The Royal School Dungannon

Teaching & Learning Policy

1. **Teaching & Learning / Learning & Teaching**

Learning is the primary objective of the school, and teaching is the principal means of securing that goal.

The overall aim at RSD is to inculcate a love of learning and the good habits which enable pupils to take forward their learning both during their time at school and thereafter. The focus is upon understanding how learning takes place. For teachers, this provides a structure for planning schemes of work and lessons. For pupils, it provides a rationale for how best to approach their studies. A shared understanding helps pupils and teachers to share the responsibility for ensuring that learning takes place. There is a commitment at RSD to:

- Creating positive pupil/teacher relationships.
- Providing a good learning environment where pupils feel comfortable contributing and are stimulated by the resources on offer.
- Encouraging positive pupil behaviours and correcting disruptive behaviours.
- Providing clear and precise knowledge in a sensible sequence so that pupils' understanding can develop over time.
- Providing opportunities to practise key skills within and across subjects.
- Building pupil engagement by requiring pupils to think about the precise issues which need to be understood, linked together and remembered.
- Creating high expectations by stretching and challenging pupils in their thinking and understanding.
- Encouraging pupils to accept that mistakes and faulty thinking are a natural part of learning and that taking risks in their thinking is worthwhile.
- Encouraging pupils to take responsibility for improving their understanding by working hard and using teacher feedback.
- Helping pupils to develop effective study skills and the capacity to learn independently.

2. The Research

The science of the art of teaching is a central focus of international research as educationalists and cognitive psychologists work to establish how people learn. Classroom interactions are examined to tease out the central characteristics of effective lessons. Pupils are tested, and re-tested, in experimental studies to compare different approaches to teaching. Teachers and pupils are invited to provide commentary on lessons and learning. Tentative links are made to behavioural science and to neuroscience. Some commentators offer typologies of learners and grand theories for classroom application.

It is quite clear that the differences that exist between individual teachers, between individual subject areas, and between individual pupils, generate such a complex and specialised matrix of interactions that simplistic declarations of idealised lessons will rarely be of value. However, substantial evidence has been accrued to suggest that certain generic features are indeed common to almost all effective learning experiences.

The research of leading educationalists and psychologists provides a consistent message about learning and teaching. At RSD those findings have found an echo in the accumulated experiences of teachers in their classrooms on a daily basis. These ideas are discussed and assessed regularly at staff days and in the Teacher Learning Community (TLC). Informing pupils and parents about such ideas is increasingly important. A flavour of the research base is given below.

"The most general and useful idea that cognitive psychology can offer teachers ... is to review each lesson plan in terms of what the student is likely to think about."

"Data from the last 30 years lead to a conclusion that is not scientifically challengeable: thinking well requires knowing facts..."

"Cognitive science leads to the rather obvious conclusion that students must learn the concepts that come up again and again – the unifying ideas of each discipline."

"Memory is the residue of thought."

D. Willingham, 'Why Don't Students Like School?' (2009)

Professor of Psychology, University of Virginia

"Lowering standards just leads to poorly educated students who feel entitled to easy work and lavish praise ... [The best teachers] teach students how to reach the high standard."

"… no matter what your ability is, effort is what ignites that ability and turns it into accomplishment."

C. Dweck, 'Mindset: how you can fulfil your potential' (2011)

Professor of Psychology, University of Stanford

"Effective teaching occurs when the teacher decides the learning intentions and success criteria, makes them transparent to the students, demonstrates them by modeling, evaluates if they understand what they have been told by checking for understanding, and re-telling them what they have been told tying it all together with closure."

"Too often direct teaching is portrayed as bad, while constructivist teaching is considered to be good… This is almost directly opposite to the successful recipe for teaching and learning."

"These results show that guided instruction is much more effective than unguided, facilitative instruction… the rejection of direct instruction is a classic case of an immature profession, one that lacks a solid scientific base and has less respect for evidence than for opinion and ideology."

"The worst thing you can do with homework is give kids projects. The best thing you can do is reinforce something you've already learned."

J. Hattie, Professor of Education, University of Melbourne

"Activity is not the same as engagement. In too many classrooms, teachers worry about having the students active rather than having the students thinking, and even where students are thinking, there is often too little concern for what students are thinking about."

"Most teachers of academic subjects seem to believe that most of the progress made by their students is made when the teacher is present. Instrumental music teachers know this can't work. The amount of progress a child can make on the violin during a 20 or 30 minute lesson is very small. The real progress comes through practice, and what I have been impressed to see is how much time and care instrumental music teachers take to ensure that their pupils can practice effectively."

D. Wiliam, Professor of Education, University of London

"[Pupils are] unable to work independently because they do not have the necessary background knowledge, but [they are] unable to gain that background knowledge because they spend all their time working independently … Teacher instruction is vitally necessary to become an independent learner."

D. Christodoulou, 'The Seven Myths of Education' (2013)

"Learning … is implanted unobtrusively in the manner in which information is conveyed … If you were to ask me the circumstances in which patience, accuracy, economy, elegance and style first dawned upon me, … I owed this recognition to a Sergeant gymnastics instructor … and I owed it to him not on account of anything he ever said, but because he was a man of patience, accuracy, economy, elegance and style."

Michael Oakeshott, philosopher

3. Effective Thinking & Learning

Whilst some classroom techniques allow pupils to develop *short-term exam-ready knowledge*, the goals of lifelong learning dictate that priority should be given to strategies which promote *long-term transferable understanding*. This is challenging but it can be done. An important point is that initial learning and knowledge (shallow knowledge) is an essential prerequisite for developing deep knowledge, understanding of key concepts and the ability to transfer understanding from a familiar to an unfamiliar context. No shortcuts are possible.

Effective thinking and learning tend, therefore, to involve the following:

➤ The pupils' knowledge base is built cumulatively and appropriate problems posed for the pupil to think about, developing long-term memory and pleasure in thinking.	*'Factual knowledge must precede skill'*
➤ The lesson is planned in terms of what the pupil is likely to think about – learning intentions and success criteria are important.	*'Memory is the residue of thought'*
➤ The pupil's understanding of the conceptual and abstract is built from specific, familiar and concrete examples. Deep knowledge is the goal but shallow knowledge must come first.	*'We understand new things in the context of what we already know'*
➤ The pupil is required to practise learning – to engage with the core processes and concepts of a subject over time – so as to gain proficiency and to aid transfer.	*'(Deliberate) practice makes perfect'*
➤ Pupils differ in intelligence but intelligence can be changed through hard work. Failure is a natural part of learning and over time pupils can improve their understanding of and capability in a subject.	*'Praise effort not ability'*

Adapted from D. Willingham

4 examples of effective classroom strategies which maximise understanding and retention include:

➢ The 'emotional' *engagement of the pupil*: whether through intrigue, competition, provocation, delight in the subject, empathy, or passionate enquiry.	*'THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE'*
➢ The deliberate use of visual material (images, film, diagrams, representations) as a more powerful, or alternative, *stimulus* to the verbal, auditory or symbolic.	*'I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN!'*
➢ The requirement on *pupils to re-articulate* what they are learning: usually by taking information in one form (e.g. text or table), and transforming it into a different form (e.g. diagram or equation).	*'ACTIVE THINKING = ACTIVE LEARNING'*
➢ The facilitation of *constructive dialogue* (teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil) with an emphasis on formative exchanges: establishing what is known, diagnosing errors and misunderstandings, establishing best 'next steps' for learning.	*'FEEDBACK TO FAST-FORWARD'*

4. Teachers & Teaching

Teachers at RSD are required to understand their role in the learning process. Although there are many models of teaching, at RSD we have focused upon discussing and assessing three models which tend to dominate theory and practice.

- The teacher as Technician
- The teacher as Facilitator
- The teacher as Activator (or Agent of Change)

The **Technician** model emphasises the teacher's subject knowledge, technical professional knowledge and principles or values. Motivating pupils to learn and understanding how learning takes place is secondary or peripheral as it is 'up to the pupil to learn it'. In the worst case scenario these may even be rejected as the responsibility of the teacher with some pupils lauded as 'bright', 'able' or 'good' and others condemned as 'weak', 'lazy' or 'not interested'. This approach is in danger of permanently labelling pupils and cementing a 'fixed mindset' (Dweck). Whilst it is clearly right that some pupils are behind others in their learning it is the responsibility of the teacher to help all pupils make progress in their learning. This model is not promoted at RSD.

The **Facilitator** model emphasises the teacher's role as 'the guide on the side' instead of 'the sage on the stage'. The teacher is to step back and allow pupils to learn independently, intervening with individual pupils on occasion. There is an emphasis on discovery learning led by pupils, working on their own or in groups, rather than teacher instruction and whole class teaching; and a focus upon making topics relevant to pupils' lives and interests rather than learning subject knowledge. The aim is to make lessons fun and to motivate pupils to develop skills (such as thinking critically) and to learn independently. This approach is ineffective for school pupils as it is premised upon faulty thinking about knowledge and skills; how thinking and learning take place; and what motivates pupils to learn. This model is not promoted at RSD.

A more effective approach is found in the **Activator** model. It is clear from research that knowledge is a prerequisite for effective thinking and learning; and that domain-specific subject knowledge is key. A pupil who can think critically in science does not automatically possess the skill to think critically in other areas. Domain knowledge for a new area must be acquired before this can take place and teachers are encouraged to build that knowledge base cumulatively (so that surface knowledge can, over time, contribute to deeper knowledge and understanding). Pupils are motivated to learn less by what is 'fun' or 'relevant' and more by pitching the level of challenge at a level of moderate difficulty (the Goldilocks moment or sweet spot for learning). Teachers should focus upon planning lessons which provide such a

level of challenge; and when pupils meet that challenge then the next level of learning should follow. Learning intentions and success criteria are crucial in helping pupils to understand the learning they need to engage with and how they can meet those challenges. Feedback is essential for both teacher and pupil. For the former it helps to ensure that the level of challenge is moved forward appropriately; for the latter it ensures that improvement is focused on the right area and practice is purposeful. A positive and trusting relationship between teacher and pupil is crucial. There is an acceptance that thinking and learning are difficult, cumulative and only achievable with hard work. Teacher instruction contributes much to pupils' capacity to think well and learn independently. Teachers are interested in learning and reflect on their practice. This model is promoted at RSD and discussed at staff days and within the TLC.

'Visible teaching and learning is where the **teacher and student both** seek to ascertain whether and to what degree the challenging learning goal is attained, when there is deliberate practice aimed at the attaining mastery of the goal, when there is feedback given and sought.'

'The major part of this story relates to the power of directed teaching, enhancing what happens next through feedback to inform the teacher of the success or failure of their teaching.'

'The story is about the power of passionate, accomplished teachers who focus on students' cognitive engagement with the content of what it is they are teaching … monitoring, assessing and evaluating the progress in this task is what then leads to the power of feedback to students and from students.'

'Effective teaching occurs when the teacher decides the learning intentions and success criteria, makes them transparent to the students, demonstrates them by modelling, evaluates if they understand what they have been told by checking for understanding, and re-telling them what they have been told tying it all together with closure.'

J. Hattie

What kind of teacher - Activator or Facilitator? J. Hattie

An Activator	ES	A Facilitator	ES
Reciprocal teaching	.74	Simulations and gaming	.32
Feedback	.72	Inquiry based teaching	.31
Teaching students self-verbalization	.67	Smaller class sizes	.21
Meta-cognition strategies	.67	Individualized instruction	.20
Direct Instruction	.59	Problem-based learning	.15
Mastery learning	.57	Different teaching for boys & girls	.12
Goals - challenging	.56	Web-based learning	.09
Frequent/ Effects of testing	.46	Whole Language Reading	.06
Behavioural organizers	.41	Inductive teaching	.06
ACTIVATOR	*.60*	*FACILITATOR*	*.17*

ES = Effect Size, with 0.4 as the average

What Activator teachers do	So that pupils
Clear learning intentions	Understand learning intentions
Challenging success criteria	Are challenged by success criteria
Range of learning strategies	Develop a range of learning strategies
Know when students are not progressing	Know when they are not progressing
Providing feedback	Seek feedback
Visibly learns themselves	Visibly teach themselves

The need for passion, teaching and promoting of the language of learning – J. Hattie

1. Teachers, working together, as evaluators of their impact ('know thy impact')

2. The power of moving from what students know now towards explicit success criteria

3. Errors are welcome as opportunities to learn – teacher/pupil trust

4. Maximise feedback **from** pupils **to** teachers about their impact

5. Getting the proportions of surface (lots) to deep (some, eventually) correct

6. The Goldilocks principle of challenge, and deliberate practice to attain these challenges

Effective Teachers – Technician v Activator (or Agent of Change)

F. Promoting Strong Home-School-Community Relation
Effective teachers make efforts to know their students individually and to build openness and bridges between homes and classrooms. They try to see the "whole child" and provide extra help, referrals, and assistance for children facing challenges out-of-school.

G. Understanding Students and How They Learn
Effective teachers believe that every child can learn. Different students have different learning styles. One size does not fit all. Effective teachers tailor their instructional style to fit the needs of both individuals and whole classes of students.

A. Deep Knowledge of Subject Matter
Effective teachers have extensive training and skill development in their academic content area. They work hard to keep their skills and knowledge current and sharp.

E. Technological Literacy
Effective teachers understand and have training in how to use state-of-the-art technology. They integrate technology into their classroom lessons. Good teachers understand that technology is a tool for increasing student interest, motivation, and achievement.

B. Creating Safe, Productive and Well-Managed Classrooms
Effective teachers understand that firm discipline policies contribute to a healthy academic atmosphere by emphasizing the importance of regular attendance, promptness, respect for teachers and other students, and good conduct. Good teachers understand that students respond to consistency, fairness, and structure. They make special efforts to ease the stresses and adjustment difficulties of children with special needs.

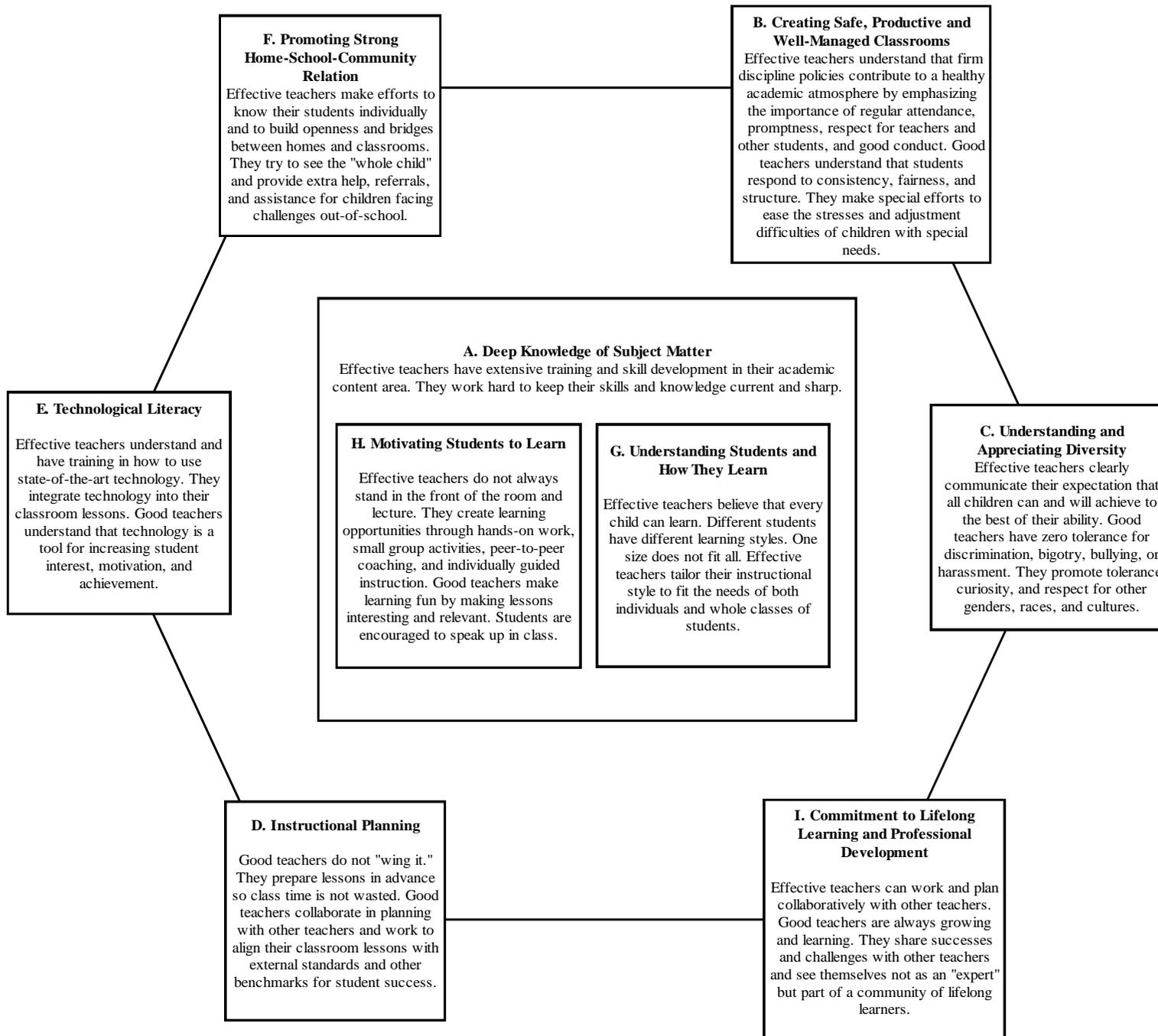**C. Understanding and Appreciating Diversity**
Effective teachers clearly communicate their expectation that all children can and will achieve to the best of their ability. Good teachers have zero tolerance for discrimination, bigotry, bullying, or harassment. They promote tolerance, curiosity, and respect for other genders, races, and cultures.

H. Motivating Students to Learn
Effective teachers do not always stand in the front of the room and lecture. They create learning opportunities through hands-on work, small group activities, peer-to-peer coaching, and individually guided instruction. Good teachers make learning fun by making lessons interesting and relevant. Students are encouraged to speak up in class.

D. Instructional Planning
Good teachers do not "wing it." They prepare lessons in advance so class time is not wasted. Good teachers collaborate in planning with other teachers and work to align their classroom lessons with external standards and other benchmarks for student success.

I. Commitment to Lifelong Learning and Professional Development
Effective teachers can work and plan collaboratively with other teachers. Good teachers are always growing and learning. They share successes and challenges with other teachers and see themselves not as an "expert" but part of a community of lifelong learners.

The 'effective teacher' can be characterised in a number of different ways.

The model on this page is constructed around the central notions of subject knowledge, technical professional knowledge and a principled position on 'values'.

This might be described best as the **'teacher as technician'**, and focuses on the essential minimum intellectual traits of the effective practitioner.

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Using the same elements, an alternative model places *pedagogic* elements at the centre. Firmly rooted in subject knowledge and subject context, the key elements are interactive - motivation to learn, and a reflective instructional style.

This might be described best as the **'teacher as agent of change'**, and focuses on the qualities of character, relationship, and a sophisticated understanding (*conscious or unconscious*) of the learning needs of pupils.

5. Effective Technology

The learning classroom takes full advantage of any 'tool' that is available. ICT offers a number of facilities that make it a potentially powerful vehicle for learning. This potential emerges through: the predominantly visual medium; the wealth of available data; the speed of acquiring data; the capacity to manipulate (and re-manipulate) text, graphics and animated objects; and the opportunities for collaboration.

The *ineffective* use of ICT is very easily achieved, with activities filling time and much effort expended; but only limited learning. This can occur: when pupils are asked to pursue vague tasks - 'find out about'; when the focus is on effort expended not quality of understanding -'length rather than depth'; if technical aspects of the software limit or detract from the task; or if presentation predominates over content – 'power pointless'.

In contrast, the *effective* use of ICT echoes the strategies for 'retention' highlighted at the start of this document. Technology is chosen because it is 'better than …' an alternative approach, in that the learning outcome (not just the end-product) is enhanced.

As such, effective learning with ICT:

a. is well-prepared;
b. is structured and purposeful with feedback during the process;
c. is personalised to meet individual learning needs and preferences;
d. maximises pupil activity (in terms of thinking);
e. requires information to be consciously processed in the mind of the pupil, not just manipulated on the screen;
f. will, therefore, often involve multiple software applications;
g. ensures visual and 'animated' elements are used to captivate;
h. does not allow technicalities to predominate;
i. engenders an inquisitive 'tweaking' mindset; and
j. generates a finished product which is available for future reference or revision

6. Effective Lessons

(i) Key Ideas

There is no prescriptive 'house style' of teaching or lesson structure at RSD. Rather, there is a commitment to understanding what works – in terms of how pupils learn; and which teaching approaches are most effective. In the classroom teachers are encouraged to focus upon key ideas which have been demonstrated to bring advantages to pupils' learning and to plan lessons accordingly.

a. **Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning**. The aim is to connect prior learning with the learning about to take place. Review also helps pupils to practise – to think again about key knowledge and concepts and embed these.

b. **Present new material in small steps with pupil practice after each step**. Do not overwhelm pupils with too much new information. Instead, build up knowledge step-by-step and fold in practice. This will allow pupils to connect new learning with previous learning and improve recall, understanding and the possibility of transfer.

c. **Ask a large number of questions and check the responses of all pupils**. Questions help pupils to think about what they do and do not know and understand. They also enable discussion and feedback – from teacher to pupil and pupil to teacher.

d. **Provide models**. Teachers modelling their thinking and providing worked examples helps pupils to understand the steps required to be successful. This can make explicit to pupils the thinking required to become proficient and ensure they focus upon and practice the correct approach.

e. **Guide pupil practice**. When pupils spend time rephrasing, elaborating, summarising and transposing material they will be more able to store it in long-term memory and retrieve it when needed. Practice needs to be guided by the teacher and focused on the core knowledge and concepts of the subject which come up time and gain. Avoid repetition and boredom by folding practice from prior learning into new learning. Practice should be frequent but spread over time.

f. **Check for pupil understanding**. Check all pupils' understanding frequently. The aim is to intercept pupils' misconceptions and avoid these becoming embedded in their long-term memory. Don't ask the class "Are there any questions?" and assume that silence means they understand.

g. **Obtain a high rate of success**. Teachers who adopt a 'mastery learning' approach help their pupils to embed accurate understanding before moving on to new learning. Mastery learning focuses upon all pupils being able to complete step 1 before the lesson moves on to step 2. Moving on too soon will see a number of pupils move on with faulty thinking embedded in their understanding and this is very difficult to correct later. This can lead to those pupils condemning themselves as "I am no good at subject X".

h. **Provide scaffolds for difficult tasks**. Scaffold supports for pupils should come early in the learning and then be withdrawn. Scaffolds can be from the teacher (modelling, thinking aloud) or on paper (writing frames, cue cards, checklists). Pupils can compare their own work to the exemplar and learn both content and strategies. Helping pupils to learn in this way has been referred to as "cognitive apprenticeship" as the pupil sees the correct thinking and method.

i. **Require and monitor individual pupil practice**. Pupils need to practise a lot if they are to be successful in their learning. The aim is fluency or automaticity where pupils recall key material swiftly and accurately. Pupils' practice should take place after sufficient teacher instruction and modelling. Teachers should circulate and monitor pupils' progress, intervening briefly to put a pupil back on track.

j. **Engage pupils in regular review – weekly and monthly**. Reviewing information and rehearsing the connections between key knowledge, concepts and procedures is a good way to cement a schema about a topic in long-term memory. This enables pupils to learn subsequent material more fluently, by connecting it to the established schema, builds deeper knowledge and aids transfer.

Adapted from *B. Rosenshine, Professor of Educational Psychology, University of Illinois*

These key ideas guide teachers to plan lessons in terms of enhancing pupils' learning, monitoring their progress and intervening when necessary.

(ii) Some Examples

There is limited evidence to suggest that adopting a three-part lesson (starter, main, plenary) has any impact on learning for retention or understanding. However, there is substantial evidence that teaching is more effective:

a. if pupils are given some prior indication of the anticipated learning, and some motivational stimulus towards that learning;

b. when there is a substantial level of pupil participation in a planned activity, where the outcome is focussed learning (rather than completing or producing); and

c. if pupils are required to re-articulate what they have learned in some new format

These are, then, the reasons to support appropriately selected 'starter', 'main' and 'plenary' elements across all *sequences* of lessons (i.e. not necessarily all in one 30-35 minute period).

The next section of this document outlines **some** recommended activities that characterise the key elements of effective lessons. All these approaches are from real lessons used successfully by teachers in schools similar to RSD. Although grouped as 'starters', 'main' and 'plenary'; they could quite clearly be used with various orderings. Each sample activity is cross-referenced to the four strategies that maximise long-term transferable understanding (see section 3).

'Starter' Elements	pupil engagement	sensory stimulus	pupils to re-articulate	constructive dialogue
Visual stimulus (possibly audio-visual) of e.g. relevant current affairs topic or 'real life' example, that generates enquiry	✓	✓		
Sound effects: e.g. thunderstorm with rain, wind, thunder, lightning, wolves howling.	✓	✓		
Ask a question which the pupils neither know the answer to, nor know how to set about answering.	✓			
Rapid recall 'question and answers' with pupils generating questions to be used.	✓		✓	✓
Demonstration with key items to 'watch for'.		✓		
Generate conflict by presenting opposing views on a topic.	✓			
Explain a paradox or provocative idea, which appears not to make sense – possibly one that arises from a misunderstanding in pupil work, and pursuing it to a logical conclusion.	✓		✓	✓
Describe a physical object to another pupil (who can't see it).	✓	✓	✓	✓
An unlabelled image/diagram – pupils are required to identify questions to be asked about the stimulus material.		✓	✓	✓
Pupils are required to design a question that would test whether their partner understands the material learned in the last lesson.	✓		✓	✓

'Main' Elements	pupil engagement	sensory stimulus	pupils to re-articulate	constructive dialogue
Discussion of 'starter' leading to groups of pupils creating their own plan to investigate a new topic. (Requires pupils to use, apply and adapt their knowledge.)	✓		✓	✓
Demonstrate an 'attention grabbing' experiment to demonstrate relevant topic material introduced earlier.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pupils generate 'cards' with their own questions and answers for 'domino' activity. (Requires pupils to work from question to answer, and answer to question.)	✓		✓	✓
Enquiry based 'mystery' activity, with data in a variety of styles, pupils working in small groups to solve the problem.	✓	✓	✓	✓
'Circus' of experimental activities, with pupils expected to present and explain their findings to others.	✓	✓	✓	
Exploring a literary text, and identifying colours, sounds or facial expressions that can be used to accentuate the words.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Resource material to small groups who become 'experts' representing a perspective, groups reconstructed to have a blend of experts to solve a problem.	✓		✓	✓
Practical demonstration of skill to be replicated by pupils, working in pairs, with peer-coaching.		✓	✓	✓
Pupils develop a 'teaching resource' (in a format of their choosing) to explain a topic to another group of pupils.	✓	✓	✓	
Pupil groups work together on sub-divisions of a larger task, submit work to a shared area, for all pupils to compile complete version.			✓	✓
Case studies: use of extended 'real life' examples to reinforce theoretical understanding.	✓			✓

'Plenary' Elements	pupil engagement	sensory stimulus	pupils to re-articulate	constructive dialogue
Final 'competitive' activity to assess learning.	✓		✓	
Pupils to summarise learning from lesson.			✓	
Pupils to generate – in pairs – a mnemonic/rhyme/image to aid future recall of learning.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pupils each use mini-whiteboard to record 'most important' thing learned in lesson. Physically collated into a spider diagram.		✓	✓	✓
End with a provocative question, based on lesson ideas, to stimulate interest for next lesson and to sustain thinking.	✓			
Pupils asked to identify *most interesting* and *most important* learning from the lesson. Pupils contest/defend their claims.	✓		✓	✓
Pupils plan content and approach for next lesson, based on what they know they need to learn or accomplish.	✓		✓	✓
Pupils apply new learning to an examination question.			✓	
Pupils are required to design a question that would test whether their partner understands the material learned in the lesson.	✓		✓	✓
Diagnostic question and answer session to gauge pupil learning.				✓

7. Departments

Each Department at RSD is required to address the teaching & learning agenda directly. The most obvious and important means of doing so are outlined below.

Schemes of Work

There should be a scheme of work for each year group. The scheme should cover areas such as: core knowledge; key concepts; resources; teaching strategies; assessment; and differentiation (e.g. stretch & challenge). Schemes of work should be reviewed and updated periodically.

Departmental Development Plan (DDP)

The DDP is produced each September, following the examination results review, and forms the basis for development work for the year ahead. The DDP should be based upon the whole school priorities in the School Development Plan (SDP) as well as identifying particular subject needs. An update on progress in provided in February to the SLT. It is important that all teachers of the subject are involved in generating the DDP and the subsequent implementation and evaluation of progress.

Meetings

Departmental meetings are held monthly after school and also on staff days. The agenda is a mixture of whole school priorities and departmental items drawn from the DDP. There should be an emphasis on committing the majority of time to development work rather than administrative work (for example, 20 minutes of administration and 40 minutes of development work).

Homework

The Homework policy sets out the details for setting homework. In general, homework tasks can be set: at the start of a lesson, with an indication of what pupils need to learn during the lesson in order to accomplish it; in the middle of the lesson as an extension to the task currently undertaken during the lesson; or, at the end of the lesson, for reinforcement.

Professional Development (CPD)

All subject teachers are encouraged to take the opportunity to seek professional development opportunities related to their subject or broader pedagogical issues. Beginning teachers are supported directly in their first 3 years of teaching through the school's induction programme. At RSD the focus is on in-house CPD and making use of the experience and expertise found amongst the group of current staff. Colleagues share best practice at various meetings (e.g. HoDs) and through the TLC.

8. Assessment

Formative assessment or Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Formative assessment is often referred to as Assessment for Learning (AfL).

Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.

Assessment Reform Group (ARG), 2002

Formative assessment is part of the everyday teaching and learning process. Teachers gather evidence about a pupil's learning by, for example, observing, listening, questioning, discussing, and reviewing their work. They can then use this evidence to:

- identify progress and gaps in learning (including individual support needs);
- set learning goals and success criteria; and
- provide feedback to pupils

Making time to provide feedback and making time for the pupils "to take the feedback on board" are two issues that should be considered by teachers. Assessment is not formative unless it **causes pupils to think** and is **used by the pupils to make improvements**.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment gives pupils, parents and teachers valuable information about a pupil's overall performance at a specific point in their learning. It provides information about a pupil's progress in subject knowledge, understanding, skills and capabilities.

Summative assessment usually takes place after pupils have completed units of work, or modules, or at the end of each term and/or year. The information it gives indicates progress and achievement, sometimes in grade-related or numerical terms.

Summative assessment should:

- take account of all the objectives or outcomes of the programme of study (this is why summative tests of part of the programme of study are not necessarily valid);
- be used to indicate a pupil's progress at the end of a period of learning, for example a unit of work or a module;
- take account of formative assessments throughout the year;
- be formative in its own right:
  - providing teachers with insights into what pupils have and have not learned, and enabling them to adapt their practices; and
  - providing feedback on what learners did or did not do well