

PPE - Higher Quality Learning



Ensuring students understand the context and the learning expected.

The P.P.E. faculty is committed to providing students with an exciting and diverse curriculum with creative and practical learning at its heart. We understand however, that a number of dichotomies dictate what is taught and when: assessment of process vs. assessment of product, P.P.E. for wellbeing vs. P.P.E. as a discrete subject and including all vs. challenging the most able. These are notions which are carefully considered as part of curriculum mapping. Fernwood students in the lower school receive a curriculum which aims to teach foundation skills but also promote inclusion, an appreciation of the arts and sport and promote the idea that a learning journey is as valuable as an outcome. An increasing focus on performance, product and subject-specific knowledge is then built into schemes of learning and extra-curricular provision as students progress through each year group. Core P.P.E. at Key Stage 4 aims to continue the appreciation of physical activity and provide students with the skills to maintain a healthy lifestyle beyond their time at school.

Focus

Lessons in the P.P.E. faculty at Fernwood follow the four-part learning cycle. Connect activities may involve recalling knowledge from a previous lesson, providing an original idea, sharing an opinion or experience, participating in a warm-up or working practically on a short task. As new phases of the lesson begin, reference to learning objectives ensures that students understand what they are learning next and why they are learning it. New knowledge and skills are introduced and explored during the 'activate' stage before students are expected to 'demonstrate' learning by creating original work (in Drama and Music) or applying what has been developed to a competitive situation (in P.E.). The 'activate' stage may also contextualise the lesson as part of a bigger picture and refer to how new concepts relate to existing understanding. Progress is then consolidated through self and peer reflection on performance and through key questions to extend understanding and to scaffold future development. Self and peer appreciation and evaluation play an important role in P.P.E. pedagogy and differentiated potential outcomes are also integral in supporting these discussions.



Challenge

Meeting the needs of all learners in order to build confidence, provide challenge and ensure success.

Students arrive in the P.P.E. faculty with a diverse range of abilities and experiences. Our curricular and extra-curricular provision aims to support and challenge each one of them. Differentiation by task is written into medium term planning and may include, but is not limited to:

Drama: Performing with or without line prompts, devising with or without plot prompts, attempting more naturalistic or stylised drama.

Music: Playing a single hand melody or adding a left-hand accompaniment.

PE: Taking on leadership roles or being supported by others.

Teachers often model a variety of outcomes so that learners at all levels can see and hear what they are aiming to achieve. Differentiation by role is also commonplace across the faculty. Able students are given opportunities to take on key roles as part of a performance or team as well as being given leadership, directing, conducting or coaching responsibilities. Less able students may be given roles which are more accessible and opportunities to be supported by student leaders. Careful planning of groupings on a lesson by lesson basis facilitates this peer support and challenge. Differentiation is planned for but also takes place as the need presents itself during the demonstration phase of each lesson. Staff respond to student requirements and provide the appropriate intervention.

At Key Stage 4 small class sizes enable further personalisation and individual support. Triangulated data from assessment and student self-reflection (using P.L.C.s or surveys) informs future teaching as well as the creation of bespoke intervention sessions. Seating plans in Music and desk planners in Drama and P.E. are used in line with school policy to monitor pupil progress, aid planning and feedback and ensure that staff take into account the needs of all students. These are kept 'live' and are continually updated.

Extra-curricular activities are designed to ensure access for all whilst providing opportunities for the most able to develop their skills in contexts of increased pressure and competition. Each department ensures that as part of their offering all students have access to at least one inclusive and non-auditioned activity as well as the chance to perform for fee-paying audiences and/or at city and county level.



Assessment

All students know how to improve, progress is reviewed regularly and feedback supports improvement.

Staff in the P.P.E. faculty believe that practical subjects can and should be assessed both formatively and summatively through rigorous and robust systems underpinned by pedagogic research. Students do not always record written work in books but should expect regular verbal feedback during lessons and more formal written feedback at least once per unit. Practical work in Drama, Music and P.E. presents students and teachers with increased opportunities to 'close the feedback loop' through a two-way in-person dialogue during lesson time. Assessment for learning strategies at subject level include:

Drama: Work-in-progress sharing with teacher and peer feedback, reflecting on filmed work, whole class demonstration of a skill.

Music: Use of assessment grids in work booklets to record self, peer and teacher assessment feedback during ongoing work.

P.E.: Teacher feedback so students can refine skill and apply this in a competitive situation to improve performance of themselves and peers

Administration of summative assessment is similar across the three departments. Students are given an extended practical task to prepare over a number of lessons. During preparation time a work in progress reflection takes place involving self, peer and teacher feedback and agreed action points are recorded. Assessment of learning takes place as final performances or demonstrations are shared. Students receive written feedback from their teacher and achievement of assessment objectives is logged. Students are then expected to review their feedback and respond with their next steps. In Music an additional composition assessment usually takes place at the mid-point of each unit. At Key Stage 4, extended written work is submitted electronically and students receive feedback as a private comment. In GCSE PE, students complete work booklets for specific units before completing cumulative end of unit assessments then reflecting on their progress through a PLC to close the loop before moving onto the next unit. In Music, Drama and BTEC Sport the use of technology, particularly recording is used extensively for student and teacher review, to document progress and to aid in the giving of feedback.



Climate

Creating a positive climate of learning, behaviour and engagement.

Whole school behaviour policy is used consistently in every P.P.E. department. Practical subjects allow certain freedoms which may not be the case in other areas of the school so lesson specific behaviour expectations are clearly outlined and regularly revisited. It is anticipated that practical and group work will result in a higher working volume than individual written work but staff intervene if an atmosphere is not conducive to good progress. When completing an activity, students are expected to remain in a specified working area. During performance or game-play, respectful audience attitudes are explicitly taught and strictly enforced to ensure that all students can feel comfortable and confident sharing their skills. This positive, focussed and creative learning environment is promoted through setting expectations and responding if these expectations are not met, establishing mood-setting routines (for example in the use of entry music in drama or lining up in silence in P.E.) and rewarding desirable behaviour.

The P.P.E. faculty further engages its students through use of the Fernwood Award. This is used to reward high effort levels, encourage students to go 'above and beyond' and recognise achievement in lessons. Examples of where points are awarded include students achieving beyond expectation in an assessment, showing they have acted upon feedback, high effort on a particular task, acts of kindness or compassion or sustained involvement in an extra-curricular activity. Fernwood Award Points are distributed in the 6 key areas and we expect staff to award on average 3 or 4 per lesson in addition to points given for homework or assessment. Accolades and Achievements are used regularly to reward commitment to an extra-curricular club, project or performance. Accolades given will reflect the number of hours committed. Perfect award accolades are also given for exceptional work as a prefect. We believe that the 'badge' which students receive when given an accolade also acts as a visual record of their achievements and provides further motivation. Roles in productions (be they cast or crew) and places on teams are coveted and are given to students who demonstrate talent but also reliability and hard work. We recognise that the proper learning climate is also vital for a successful extra-curricular programme. We actively encourage students to use rooms and equipment in their free time to develop their skills. Staff expect our teaching spaces to be busy and 'buzzing' at lunchtime and after school, indeed, it is something we take pride in.



Fluency

Developing the language fluency and learning skills students need to access learning and make progress.

P.P.E. staff are passionate about teaching and learning and seek to engage the mind, body and emotions of Fernwood students. Topics covered are chosen to appeal to student interests as well as provide them with the skills necessary to appreciate theatre, music and physical activity beyond their time at Fernwood. Confidence, tolerance, determination, resilience, self-esteem, personal discipline and appreciation of others are just some of the attributes developed in P.P.E.'s 'hidden curriculum' and, although these attributes may not always be overtly taught, each learning activity is selected to develop these personal skills. The P.P.E. faculty believe that there is value in the process of preparation for competition or performance as well as in the product itself. For this reason, assessment objectives across all three departments reflect the need to develop desirable attributes for performers and athletes as well as the demonstration of discrete skills.

A variety of teaching approaches are used across the three departments to challenge students. Demonstration, either by the teacher, by other students or through film is important for skill-based subjects and across the faculty students learn to reproduce examples before applying skills in new contexts or with more creative freedom. Students begin with skill development, apply their skill in a discrete context then begin to apply skills in new contexts. Discovery learning is also a key pedagogic approach as students learn through reflecting on unsuccessful results.

The P.P.E. curriculum is also complimented by extensive extra-curricular provision across Drama, Music and P.E. The faculty philosophy is that curricular and extra-curricular activity is symbiotic with each supporting the success of the other. Extra-curricular activities are designed to ignite or further a passion for Drama, Music or P.E. and cater to a range of interests and abilities. The Drama and Music departments regularly collaborate on extra-curricular events such as the annual variety show and bi-annual musical, enabling students to combine artistic disciplines and staff to support each other on large scale projects. Recruitment to extra-curricular activities is proactive, especially with students belonging to under-represented groups.



Our School Intent: At Fernwood, we value the contribution all individuals make to our family. We strive for success, we support all and we nurture potential through a culture of high achievement, care and discipline.

