THE COTSWOLD SCHOOL – POLICY DOCUMENT

Policy: Preventing Underachievement for Key Groups
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Authorised by: Governing Body
Updated by: Mr C Edwards

NOTE: This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies: Teaching and Learning, SEND, Equalities and Attendance.

Introduction
The Cotswold School's mission statement is 'The pursuit of excellence and individual achievement within a caring community'. Therefore we have put in place strategies to identify and address underachievement, where it exists.

A significant strength of our school is that the gaps in achievement of different groups are already small, closing rapidly or better than most schools nationally. However, we recognise there is a risk of underachievement for some groups of young people when compared to their peers and that constant attention should be given to the development of staff knowledge, skills and strategies so they can take appropriate action to swiftly mitigate any possible disadvantage. The focus on mitigating disadvantage has high priority in The Cotswold School Development Plan.

Research from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) suggests that the most effective actions to close gaps in achievement are delivered through improved attendance, enhanced staff awareness and consistently excellent teaching and learning experiences including, where needed, timely additional intervention. The School is also aware of the EEF's report on the impact of the Covid19 school closures on widening the gaps and has put in place actions to address this risk.

There are some key groups of learners in our school that are monitored closely because they are more at risk of underachievement. These groups are listed below:

- Children eligible for Free School Meals currently or within the past six years (FSMe6)
- Children within the Care System (LAC/CIN)
- Children of families serving in the Armed Forces (SCP)
- Children who did not attain national benchmarks at the end of KS2
- Middle Prior Attaining boys in subject areas identified by our internal data
- Children with Special Educational Needs including those under the protection of an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)
- Children with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Children with low attendance/persistent absentees
- Children with English as an additional language
- Children from a Roma/Gypsy/Traveller background

We recognise that some children may belong to a combination of the groups listed above and that, as a result of this, may be at greater risk of underachievement than their peers. Whole-school data-tracking and assessment processes, coupled with regular teacher monitoring and team scrutiny of progress for all pupils are used to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve well at The Cotswold School.

Strategies for closing gaps include…
- Improving pupils' metacognition through specific Learning-to-Learn lessons.
- Supporting independent work and targeting pupils who have fallen behind during the Covid19 pandemic for catch-up using after-school homework "prep" club, intervention and specific catch-up lessons.
- Using assessment to target timely small group intervention.
- Summer school to improve transition of targeted Year 6 pupils from Primary school and to support Key Stage 3 pupils who have fallen behind.
- Supporting pupils and their families to improve attendance by engaging with our Educational Welfare Service (see also Attendance policy).

We expect all teachers to understand the possible risks of underachievement for these groups and to use quality first teaching processes (see examples below) to ensure that progress is secure for all pupils within their care.

1.   Teaching and Learning and Assessment Strategies

   Classroom Management
- Set clear limits and have high expectations; be strong and consistent.
- Work in close co-operation and partnership with Teaching Assistants.
- Show humour and reward good work (perhaps discreetly).
- Use a boy/girl seating plan – or be prepared to justify an alternative.
- Select work which will capture their imagination. Describe ordinary tasks in exciting ways.
- Choose and adapt resource materials carefully to ensure they are concise and avoid extraneous information.
- Share learning objectives and assessment criteria – introduce them at start of lesson, reinforce during, revisit at end. Give pupils the strategies they need to meet these objectives.
- Encourage the articulation of learning objectives and assessment criteria – to you and each other.
- Set ambitious but achievable challenges.
- Show pupils examples of good work. Articulate how these examples meet assessment criteria.
- Use concise instructions and short time frames. Use competition and short-term goals.
- Use ICT where possible.
- Think carefully about groupings – mix gender/ability/social groups.
- Use peer support for learning.
- Share assessment criteria – KS3 levels/GCSE grade criteria - with pupils at every opportunity.
- Use formative assessment to negotiate challenging but achievable short-term targets, referring to KS3 level and GCSE grade criteria.
- Use baseline data to negotiate challenging but achievable medium-term targets.
- Encourage pupil self-assessment – allow pupils to measure their work against learning/assessment objectives. Allow time for reflection and review.
- Do not confuse the quality of ideas with the quality of the handwriting.
- Give regular feedback about progress and rewards.

2.   Promote Literacy
- All teachers are literacy teachers.
- Give lists of key subject-specific vocabulary.
- Support writing with frames or scaffolds where appropriate.
- Use modelling where possible.
- Support reading and do not assume pupils can access text or written instructions.
- Check accessibility of textbooks and worksheets.
- Build a literacy strand into formative assessment and alter teaching / set targets as appropriate.

> This policy is written and administered with due regard to our duty and commitment as a school: to consider all aspects of equality and diversity.

_____ (*07/09/2020*)
Ratified by Governors and signed as such by The Chair of Governors