N) • Latest academic performance update (see table in section 5b) • Urgent parent meeting required? (Y/N) • Mock Results
Year 10	5	

Year 11	3	*For each subject:*
		• Any concerns around classwork? (Y/N)
		• Any concerns around homework? (Y/N)
		• Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 Reports:
		  ○ Any recent mock results
		  ○ Forecast grade
		  ○ Potential grade
		• Urgent parent meeting required? (Y/N)

Year 12	3	*For each subject:* • Any concerns around classwork? (Y/N) • Any concerns around homework? (Y/N) • Latest academic performance update (see table in section 5b) • Urgent parent meeting required? (Y/N)

Year 13	3	*For each subject:*
		• Any concerns around classwork? (Y/N)
		• Any concerns around homework? (Y/N)
		• Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 Reports:
		  ○ Any recent mock results
		  ○ Forecast grade
		  ○ Potential grade
		• Urgent parent meeting required? (Y/N)

6. Homework and Independent Study

Homework and independent study cannot be neatly separated from how we teach and how pupils learn. Whilst a separate policy is available, the following provides a simple introduction for families and pupils.

Our Core Principles for Teaching, Learning and Assessment (see Section 3d, above) makes an explicit reference to homework and that it must be meaningful and valued widely as follows:

"Homework must be meaningful and valued widely: Pupils' attitudes towards homework will depend on the degree to which they value what they are being asked to do in 'their' time. Homework can never be 'finishing off' or completing assessments and instead must be to follow one of the 3 Rs: reading, research or revision. Reading and research must be strategic and structured. Revision must be highly planned and purposeful."

Whilst every department devises its own homework policy, they must all be aligned by the following just two key principles:

- Only include Tasks that encourage pupils to think through reading, research or revision.
- Those Tasks must include clear Explanations that include step-by-step instructions that will benefit children with SEND and those more likely to cut corners.

The table below captures the guidance given to teachers at Priory school.

	Do	**Do Not**
Reading *Check out the 'Reading and Literacy' section for much more guidance.*	- Do **choose the texts** very, very wisely. - Do set routinely as a means to enrich, extend and extend. - Do accompany the reading with some comprehension checks to ensure (a) they understand the key messages and (b) they have genuinely read (and processed) the document.	- Do not set reading activities that are insufficiently connected to the topics being studied. - Do not set reading activities that are poorly matched to reading ages. Pasting text in Gemini AI or Chat GTP provides an instant check on reading ages and accessibility - and provides some recommendations.
Research	- Do provide **specific instructions** and ensure you signpost the best library books, the best websites and the best resources that pupils ought to use.	- Do not set unstructured research or big umbrella topics. For example, "Go and research all you can find out about baroque music."
Revision *Check out the 'Memory and Recall' section for much more guidance.*	- Do set regularly, drawing on knowledge organisers, previous lessons and the requirements for any forthcoming assessments in mind. - Do **be very specific**, not just what to revise but how to revise it well. - See page 58 for more guidance.	- Do not ask pupil to revise whole topics without very clear and specific instructions. - Do not forget that unstructured revision is the hardest task that a teacher can set a pupil and the most rapid means to encourage pupils to give up before they even begin.

The difference between the pupils who do well in the GCSEs and their A levels and those who do not is usually related to their ability to work independently. Starting in Early Years and Prep, and then progressively through Seniors, our pupils must become more independent, and more confident to read, research and revise on their own.

7. Adaptive Teaching and Learning

Whilst we know that some of our pupils will benefit from specialist interventions, it is our mainstream lessons that provide those opportunities to build pupils' self-confidence, self-motivation and success.

A High-TEMPO lesson is far more likely to enthuse, engage and motivate learners of all abilities and needs. Whilst many more pupils thrive in such inclusive classrooms, there may be some who need both High-TEMPO classrooms and additional specialist provision outside the classroom – for example: speech and language; interaction and communication; reading; or mental health interventions. High-TEMPO lessons ensure that teachers have more time to work with those who need us the most and to spend less time dealing with the negative consequences of lessons that do not engage and enthuse all of the learners.

Great teaching tries to bridge the gap between a pupil's current grasp of a topic and where we need them to get to by the end of our lesson or scheme of work. If that bridge is too short and certain then a pupil will get bored. If that bridge is too long and rickety then they risk becoming overwhelmed. We help pupils cross the bridge from old to new learning in many ways, including the most important as follows:

1. We must **introduce new information and ideas very gradually**. We then 'move on' when we believe the new information is secure.
2. We remove some information or '**declutter'** the learning so that we do not fill up a child's working memory with irrelevant (and distracting) information.
3. We create **scaffolds** that provide partial solutions and gradually take those scaffolds away as the learner's confidence and independence grows.
4. We **declutter the visual information** we provide. Lots of pictures, diagrams, colours and fonts can look great but to an anxious pupil they can feel lost as they sift what is important and what is not. It is a teacher's job to remove the unnecessary and shine a light on the essentials.
5. It is not just whiteboards, PowerPoints and textbooks that can split or disperse a pupil's attention. If a child is in a classroom and they are surrounded by **social distractions** then that just adds to the risk of a cognitive overload. A **quiet and orderly classroom** is therefore essential for every child to bridge the gap between old and new learning.

If a pupil is on our SEND register, they will have a 'SEND Profile'. This is a simple document that provides advice to all of their teachers. When we pick up a new class, we always check to see who is on the SEND register and then study their personal profile. That profile will help us adapt our teaching, the resources we design, and the learning they experience. The advice is split into six parts and relates to the cornerstones of our High-TEMPO teaching, learning and assessment framework at Priory School. SEND profiles are updated annually and completed in collaboration with the pupil and their family.

8. The Role of Staff and Professional Development

The **Senior Leadership Team** are responsible for establishing a strategy to raise standards of teaching and learning across the school. This strategy must involve the provision of quality assurance activities (see section 8, below), as well as continued professional development learning opportunities throughout the year. Further responsibilities related to the delivery of our curriculum are outlined by our Leadership Team structure and job descriptions. Pertinent to this policy are the following responsibilities:

- The Assistant Headteacher (Quality of Education) has oversight of the teaching, learning, formative assessment, homework and staff development.
- The Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum Standards and Assessment) has oversight and responsibility for all curriculum areas and is assisted by the Examinations Officer

- The Head of Personal Development has responsibility for overseeing personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), including careers information, advice and guidance (CAIG). Education and citizenship.

Subject leaders are responsible for the design of a curriculum that ensures the High-TEMPO teaching, learning and assessment principles, policies and practices are in place. In addition, they must quality control and quality assure the curriculum and the delivery itself, which includes all formative and assessment practices.

Teachers are responsible for delivering High-TEMPO lessons consistently and to a high standard.

The SENDCo is responsible for promoting a whole school culture of high expectations and best practice in teaching and learning to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities. In addition, they must co-ordinate, track progress and evaluate the impact of the provision being made for learners with and/or disabilities.

9. Quality Assurance and Review

Quality assurance has several purposes:

- To demonstrate a permanent commitment to securing excellence as standard.
- To nurture a high performing culture that is built on clear expectations and consistent delivery.
- To provide senior and middle leaders with an accurate insight into the strengths and areas for improvement at the school.
- To gather information that will help improve accurate self-evaluation and inform school improvement activities.

Quality assurance can be secured through several means:

- Brief lesson visits and longer lesson observations to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
- Evaluation of short term (lesson plans) and long term (schemes of work) curriculum plans.
- Sampling of pupils' work to evaluate relationship between curriculum intentions (the scheme of work), curriculum implementation (the teaching) and its impact (pupils' work and progression) on pupil progress.
- Talking to subject leaders, teachers, pupils and parents.
- Analysis of available data on outcomes.
- Pupil pursuit of those individuals who appear to be making least social, emotional or academic progress.
- Scrutiny of existing departmental and school improvement plans.

Quality assurance ought to lead to a variety of outcomes:

- Praise and affirmation of employees, pupils and families wherever success is evident.
- Identification of short term (immediate), medium term (within four weeks) and long term (within the year) improvement goals for individual employees and departments / teams.
- Refinement of departmental and whole school improvement planning.
- Refinement of the school's self-evaluation form.

Quality assurance must be accurate and objective:

- Quality assurance leads must apply the same high standards by consistently observing lessons, speaking to individuals, evaluating documentation and interpreting data.
- Quality assurance cycles ought to end with brief and appropriate quality assurance reports to a range of audiences: the Governing Council, employees, parents and pupils.

Reviewing how we teach, how well pupils are learning and how effective assessment is cannot be undertaking on anything other than an ongoing basis with minor or more significant amendments considered at all times.