

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

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Rationale

'Back to Basics': A Pedagogical Model

Our 'back to basics' ethos supports an evidence informed approach to teaching and CPD in which the students in our care can thrive – there are no gimmicky ideas here. We will continue to shape our teaching around what research evidence says is most likely to work. By 'hold[ing] fast that which is good' our teaching will embrace that which makes the most use of our time with students, resulting in great learning, every lesson, every day.

Purpose

Through our teaching, students (especially those in priority groups) will make significant academic progress and achieve strong academic outcomes. This gives our students the best possible life chances. Students will value their learning and develop a range of skills, including: study skills (such as retrieval practice, spaced practice), non-cognitive skills (such as perseverance, collaboration), metacognitive skills (such as planning, acting on feedback).

Academic research shows that certain principles underpin the planning and delivery of effective lessons. When used consistently, they improve the quality of teaching and the quality of the curriculum over time. In 'Making Every Lesson Count' Allison and Tharby (2015) outline 6 core pedagogical principles of expert teaching based on robust evidence and practical wisdom. It is these 6 pedagogical principles, and the Teachers' Standards, which underpin our teaching and learning policy.

With careful thought and consideration of these principles, classroom delivery will support the curriculum aims and ethos outlined in the 'Curriculum Statement'. Students will encounter a consistent approach across their lessons e.g. high levels of challenge; probing questions; time to engage with deliberate practice etc. Students will learn well, have high aspirations of what they can achieve and develop into assured and persevering learners.

These six principles are not an arbitrary tick list to be used in each lesson but are rather the basic foundation of an effective approach to teaching over time. In order that departments can focus on how these principles are best implemented to present subject and lesson specific concepts in the most effective way to students, we have fortnightly department CPD sessions. These frequent subject planning and development sessions (SPDS) are an opportunity to focus on high quality discussions on implementing the principles and considering these questions:

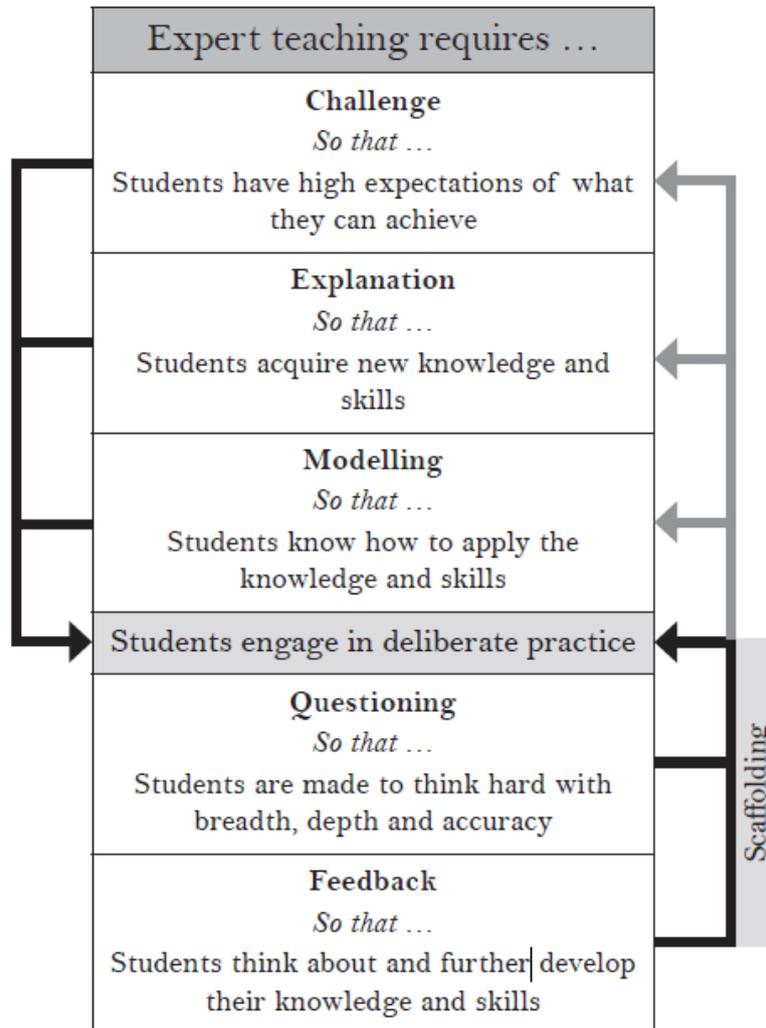
- What is the subject content I am to teach students in front of me?
- How can the principles and their supporting strategies come into play?

Discussions about high quality teaching and learning across the school have focussed on these principles over the past two years, and will continue to do so. Within departments, subject CPD has centred around these principles and it is a natural progression to formally outline them in the revised teaching and learning policy so that we have a common language and understanding of what makes outstanding teaching.

Implementation

Our agreed principles of effective delivery

At STS, lessons are based on the six principles of challenge, explanation, modelling, feedback, questioning and deliberate practice. This underpins everything we do in the classroom and is summarised in the following diagram, designed by Shaun Allison and Andy Tharby (2015).



@shaun_allison

<http://classteaching.wordpress.com>

This is supported by positive classroom climates and relationships built on routines, mutual respect and high expectations of all. Further information on classroom management is outlined in the 'Behaviour Management' policy.

By its very nature, teaching is a creative profession, so whilst these are our agreed principles of effective teaching, teachers have the freedom to implement them appropriately for their subject and the students in front of them.

Allison and Tharby (2015, pp 269-272) provide a useful planning and reflection tool to aid planning in relation to the 6 pedagogical principles.

Each principle is explained in more detail overleaf.

Challenge *'So that students have high expectations of what they can achieve.'*

- When considering how teachers approach a lesson, challenge is about providing students with difficult work that makes them think deeply and engage in a healthy struggle. We should have high expectations of all students.
- Challenge is all too often seen as providing for the 'most able' students. It is important that teachers plan lessons that allow for all students to work just outside of their comfort zone because this is when they are likely to learn the most.
- We should set the bar high for all students to challenge them to aspire to reach the learning intentions. It is then our responsibility to be responsive during the lesson to provide students with the necessary support and scaffolding to reach the learning goal.
- Have a single challenging learning objective and then think about what each individual student needs to achieve it. Students may have different starting points but should aspire to the learning objective and a teacher is responsive in helping them to work towards this with, for example, focused questioning.

Explanation *'So that students acquire new knowledge and skills.'*

- Recent evidence suggests that high quality teacher talk is one of the key ingredients to students achieving excellence. It is a two-way process, where we interact with those in front of us to continually shape our explanations to ensure they have the greatest impact. It should be used effectively as a hook to stimulate curiosity, to correct misconceptions and to build knowledge, skills and understanding. Three key ingredients should guide explanations:
 1. They are linked to something students already know
 2. They are delivered in short, manageable chunks for students to grasp
 3. They aim to make complex, abstract ideas simpler to understand

Modelling *'So that students know how to apply the knowledge and skills.'*

- In order for students to learn how to do something, they need to be able to watch the expert as they guide them through the process, step by step. By modelling writing, thinking and subject-specific language, students know what is possible and how to apply the knowledge, skills and understanding they have been taught. Modelling falls into two main categories:
 1. Live modelling of the creation of products/procedures
This involves the teacher showing the children how to do something while simultaneously describing what they are doing and explaining why they are doing it. Modelling slows down the process so it can be seen clearly. By discussing how/why you are doing each step as you're creating it, you can question students and also demonstrate that expert learners modify, improve or correct a process AS they undertake it. This supports the development of students' planning, self-monitoring and self-evaluation skills.
 2. Pre-prepared models
Deconstruct expert examples and use worked examples, giving students an opportunity to discuss it. Students should have high quality models that benchmark excellence in your subject.

Practice *'So that students can recall knowledge effortlessly.'*

- In order for students to learn, they need to consolidate and practise knowledge, skills and understanding. Practice needs to be regular in order to encourage retention ('practice makes permanent') and also promote independence. There are two types of practice to consider:
 1. Practice for fluency and long-term retention – repeating things in order to master them; coming back to things in subsequent lessons etc. A range of strategies can be used to assess and improve retention of knowledge, for example, multiple-choice questions, low-stakes quizzes and students will be taught how to use learning strategies such as retrieval practice and spaced practice.
 2. Deliberate practice – so that students think deeply and eventually achieve fluency. By monitoring students carefully, we can make decisions on whether to increase the level of independence as their confidence and fluency increase.
- Homework should provide students with the opportunity to practise, embed, extend upon or apply the knowledge that they have been taught in lessons, or provide the opportunity to improve a piece of work.

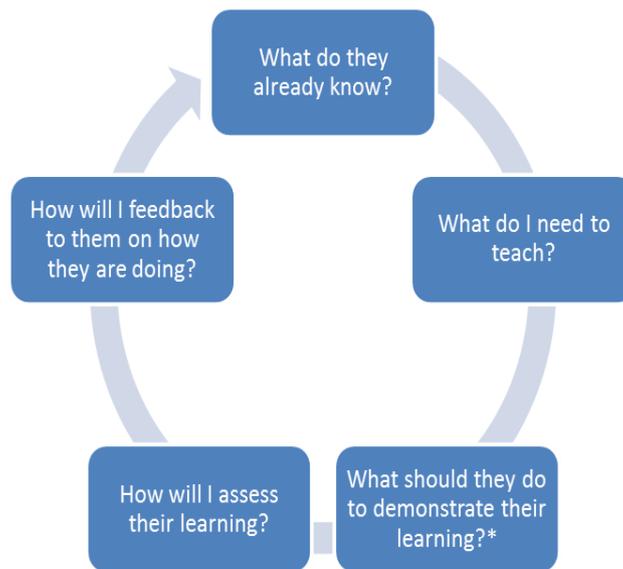
Questioning *'So that students are able to think hard with breadth, depth and accuracy.'*

- Deep and careful questioning is essential so that students are made to think hard with breadth, depth and accuracy. Asking both lower and higher cognitive questions embeds and develops knowledge.

- Prior knowledge can also be determined through questioning, enabling appropriate challenge to be determined whilst also checking understanding. This in turn informs future teaching.
- The more that we embed a culture of good questioning in our classrooms, the more we develop high levels of academic rigour, which leaves less chance of knowledge being unchallenged, and the better our students will learn.
- Questioning allows teachers to deepen and develop students understanding. Teachers should embed a culture where simple or incomplete answers are not accepted, we should dig deep for more. At the same time if we want our students to think deeply, we must allow them the time to think.
- Questioning works to enhance the other principles of explanation and modelling.
- Some questions can be planned for but some should be responsive to what is happening in the lesson. When considering planned questions, they should be to:
 1. Check for understanding
 2. Provoke deeper thinking
 3. Increase the ratio of participation and thinking of all students

Feedback ‘So that students think about and further develop their knowledge and skills.’

- Students need to be provided with timely and precise feedback so that they think about and develop further their knowledge, skills and understanding. Feedback should close the learning gap and/or move students forward. Feedback happens regularly in the classroom though teacher questioning, live marking, discussion and peer feedback.
- It is important to plan how you will give feedback during/after lessons and – for this feedback to be meaningful -how you will allow students to respond to this feedback. This is supported by the ‘Feedback to Support Learning’ policy. Feedback is a two-way process and the teacher should use the students’ feedback to inform future planning.



*This can include any of the following: classroom activities, classwork, homework and (where appropriate) coursework.

- In order that students become critical and reflective learners, we need to make sure that they move beyond acting on feedback, to actively searching out feedback.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Termly teaching and learning monitoring that involves a combination of: development observations, learning walks, book looks, data analysis and student voice. The schedule can be found [here](#).
- A performance management objective linked to the teaching principles.
- The attendance and evaluation of SPDS (subject planning and development sessions) that are consistent and have an unrelenting focus on subject and pedagogy development.
- Wednesday afternoon T&L briefings.
- Lesson visits (including Staff Shout Outs).
- Homework data through SIMs/Edulink.
- Tracking point data.

It is the responsibility for all staff to implement this policy as detailed below:

Subject Teachers

Teachers should have access to and record the following information for their classes:

- identified students with additional needs (this includes Pupil Premium, English as an Additional Language and Special Educational Needs);
- prior attainment and target data;
- assessment marks (Homework, class work, tests, etc);
- work covered and Homework set;
- seating plans.

Teachers should plan thoroughly and consider:

- learning objectives and success criteria;
- consideration of the principles to be employed and the level of challenge so as to maximise student learning;
- use of Teaching Assistants where relevant;
- student baseline data and other available information (e.g. IEPs);
- Homework;
- development of the students' Literacy and Numeracy and Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) awareness;
- Health and Safety.

To inform planning, teachers should regularly assess the performance of students, as detailed in the 'Assessment and Reporting Policy'.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to constantly seek to improve subject knowledge and teaching skills in order to inspire, motivate and enthuse the students. In order to do this the teacher should be self-aware and constantly evaluate their own performance in consultation with their Line Manager. Opportunities for Continuing Professional Development should be actively sought wherever possible.

The teacher should be aware of the Health and Safety issues relating to the delivery of their subject in accordance with whole school and departmental policies. In the event of a fire/lockdown/shelter alert, the teacher should follow the established school procedures.

Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistants should support the learning of students with identified additional needs, as described in the Special Educational Needs Policy and liaise with the subject teacher in order to maximise the sharing of information and ensure their skills are being used to an optimum.

Head of Department

The Head of Department has responsibility for overseeing the improvement of their subject. To do this they should:

- lead on the subject specific professional development of their team by overseeing and leading the SPDS for their department;
- follow the annual teaching and learning monitoring schedule to monitor and evaluation teaching and learning;
- follow the annual line management meetings overview which places teaching and learning at the heart of line management discussions;
- set and review targets that will enhance performance as part of the Performance Management process.

Assistant Headteacher (Teaching and Learning)

The Assistant Headteacher should drive improvement of the teaching and learning of individual staff, across subjects, and the whole teaching staff by:

- offering advice/guidance to the Heads of Department and Line Managers as they seek to support and improve subject performance;
- leading on teaching and learning briefings;
- organising external training;
- organising whole-school internal training where appropriate;
- organising internal coaching opportunities;
- seeking good practice in other local schools that could be shared;
- disseminating information that individuals have gained from training;
- reporting on teaching and learning monitoring so that staff and governors can evaluate progress;
- organising the whole-school development observation programme;
- identifying and acting on individual, subject and whole-school training/coaching needs and planning.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is ultimately responsible for Teaching and Learning at STS and works closely with the Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Department and the Assistant Headteacher (Teaching and Learning). The Headteacher will undertake lesson observations as part of the whole-school observation process and, in particular, will observe all Newly Qualified Teachers once during their induction period. The Headteacher reports to the Governing Body about the standards of Teaching and Learning within the school and, with representatives of the Governing Body and the School Improvement Partner, sets challenging targets for the school in order to raise standards, ultimately, via high quality teaching and learning.

Governors

The Governing Body will review the regular reports from the Headteacher about standards. The Governors' Learning and Development Team receives presentations from subject leaders regarding progress in their subjects.

Links to other policies/documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Assessment and Reporting Policy
- Curriculum Statement
- Examination Procedure
- Feedback to Support Learning Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Homework Policy
- Literacy Policy
- Numeracy Policy
- Sandwich Technology Achievements and Rewards Scheme
- SMSC and British Values Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Staff Development Guidelines
- Student Behaviour Management Policy