Teaching and Learning policy

Ramsey Grammar School

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RGS Teaching and Learning Policy
"Start with the end in mind"

Rationale

At Ramsey Grammar School we believe learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun and encourage curiosity. A positive classroom climate, professional competence and strong parental support will help to sustain highly effective learning. The behaviours in every classroom should reflect and support the Ramsey Grammar School 'Way of Being'.

The purpose of this document is to guide and influence classroom practice at Ramsey Grammar School. This document should be referred to regularly in planning and discussion with colleagues about the teaching and learning that goes on in our school.

It is our shared expectation that all teachers will, as a minimum, meet the current Professional Standards for Teachers and this policy is intended to support the development of very effective and inspirational teaching and learning.

Aims and Purpose

By acting upon this policy we aim to:

- Secure high-quality teaching and learning consistently throughout the school
- Encourage the sharing and development of very effective and inspirational practice
- Foster the development of students with enquiring minds who want to learn more each day
- To build knowledge, positive attitudes, skills and learning habits (KASH) in students so they develop independence, confidence, flexibility and the ability to cooperate with others
- Promote pride in achievement, resilience in learning and a desire to succeed
- Develop and sustain effective links between the school, the student's home and the community which promote aspiration and high expectations

Definitions

Great Teaching at RGS (devised and agreed by staff and students in 2018) (see Appendix A)
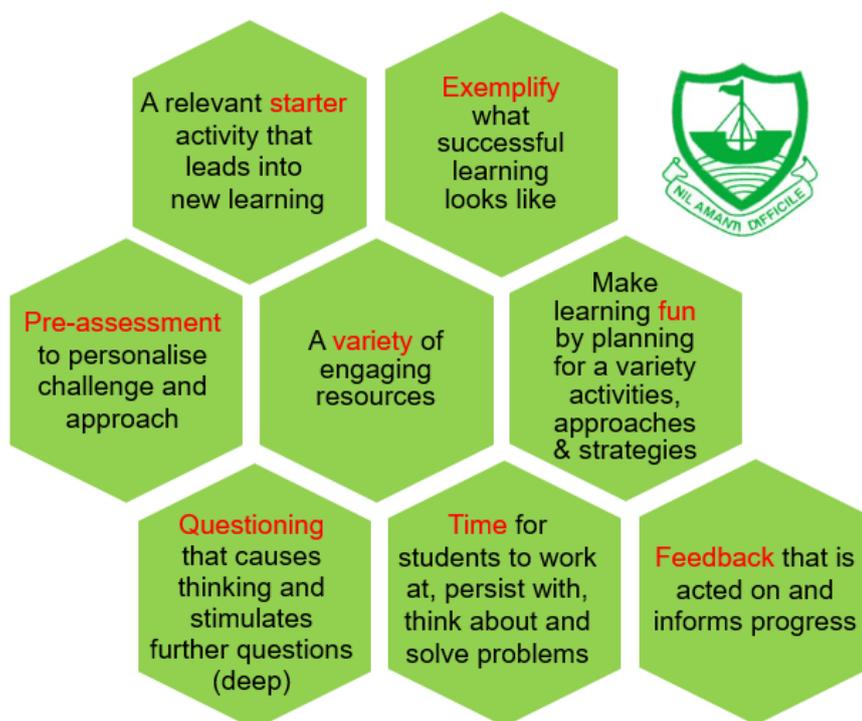
Effective Teaching	Very Effective Teaching
I explain things confidently and clearly	I model thinking like a researcher
I have secure curriculum knowledge	I frequently show students that I am learning
I ask probing diagnostic questions	I challenge students to formulate questions
I build variety and change of pace into lessons	I vary activities to develop different learning capacities
I respond to students' learning preferences	I work to broaden the student's repertoire

Very Effective Learning at RGS

We believe that learning is best when students' are actively **using acquired skills** to apply or **process new information**. We aim to deepen understanding by **establishing connections** between what is already known and new information.

Students learn best when:
- They are **happy and treated with respect**
- They are given a **wide range of learning experiences** and stimuli
- Feedback provides a balance of **support and challenge**
- Lessons are led with **unceasing enthusiasm**
- The environment is **well-ordered and stimulating**

The **process** by which very effective and inspirational teaching may be sustained is summarised in the diagram below which emphasises the need for clear **pre-assessment** of student starting points and progress before **planning** for specific challenge and **teaching** in a manner that focusses of student progress before **assessing** actual progress and **re-planning**.

How will we achieve our aims? (see Appendix B and F)

We base our approach to Teaching and Learning on the principles of Teaching Backwards which has been our influence since being introduced during 2016/2017. The '**Teaching Backwards Topic Planner Guide'** provides the essential considerations for staff planning topics and learning sequences. It's completion is not intended to be mandatory however the sequence should be observable in lessons and lesson sequences.
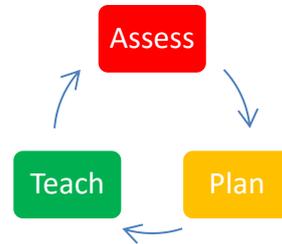
The FACE model sets out the Big Four components of outstanding teaching.

(From Outstanding Teaching: Teaching Backwards, Mark Burns INSET 2016)

1   CHALLENGE
Differentiation:
- *Teacher's planning will take account of individual differences including those referenced in the SEN Register and employ appropriate strategies for differentiation based on **pre-assessment** of students.*
The PIT:
- Effective and quality **questioning** will promote deeper thinking and understanding of concepts.
Growth Mindset:
- *We will praise and reward students and value **effort** to help to build growth mindsets and positive attitudes towards school and lifelong learning.*

This means that staff will conduct activities to:
- **Pre-assess to be clear about what students already know and can already do**
- **Establish learning intentions that are highly personalised, affect deep thinking and maximise student progress**
- **Ensure that questioning allows staff to probe, reinforce and extend understanding**
- **Establish maximum effort as non-negotiable aspect of learning.**

2   ENGAGEMENT
Clarity:
- *Learning intentions will be explicit. Success criteria / Learning intentions will be explored, students will be shown **what 'success' looks like***
Intrinsic Motivation**:**
- *The **purpose** of learning will be clear to students*
FLOW:
- *Students will be **absorbed** in their learning*

This means that staff will:
- **Exemplify the destination (excellence) by unpicking learning intentions**
- **Provide examples and go beyond simply stating intended outcomes**
- **Explicitly achieve 'buy-in' from students by linking current learning to exam requirements, employability, lifelong learning and links to other subjects**
- **Maintain a purposeful learning environment where students are doing most of the thinking and caught in the 'flow' of learning**

3   FEEDBACK
Assessment:
- *Expected **progress will be clear**, defined and individualised for all students*
- *Teachers will know how many students and which students/groups make expected progress*
- *Teachers will know which students are making exactly which gains in KASH*
Pupil voice:
- **Student feedback** will be routinely used to plan lessons and schemes of work and to influence pedagogical choices
The GAP:
- Teachers and students will be clear about the learning gaps between current position and what success looks like
- Teachers and students will be clear about how to close learning gaps
- *Feedback impacts upon student progress (**closes the learning gaps**)*

This means that staff will:
- **Have devised assessments that are formative**
- **Follow-up assessments making sure students are clear about what they need to do in order to make progress**
- **Have systematic processes to gather student feedback about their learning experiences and ensure this impacts upon staff planning**
- **Feedback will lead to evidence of students improving their outcomes based on the principle that feedback must followed by specific student action eg DIRT**

4   **AUTOMONY**

Meta-cognition:

- *We will maximise impact on student progress by using research based strategies regarding **metacognition***

Independence:

- *Students will be clear about the criteria for success in the lesson. They will be able to "start with the end in mind"*
- *Students will know how the current learning relates to previous learning and what may be the next stage*
- *Students will be able to explain confidently and clearly what they have learned and why*
- *Students will have the **KASH** to make their next transition in learning, education and life*
- *Autonomy will be evident in a state of inter-dependence between students and teachers*

Resilience:

- *Students will view feedback as an opportunity for learning growth*
- *Teachers will plan for and integrate opportunities for students to **act on feedback** received to sustain progress*

This means that staff will:

- **Explicitly model the thinking process when completing learning activities. This may take the form of I do, we do, you do.**
- **Be clear about the knowledge required to 'master' specific learning sequences**
- **Model and promote the required attitudes to succeed**
- **Specifically develop, practice and apply subject and core skills and over time contribute to students developing more effective learning habits**
- **Develop student autonomy observed in their ability to stick at difficult thinking, ask appropriate questions to get support that they need and respond positively to feedback from staff and peers**

Student Services and Support (SS&S) (see SEN Policy and RGS COLI)

SS&S is at the centre of our support for the learning and well-being of all students at RGS. Student need is assessed during transition and during the year a referral system is in place led by the appropriate Head of Year. This enables students to receive a support package specialising in a high impact provision linked to their needs and mainstream requirements. SS&S creates an area within the school that focus' on support for all, whilst driving forward an inclusive environment that ensures all students get the opportunity to succeed. The principal aim of SS&S is to provide a stimulating, challenging and caring environment, which allows each child to develop to their full potential educationally, physically, socially and personally. Universal support at RGS is provided by mainstream staff guided by their own assessment information and with reference to the Communications (SEN) Register. Some students will require additional support and this may be provided by Teaching Assistants (SESO) in class or in some circumstances through withdrawal. When working with students, teaching assistants aim to develop increasing student independence and this will be informed by the MITA self-scaffolding framework (see appendix D and E).

Homework (full Homework Policy review 2021/2022)

Work to be completed outside of lessons will be planned and reviewed under the guidance of Team/Subject leaders at the same time as schemes of work and should support the Teaching Backwards framework. Due consideration will be to the SEN register and associated differentiation requirements. Homework will be purposeful, directly contribute to students reaching their intended learning outcomes and should engage students through a degree of choice, particularly in KS3.

Feedback

Basic Requirements for the Feedback

• Feedback should be diagnostic in nature and provide opportunities for the student to understand and apply feedback to improve their progress

• Feedback can be carried out in the forms of teacher feedback, teacher oral feedback, self-feedback and peer feedback.

• Formative comments should be given that show what has been done well and what still needs improvement and shows pupils how to improve their performance and move them on in their learning

• Over the course of a term when marked work is returned to a class **DIRT time should be set aside to allow each student to respond to the teacher's comments and improve their understanding**

• All teachers should have a common approach to feedback SPaG. Important and significant errors should be corrected

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar
The following standard codes should be used across all subject areas:
Sp = in the margin and the word underlined or highlight incorrect spelling. Spelling error, students should be encouraged to learn their corrected spellings.
Gr = grammatical error
P = punctuation needed
// = new paragraph needed

Frequency of Feedback
• The type and extent of written feedback will vary from subject to subject, though TSLs should ensure that all teachers complete the minimum assessed work requirement for their subject (see ARRP)
• Marking that provides no constructive feedback is not required
• No ticking of work is required
• Live marking in lesson can be efficient and effective to clarify next steps in learning

Oral Feedback
• Can be effective feedback and does not require additional notation purely for monitoring purposes.

Targets and Levels
• All students should have target level or grade noted as a point of reference
• All students should have assessment criteria for formal assessed work
• All students must have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve after each piece of assessed work

How assessment pieces should be marked
At the end of each assessment, the teacher needs to give as a minimum:
• A level or grade (depending on key stage) with the opportunity to indicate whether the student is on, below or above target
• Identify strengths of the piece of work. Marking should be as encouraging and positive as possible
• Prompt specific improvement that increases progress

Evaluation and Professional Development
Teachers will reflect on lessons as they affected the whole class and individuals, and the evaluation that flows from this will inform future planning and practice.
Key questions for individual staff to ask themselves after each lesson:

What have students learned? How do I know? Where must learning go next?

Team leaders will continuously monitor members of their team both formally and informally and may include lesson observation, book looks, student survey and professional discussions.
Teams will engage in the self-evaluation and review processes including the requirement for an evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
Whole school self-review and evaluation processes will gather evidence from students, staff and parents about their experience of teaching and learning in conjunction with evidence gathered from subject monitoring. The findings of the self-review processes will feed into subsequent School Improvement Plan.
Whole school monitoring processes are outlined in school self-review documentation and will be subject to further review in light of the outcomes of the DESC school self-review 'Task-Finish' group planned for March 2022.

Lesson Observation
In order to develop very effective teaching, we believe in formative lesson observation and not judgements of individual lessons. Some consideration may be given regarding the likely effectiveness of learning if the lesson observed was 'typical' however lesson observation will be used as a stimulus for professional discussion.
Teachers will commit to the development of a culture of sharing with colleagues in order to facilitate professional discussion about personal and professional development. One of the most effective ways to develop our practice is through observation of colleagues. The challenge of observation is finding the time away from our own

teaching commitment to observe and follow-up. The Senior Leadership Team will support observation and follow-up development opportunities by providing Team Release cover and integrating 'Lesson study' approaches in the CPD schedule. Technology may be used to enhance the impact of observations on learning in our classrooms, for example to record lessons as the basis for professional development conversations. Lesson observation forms one part of the self-review cycle and will usually be focused upon engagement and teaching to support individual, Team and School improvement. Lesson observation resources are available on Teams.

Sharing of great things
School Self Review and Evaluation will identify very effective and inspirational teaching across the school. It is a key priority to share and develop this excellent practice.

Teaching & Learning on Teams
In the Teaching & Learning channel of RGS All Staff team, staff may find and make contributions including:

- Top Tips
- Useful resources
- Exemplar material
- Teachmeet blog

Meetings
Teaching and learning should be our highest priority and as such it should be a standing agenda item at subject team meetings. The agenda item may invite discussion, sharing of strategies, demonstrations or planning of resources for example and outcomes of subsequent development should always be measurable by impacts on learning in classrooms.

Role of parents
We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping their children to learn. Academic Review Days, Information Evenings and the reporting cycle provide opportunities to establish relationships and encourage dialogue with parents to inform and support them in how they can help further their children's learning and confidence at school. It is an expectation that subject staff and Team Leaders will contact and maintain communication with families in order to promote and sustain very effective learning.

Appendix A: RGS Way of Working

Appendix B: Expectations in Teaching and Learning Big 4

Big 4	What is expected
Challenge	• Pre-assessment activity • Learning intentions that are highly personalised, affect deep thinking and maximise student progress • Effective questioning that probes, reinforce and extends understanding • Maximum effort established as non-negotiable aspect of learning
Engagement	• Destination (excellence) is exemplified by unpicking learning objectives, providing examples and going beyond simply stating intended outcomes • Student 'buy-in' linking current learning to exam requirements, employability, lifelong learning and links to other subjects for example • Purposeful learning environment. Behaviour is well managed • Students doing most of the thinking and they will be 'on task'
Feedback	• Assessments are formative • Following assessments students are clear about what they need to do in order to make progress • Feedback will lead to evidence of students improving their outcomes • Feedback is followed by specific student action. Planning may and should incorporate this into lesson time • Staff will have systematic processes to gather student feedback about their learning experiences and this will impact upon staff planning
Autonomy	• Staff explicitly model the thinking process when completing learning activities eg. I do, we do, you do • Staff will be clear about the knowledge required to 'master' specific learning sequences • Staff model and promote the required attitudes to succeed • Staff specifically develop, practice and apply subject and core skills and over time contribute to students developing more effective learning habits In students • Students will demonstrate the ability to stick at difficult thinking, ask appropriate questions to get support that they need • Students will respond positively to feedback from staff and peers

Appendix C: Expected Adult Behaviours

RGS Way of Being	Adult Behaviours
Respect	• Say "Please" and "Thankyou" • Act in a respectful way even in difficult situations
Responsibility	• Be responsible for the impact that your behaviours have • Plan learning based on pre-assessment of students
Fairness	• Treat every student with the same values • Give recognition to the 'hidden middle' students
Community	• Be interested in every student in your form and in your class • Develop an ethos of support in your classroom
Kindness	• Smile and greet students at the start of each lesson • Make the people that you meet feel better for meeting you
Trustworthiness	• Be clear and consistent • Follow through what you say you will do

Appendix D: Self Scaffolding approach adopted by SS&S and applied by Teaching Assistants

Self-scaffolding: pupil planning, problem solving and reviewing

Prompting: wait time (10 secs); verbal *('What's your plan?'* *'What do you think you should do?')*; gesture to a useful resource

Clueing: statement *('It's a grey mammal')* or a question *('What goes on the top right-hand side of your page?')*

Modelling: demonstrate *('I am…')*, then they have a go

Correcting: avoid giving answers or telling them what to do next

Our Self-Scaffolding Approach at RGS

Strategy	TA Says	TA Does	Student	Teacher says	Teacher does
Self-Scaffolding (a certain amount of 'struggle' is essential)	• "Well done for sticking at it" • "What did you do that helped you?" • "Would you do this differently next time? Why? How?"	• Observe & listen to student/s as to which strategies they use • Provide a prompt sheet reminding of self-scaffolding strategies • Recognise signs that support is really needed • Physically remove yourself eg. Circulate & work with others • Highlights positive • Praise resilience • Encourage student to review success and challenge what they would do differently	Gives it a go	• "Well done for sticking at it" • "What did you do that helped you?" "Would you do this differently next time? Why? How?"	• Explain task thoroughly • Observe & listen to student/s as to which strategies they use • Provide a prompt sheet reminding of self-scaffolding strategies • Recognise signs that support is really needed • Highlights positive • Praise resilience • Encourage student to review success and challenge what they would do differently
Prompting (access prior knowledge or similarity of task; build self-confidence; not task specific)	• Use "You" & "Think" • "You have to think about what to do next" • "What do you think you could do?" • "What is your plan?" • "I'm not sure; can you remember what the teacher said?" • "So you're not sure … how could you work it out?"	• Give time for student to think of strategies to use (5-10 secs) • Resist the temptation to say or do something • Verbal prompt for student to think some more & reassure – open Q's • Prompt sheet – 'What to do when you don't know what to do' • Non-verbal cue to resource eg. Prompt, poster • Silence-gesture-verbal prompt • Prompts are general and refer to deployment of strategies	Is supported to try and to access what they already know	• Use "You" & "Think" • "You have to think about what to do next" • "What do you think you could do?" • "What is your plan?" • "Can you remember what I said?" • "So you're not sure … how could you work it out?"	• Give time for student to think of strategies to use (5-10 secs) • Resist the temptation to say or do something • Verbal prompt for student to think some more & reassure – open Q's • Prompt sheet – 'What to do when you don't know what to do' • Non-verbal cue to resource eg. Prompt, poster • Silence-gesture-verbal prompt • Prompts are general and refer to deployment of strategies
Clueing (give a piece of information / hint; a bigger task specific nudge than prompting!)	• "Do you remember …?" • "It's a grey mammal" • "What goes at the start of a sentence?"	• Start with a small clue • Word clues as questions • React to the specific task being done • Refer to resource in room • Put responsibility on student to give answer	Uses a bit of extra information given about the specific task	• "Come on you remember" • "It's a grey mammal" • "What goes at the start of a sentence?"	• Start with a small clue • Word clues as questions • React to the specific task being done • Refer to resource in room • Put responsibility on student to give answer
Modelling (show what to do in easy replicable steps)	• "I", "I am …" • "Oh so you …"	• Provide simultaneous commentary ('script') • Speak in the first person • Recast ie. repeat student's words but in the correct form • Make sure student is actively watching and listening	Repeats the steps modelled to embed it as a strategy	• "I", "I am …) • "Oh so you …"	• Provide simultaneous commentary ('script') • Speak in the first person • Recast ie. repeat student's words but in the correct form • Make sure student is actively watching and listening • Use short, clear steps

		• Use short, clear steps • NOT just doing the work for the student! • Use only if sure prompting or clueing won't work • Use if student is unaware of error • Make sure students try asap after modelling			• NOT just doing the work for the student! • Use only if sure prompting or clueing won't work • Use if student is unaware of error • Make sure students try asap after modelling
Correcting (last resort! Don't leap into correcting!)		• Give student the answer • Tell student how to do something	Makes little progress towards independent learning (autonomy)		• Give student the answer Tell student how to do something

Teaching backwards is a journey that starts with the end very clearly in mind. It is the *destination* that gives the *teaching backwards* process its structure.

Step 1 – Setting High Expectations

The best teachers create high expectations of their learners. It's fundamental to the teaching backwards process. This is impossible to achieve unless the teacher

(a) holds those high expectations and (b) becomes expert in moving each learner's expectations upwards. They achieve this through a combination of training and modelling. They model the knowledge, attitudes, skills and habits that they want their learners to adopt especially around striving to create the highest quality work possible. They train learners to become more resilient, more open to feedback and to hold growth mindsets about their own improvement as learners. Only when a teacher can transform learners' expectations of themselves from low or average to high is great progress possible.

Step 2 – Starting Points

Pre-assessment is one of the most valuable tools in the excellent teachers' toolkit. It saves you time and energy by helping you discover where your learners currently are and what has to be done to get them to the desired destination.

Ideally this will be the KASH criteria of Level 1a. Accurate pre-assessment shows you that you don't need to train your learners in all aspects of the criteria. It gives you quality feedback on what they currently can and can't do. This is the beauty of Teaching Backwards: if you've accurately pre-assessed their starting points and developed a plan to close the gaps you won't need to waste time developing elements of KASH they already have. Only when the starting points are accurately known can you map out a course to close whatever gaps exist between them and the final destination for which you and they are aiming.

Step 3 – Defining and Demystifying Destinations

Teachers who are clear about the destinations of their learners, and the steps they need to take to get there, are more successful than other teachers. First, they need to acquire clarity for themselves. In so doing, these teachers get greater clarity about what passes as high quality work and high quality explanation. Once they achieve this, they can transfer this clarity to their learners as they 'unpick' and deconstruct the learning with them. A model we suggest is the 'Blue Peter' presenter, one who shows learners what they are aiming at upfront. The classroom is not a democracy and it's not for learners to determine what does and what doesn't constitute high quality work. But your classroom shouldn't be a dictatorship either. Getting learners to wrestle with different notions of quality in different ways both before and during the learning process helps them to become clearer about how they can move towards making their work the best it can be.

Step 4 – Looking for Proof of Learning

Thinking like a detective can help teachers become better at proving that learning has taken place. Detectives know that they need to gather hard evidence to create the level of proof required to secure a conviction. Similarly teachers need to distinguish between weak and robust forms of evidence so they can articulate the progress of each learner in their class. When teachers improve their skills of questioning, listening, and being harder to fool they gather better proof that learners are on track or not. The best teachers are like the best detectives. When they're able to put aside their egos and the need to be right they get a far quicker and more accurate picture of what's really

going on. This feedback can help them to adapt their teaching accordingly, just as detectives will adapt their investigations when new evidence comes to light.

Step 5 – Challenge

Challenge lies at the heart of effective learning and it is the essential fifth step in the teaching backwards process. Without challenge learners won't have the opportunity to stretch their potential or get excited about developing their knowledge, understanding and skills to reach their learning destinations. As learners grapple with the task in hand, carefully designed challenges offer the teacher the opportunity to gather accurate feedback about which aspects of the new learning their class have mastered and which parts they still need to improve. Challenge helps the teacher to expose any learning gaps the class may still have. Research shows that high levels of challenge raise standards, get learners into the flow, and support them to apply their learning across different contexts and crucially remember it.

Step 6 – Feedback

The final step in teaching backwards is feedback. This is the feedback that helps learners to close whatever gaps exist between where they currently are and the destination that they are aiming at. At level 1a, teachers are able to give learners timely feedback to help them close these gaps. Given a ratio of 1:30 giving and receiving such feedback might seem impossible. Yet teachers who teach backwards achieve it by training their classes in the necessary skills and habits so that learners are able to give high quality feedback to themselves, each other and to their teacher.

If feedback is to be effective, it has to be accurate, but it also has to be delivered and received well. Making time to develop this skill step-by-step is essential. The first of these steps is to model how to give high quality feedback. Another is to ensure that feedback is kind, specific, and helpful. As learners' skills develop, the teacher can introduce activities such as 'be the teacher' to give learners more responsibility for assessing the work of others. Finally, in the context of today's fast paced world, it's also essential to develop the habit of slowing down in the classroom so that learners can benefit from the pedagogical necessity of pausing and reflecting on the verbal and written feedback they receive, and on the overall progress they are making.