Aim: To embed differentiation and team-teaching in teaching and learning at Stratford College

Differentiation is defined by schools as ‘the process by which differences between learners are accommodated so that all students in a group have the best possible chance of learning’. (Training and Development Agency, UK)

Our Mission:

Stratford College aims to provide a teaching and learning community committed to quality and excellence in education.

We are dedicated to:

Providing a nurturing environment where each individual can develop self-esteem and a sense of their place in, and responsibility to, society.

Instructing Jewish students in their religion while fostering mutual respect for all traditions.

Promoting personal achievement and academic success.

Respecting the unique potential of every student and encouraging each to maximise it.

The founding values continue to inspire the school today; those of educating our students in an inclusive academic environment which seeks to foster in young people a sense of personal and academic achievement, of respect for diversity and of service to the community.
Figure 1 Overview of Stratford College Strategic Plan

Figure 2 Our Current Context
Honouring the past, valuing the present and committing to the future

In honouring the past, valuing the present and committing to the future, Stratford College seeks to provide meaningful learning opportunities for all our students.

Stratford College is committed to providing a challenging and rigorous curriculum that helps each student progress and provide a safe environment for all students. As you will see, each year aims to provide important transitions and the acquisition of new skills that will enhance each student’s ability to apply learning in many ways.

Our guiding principles are:

**Quality**: all learners will be offered a high-quality education, characterised by high expectations of the learner and the pursuit of excellence. It will aim to generate engagement and enthusiasm and encourage participation.

**Inclusive education**: the curriculum will be inclusive of all learners and contribute to the achievement of equality of opportunity, participation and outcome for all.

**Continuity**: the curriculum will build on students’ learning to date, actively support their progress in learning, and facilitate them in preparing and planning for future learning.

**Lifelong learning**: Students will develop the skills of managing and directing their own learning that will assist them in meeting the challenges of life beyond school, in further and continuing education, and in working life.
This is Us - Differentiating.

Our teaching and learning priority was established as Whole School Inclusion.

Whole School Inclusion (Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs Post-Primary Guidelines)

The goal of inclusion is not to erase or to ignore differences between individuals. Rather inclusion aims to enable all students to fully belong to the school community and to be educated within a framework in which differences between individuals are accommodated and celebrated.

With reference to the key documents below we identified the following Dimension, Domain, Standard and Statements of Effective Practice:

The Department of Education and Skills Quality Framework (post primary)

The National Council for Special Education Inclusive Education Framework,

The DES Circular on the New Model of Special Education Provision

The Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools

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**Dimension**

Teaching and Learning

**Domain 3**

Teachers Individual Practice.

**Standard 4**

The teacher responds to individual learning needs and differentiates teaching and learning activities as necessary.

**Statements of Effective Practice:**
Teachers are aware of students’ individual learning needs and adapt teaching and learning practices to help students overcome challenges.

Teachers engage with students’ opinions, dispositions, and contexts, and modify their teaching practice to build on opportunities and address any limitations that they present. (Looking at Our School 2016, A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools, p.19)

In the last academic year, we looked at teaching and learning in our school to find out what we are doing well. This is what we discovered

- Regular communication between SEN Co-Ordinator & Staff
- Continuous Professional Development in support of Whole School Inclusion 2016-18
- Engagement in the joint JCT/DES Inspectorate Step-Up CBA Project – common approach for all students & staff (2018-20)
- Team-teaching in Maths and English.
- Teachers are aware of students’ individual needs and abilities

This is what we did to find out what we were doing well, and what we could do better

Whole Staff Survey (May 2019) and regular communication between staff and in-school management confirmed that differentiation and team teaching are still relevant.

- Additional team teaching is enhancing and improving teaching and learning:
  - 2018-2019: Structural changes with additional teachers in English, Maths
  - August 2019: Increased number of teachers on the Special Education
Team (SET)

CPD assessment told us that we were at point 3 of a 6 point model of Whole School Inclusion. Student Tracking was a priority – see Actions 4, 5 and 6 below.

Action 1: Identification of students with special educational needs Review existing information on students’ needs, using school-based data, and information from primary schools, parents and external professionals. Engage in additional screening and data gathering as required, using informal and formal assessment approaches (for example, teacher observations, information on social and emotional competence, standardised tests, diagnostic tests). Identify all students with special educational needs in the school. Match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support.

Action 2: Setting targets Based on identified needs, set clear targets at Support for All, School Support and School Support Plus levels of the Continuum of Support.

Action 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for each student on the Continuum of Support. Schools should consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching, small group and individual teaching. They should also be mindful that the interventions and supports that they are using are evidence-informed.

Action 4: Organising early intervention and prevention programmes Based on identified needs, choose evidence-informed early intervention/prevention programmes to address concerns. Identify time needed and staffing commitment required.

Action 5: Organising and deploying special education teaching resources

Action 6: Tracking, recording and reviewing progress Establish a tracking and recording system, to ensure that the progress of all students in meeting their
identified targets is monitored: • At Whole-School (Support for All) level by all teachers • At the School Support (for Some ) and School Support Plus (for a Few) levels by subject teachers and special education

**Student Survey findings:**

- MAY 2018 Survey Results: 87% of students felt all or some of their teachers are aware of their needs and abilities and 13% said they were not aware.

- 83% of students feel it is either beneficial all the time or sometimes having two teachers in class, and 17% felt it was not beneficial.

- 92% of students surveyed in TY and 6th year prefer having two teachers in their English class to enhance their learning experience.

- 39% of students felt all of their teachers are aware of their needs and abilities in class, 48% felt some were and 13% said they were not aware.

- 35% of students feel it is beneficial having two teachers in class, 48% felt it was beneficial sometimes and 17% felt it was not beneficial.
This is what we are now going to work on

- Organising early intervention and prevention programmes ie
  - Further professional development in differentiation teaching strategies & peer observation of practices. Additional staff attending CPD: (1) Magenta Principles Training with Mike Hughes - with a focus on differentiation strategies (December 2019 and January 2020), (2) JCT CPD New JC Subjects December 2019 & PDST training (3) Subject Associations CPD & workshops –(ongoing).

- Organising and deploying special education teaching resources ie
  - Templates for team teaching with more SET team involvement.
  - Creation of CBA steps to success on classroom noticeboards
  - Step-Up Project - shared use of templates for teaching CBA skills via booklet
  - Differentiation Template issued to all teachers in September 2019 (as recommended by SESS for Subject Planning for all teachers: August 2019-May 2020).
  - Greater communication between in-house committees re: SSE & SIP Plan

- Establish a tracking and recording system, to ensure that the progress of all students in meeting their identified targets is monitored: • At Whole-School (Support for All) level by all teachers • At the School Support (for Some ) and School Support Plus (for a Few) ie
  - Increased communication with staff and parents/guardians through regular meetings with staff and by reporting to parents about standardised testing. E.G. CATS, DOTs

- Whole School Inclusion Policy
This is what you can do to help:

- Increase communication following standardised literacy and numeracy results.
- Continue to support your child’s learning.
Here is some information about what the Department of Education and Skills require from us.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>School Time and Holidays</strong></th>
<th>This year we have 165 school days (2 days closure for Junior Cycle Training from 24 August 2018 to 31 May 2019. Our school week is 29.9 hours.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Department requires all post-primary schools to have 167 school days each year, and a 28-hour school week.</td>
<td>This year we have 6 parent/teacher meetings and 4 staff meetings, all in line with the Departments regulations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Department sets out a standardised school year and school holidays.</td>
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</tbody>
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**Looking after the Children in our School**

The Department requires schools to follow the Child Protection Procedures it has set down. Our Board of Management has agreed in writing to do this.

All teachers know about the Procedures and we have told all parents about them and how we follow them.

Our Designated Liaison Person (DP) is: Patricia Gordon

And our Deputy DLP is: Siobhan Reynolds

**Enrolment and Attendance**

The Department requires schools to have and publish an admissions policy, to record and report attendance accurately, and to encourage high attendance and participation.

We have an admissions policy and it is published.

We will review our policy following the commencement of the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018 October 2018 and advice as relevant.

We keep accurate attendance records and report them as required.

We encourage high attendance through our Attendance Policy and Strategy.

**Positive Behaviour for a Happy School**

The Department requires schools to have a code of behaviour, and asks us to consult parents and students about it. We do this.

Our code of behaviour describes and supports positive behaviour.

We have a very clear and high profile anti-bullying policy in our school.