



Teaching and Learning Policy

PURPOSE

This Policy outlines how Teaching and Learning is defined at Ark St Alban's

Date of last review:	January 2018	Author:	SLT
Date of next review:	September 2018	Owner:	SLT
Type of policy:	<input type="checkbox"/> Network-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Set for school <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tailored by school	Approval:	Management Team
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POSITIONING WITHIN ARK OPERATIONAL MODEL

Component	Element
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Leadership & Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, Reporting & Data <input type="checkbox"/> Governance & Accountabilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teaching & Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum & Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Culture, Ethos & Wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/> Pathways & Enrichment <input type="checkbox"/> Parents & Community <input type="checkbox"/> Finance, IT & Estates <input type="checkbox"/> Our People	Behaviour Model

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Introduction

Vision:

Teaching and Learning at ASTA will be purposeful and academically rigorous, with students and teachers sharing a sense of what they are doing, why this is important and how this fits into the bigger picture of their learning.

Rigour: Carefully thought out, intentional and challenging

Theory:

At Ark St Alban's, teaching and learning is rooted in the **Principles of Learning:**

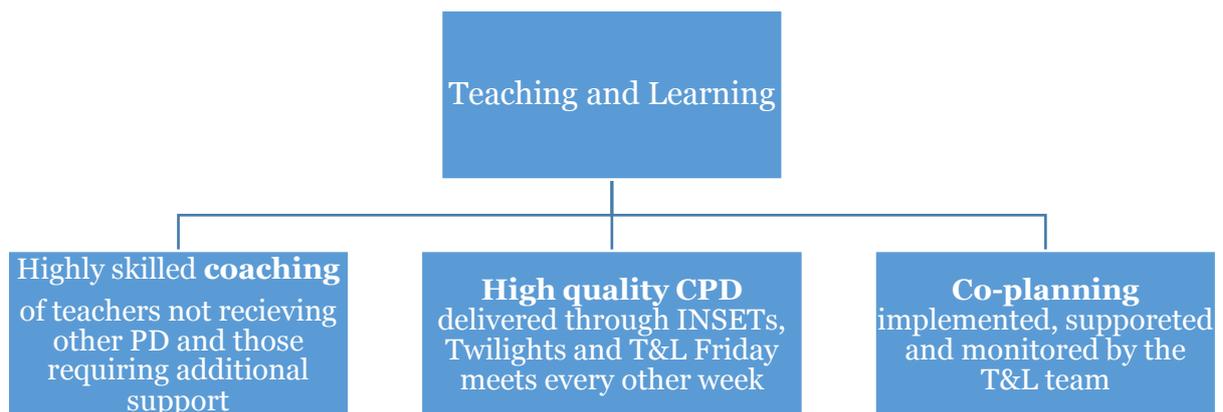
1. Memory matters! Learning is a change in long-term memory.
2. Working memory is weak.
3. Knowledge is the pathway to skill.
4. Memory is the residue of thought.
5. Deliberate practice is essential to closing the knowing-doing gap.
6. Responsive teaching makes the right memories.
7. Transfer is hard.
8. Student motivation is also critical to learning.

Strategy:

Our core priorities are:

- Backwards planning
- Using the 'Elements of Effective Teaching and Learning'
- Having high academic expectations of classroom culture, embedded through ASTA non-negotiables and shifting of cognitive load onto students

Model:



St. Alban's Areas of Focus

Whenever we walk into an Ark St Alban's Academy classroom, we should be able to place what we see into these five broad categories. As our understanding of techniques and practices grows we will be able to talk about areas within these categories, as well.

For example, at the highest (and simplest) level we will talk about *routines*. It is more helpful (and more complex), on a classroom level, to talk about techniques that lie within the wider area of routines: things like *Cold Call* and *Threshold*.

All the categories are underpinned by the idea that teaching is a practice, and that **practice makes permanent**. That idea challenges us to move away from strategy and into refinement of great practice. And that demands finesse.

The five categories are:

Routines: this involves teaching our students the right way to do things, and spending time making sure that they absolutely know what to do.

Management: this category concerns the use of school systems of detention and merits.

Control: This concerns the way in which teachers can get students to do things without resorting to the management system as a bribe or a threat.

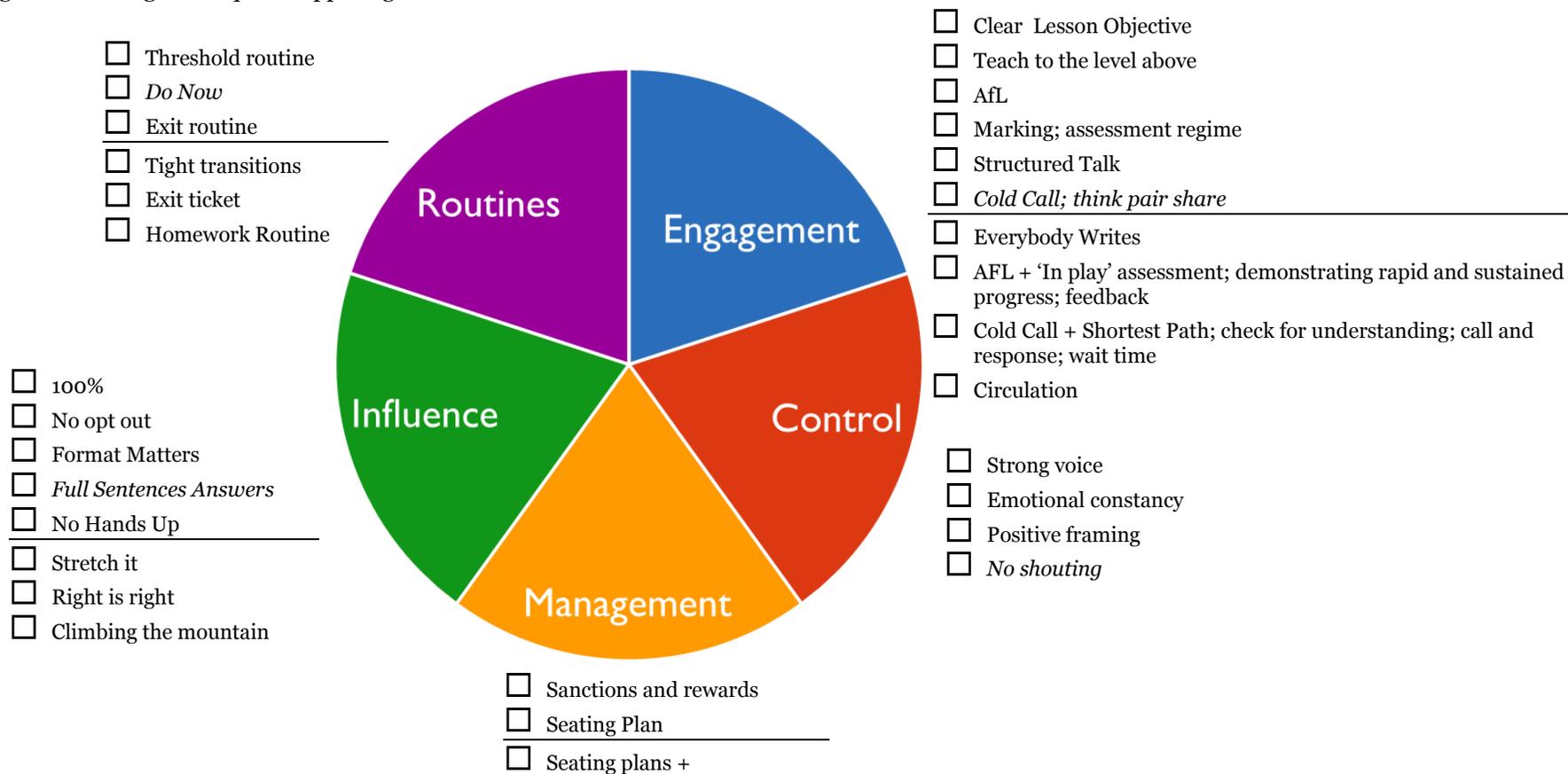
Influence: This is how we inspire students (the inspiration students have) to want to succeed. Unlike control, it operates when you're not there.

Engagement: This is about providing a stimulating, successful, learning environment that students want to be part of.

These areas of focus are not in any order. They need to be developed together to create outstanding teaching.

Fig 1. On the next page shows the techniques reside in each category, what a baseline might look like in each area and how we can link these areas of focus to Ofsted criteria for outstanding teaching.

Fig 1. Key Teaching and Learning techniques mapped against the Ofsted framework



*The minimum requirements of the Ark St Albans's Academy lesson are shown above the line; the criteria below the line are features of our practice highlighted in the teaching and learning policy as more 'advanced'.

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Planning

Every teacher needs to understand and be able to articulate progress in their subject area. They need to show what outstanding levels of progress look like across a key stage, a term, a unit of work and indeed an individual lesson.

The starting point for the above is the **Progression Map**

- The Progression Map identifies the key learning objectives that **every** student must achieve each year so that the outstanding levels of progress we expect are achieved. These learning objectives describe both the skills and knowledge that must be taught within the given time frame

Input examples:

Then comes the **Long Term Plan**

- The Long Term Plan provides teachers with an overview of the year. It identifies what will be taught and how it will be assessed, clearly linked to the specification. It shows how all the key learning objectives in the progression map for that year will be covered, as well as the formative, interim and summative assessment points.

Then the **Medium Term Plan**

- The medium term plan enables backwards planning from assessment points, resulting in a well thought out sequence of lessons planned in service to the big picture.
- When writing an MTP, the assessment comes first. It is important that the teacher **writes and/or answers the assessment** to effectively plan backwards a sequence of lessons.
- **Knowledge organisers** can be an important & useful tool in planning because they can help to identify the highest leverage content in a unit or part of a unit, which can then be used as a tool to inform both medium and short term planning and student revision.
- **Mastery quizzes**, as a form of knowledge check, will be embedded into MTPs in addition to regular assessments to test learning from study – these will often take place as the DNA of a given lesson.
- **Re-teach** will feature as a prominent part of schemes of works, picking up knowledge-gaps identified both in formative and interim assessments.
- Following summative assessments, **'question level analysis'** enables Middle Leads to review and refine the long and medium term plans and include opportunities to re-teach content and common misconceptions.

The penultimate element is the **Scheme of Work** for a unit of work

- It focuses on how the learning objectives will be taught. Teachers will be able to describe here the best approaches to achieving the learning objectives identifying the key learning tasks (i.e. the learning activities all students will complete (in class activities and homework)).

Finally, the **daily lesson plan** allows the teacher to plan for very precise, short sections of learning which help students, step-by-step, to achieve the overriding objectives/skills of the unit. Once teachers are able to conceptualise learning over a longer period of time, they are

empowered to achieve outstanding learning as part of their everyday teaching. Lessons should be planned backwards from the **Independent Practice** part of the lesson.

The follow-up is **homework**. Appropriate homework is expected to be set by teachers each week in line with the homework timetable present in student planners. Specifically for Y11-13 this will include an element of “study”. Study is defined as independent work that students undertake to enhance their knowledge and understanding of their curriculum. It has to be undertaken and led by the student themselves.

- To **prepare** for new learning taking place in a subsequent lesson.
- To **consolidate** the learning that has taken place during a lesson, giving students the opportunity to practice and refine particular aspects of their knowledge, and understanding.
- To **stretch** students to explore the subject beyond the classroom.

Ark St Alban’s lessons

Ark St Alban’s lessons should be planned backwards from the independent practice which is planned in relation to the medium term and long term plan i.e. The Big Picture:

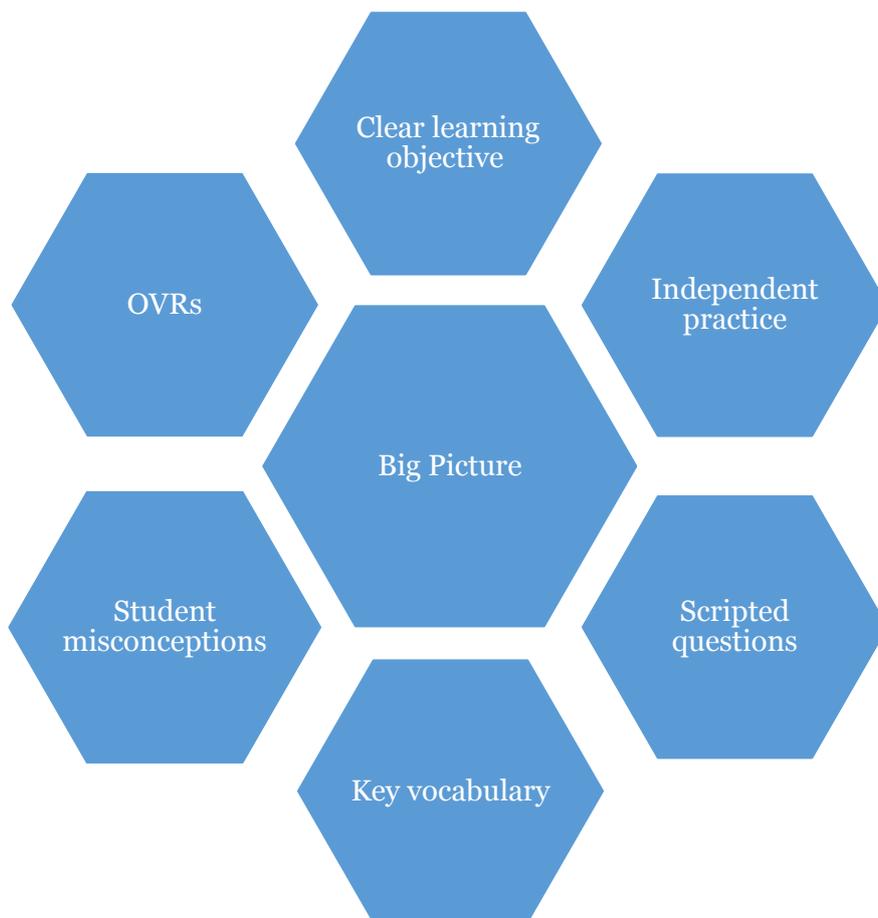


Fig 2. Short term backwards planning

Through the ‘**Elements of Effective teaching**’ Ark St Alban’s lessons should:

- Make clear the balance of work in the class and largely places the cognitive load onto students. **It makes them work harder than the teacher.**
- Focus on the key actions that affect students’ learning and progress within lessons, and teach to the level above
- Have a mastery lesson objective
- Focuses on efficient learning rather than the completion of activity
- Allow the group to take the shortest path to learning and progress
- Have the flexibility to develop learning, especially when misconceptions or misunderstandings occur. It is not a rigid thing
- Allow time for reading, writing and discussion
- Focus on explicit, planned teaching of speaking and listening, including planned questioning opportunities
- Allows students sufficient time to complete learning before Independent Practice

Element	Description
Clear learning objective	Prominently displayed, and written in crystal clear language, without mental action words Frequently referred back to Linked to appropriate curriculum standard Leaves no doubt about how mastery of the objective will be assessed
DNA	Students immediately engaged in preview / background / purpose for the lesson that motivates, connects and provokes curiosity. May include embedded vocabulary work
Chunk - Teaching and modelling/demonstrating	Teacher clearly teaches / models / thinks aloud for each component of the lesson – one brief, manageable chunk at a time Each step is followed by guided practice
Chew - Guided practice	After each brief chunk in the lesson the teacher immediately gives students a chance to practise / process information and to demonstrate mastery of that brief step, whilst the teacher checks for understanding
Check - checking for understanding	The teacher uses strategies to check that on all students progress towards mastery, after each chunk The information gathered during each guided practice and check for understanding is used to adjust instruction – to reteach and clarify – until students are ready for the next step
Independent practice	The cycle is repeated – sometimes multiple times – for each step in the lesson, until virtually all students are ready for independent practice – that is to complete the day’s assignment or assessment on their own. If necessary, tutoring is provided to those needing additional help at this time.

Fig 3: Elements of Effective Teaching

Language for Learning

Routines matter

Effective procedures minimise disruptions and maximise teaching time. They should be consistent and efficient. Taking time getting them right, and practising and refining them is a strategic investment in the future success of your class.

Principles:

There are some key principles that underlie the design of good systems and routines. These should be borne in mind when creating a routine. They are:
Procedure is culture: So, shared routines must feel like they belong to everyone in your classroom. Teachers can change the culture by routinising the elements of that culture that they want to see more of – so long as they remember that a routine is an exercise in purpose and not in power.
Efficiency is everything: Teachers like the illusion of control, and sometimes want to slow down so they can enjoy it for longer, basking in its warm glow. Actually, the goal is doing it 100% right, as <i>fast</i> as possible.
Plan what you want: You have to pay attention to the detail, here. Students have to be told exactly what to do, when, how and with whom.
Low narration: Once they are fully taught, a good routine needs only short prompts and reminders. These are often non-verbal. This lets teachers watch for non-compliance, or prepare in the classroom.
No Interruptions: Interruptions are not part of the procedure: they won't be in your plan, so don't let them seep into the performance of the plan.

The baseline:

Fig 1 makes clear that you must have the following routines in place, and efficiently practised in your classroom. They should be perfect by the end of September, and they should stay perfect for the whole year (if you don't know what they are – the glossary is in the back!):

- Threshold
- Exit Routine
- Do Now
- Tight transitions
- Homework routines
- Exit ticket

Evaluating the Quality of Teaching

Objectives:

- To improve the quality of teaching and learning across the academy
- To improve the quality of feedback across the academy
- To empower Middle Leaders to be more accountable for the above
- To provide an evidence base for the academy to help inform action and improvement plans

Monitoring of Planning and Marking

- Heads of Department to do a book look for a year group for every member of the department at least once every half term (see calendar). This forms part of the monitoring and evaluation procedure and will be reported on at regular intervals.
- With regards to feedback, a sample should be taken at regular intervals from at least two selected teaching groups by the HoD.

Monitoring of Homework

- A check on the quantity, quality and type of homework will be conducted by the Head of Department and will be reported on as part of the academy's monitoring and evaluation procedure.
- Homework will also be checked by both the Assessment and Progress Leaders and Assistant Principal for Assessment and Outcomes

Monitoring of Teaching

Ark St Alban's Academy recognises the value of outstanding teaching.

Lesson observations should be used to monitor teaching and learning, offer support and guidance, support the Performance Management Process and develop staff as teaching professionals. In addition they will inform the Academy Improvement Plan, CPD and all self-evaluation processes.

- Observation will be the main source for tracking teaching and learning across the academy. This will be achieved through the calendared observation schedule which is issued every half term.
- Please note that all observations must be copied to Mrs Kristy Young (Assistant Principal for Teaching and Learning) to be filed centrally. A copy should be given to the teacher being observed and retained by the line manager for their records. Please see the Lesson Observation Policy for further details.
- Teachers should expect to be observed formally as part of the Performance Management Cycle and as a result of internal and external reviews.
- Formal lesson observation results are stored centrally
- Teachers who are in the process of gaining QTS will be supported through regular observations by their subject mentor and the academy's professional mentor as well as by professional tutors attached to QTS institutions.
- All observations will be joint with the line manager and either a member of SLT or a member of the T&L team
- Arrangements for formal lesson observation must be made between the observer and the member of staff with due notice given.
- The member of staff must make available either electronically in advance, or hard copies of:
 - The data sheet allowing for contextualisation of the class
 - Any SEN/EAL provision sheets

- Copies of any resources, including print outs of any PowerPoint
- The students' exercise books/folders
- Following the observation, it is the responsibility of the observer to give constructive verbal feedback to the member of staff within 24 hours of the observation. Written feedback must be given within 5 working days.
- The observation and feedback process should be supportive and developmental. Achievements should be recognised and clear areas of development identified, along with advice and support on how to reach these targets.

Informal Lesson Observations/Learning Walks

A member of the SLT and/or the Teaching and Learning Team may enter a classroom at any time in order to ascertain whether staff are following The Baseline for academy lessons (see the inner circle of *Figure One*) and the impact of training and CPD. Such learning walks have proved to be an invaluable means by which to identify the strengths of an individual, a subject team and year group. These learning walks do not form part of Performance Management.

Professional Development

We currently offer a range of professional development opportunities to include:

- The National Professional Qualification of Senior Leadership
- The National Professional Qualification of Middle Leadership
- Lead Practitioner
- Good to Great
- A programme of Professional Learning Opportunism offered by Ark, from 'facilitation training' to 'literacy training'. The full PD offer can be found here:

[Ark Professional Learning Opportunities 2017-18](#)

Coaching

All staff not currently on a professional development route, those staff new to the academy and those requiring additional support are assigned a coach. The coach is either part of the T&L team or a Lead Practitioner. The coach supports the staff member to improve their practice thorough a weekly drop-in which generate the highest leverage action step, and a follow-up conversation.

Initial Teacher Training

ITT trainees follow the processes and requirements by the relevant awarding body. Every trainee is assigned an in-school mentor who drops-in weekly to generate action steps, as well as a weekly mentoring meeting which involves the follow up conversation from the drop-in, co-planning etc. Trainees also have weekly training lead by Lead Practitioners.

NQTs

Each NQT will

- Have a 10% reduction in timetable compared to MPS staff
- Receive support and guidance from a subject mentor
- Be given the opportunity to observe experienced teachers
- Receive a personalised leverage leadership coaching programme
- Receive weekly feedback on leverage leadership coaching and co-planning opportunities
- Be observed at least half-termly and be provided with follow up discussions
- Have a termly professional review of progress
- Attend ARK NQT training
- Engage with all ASTA professional development activities

Please refer to the NQT policy for more information

[Appendix 1: Glossary of techniques](#)

The Inner Circle

100%

100% compliance, 100% of the time, 100% of the way.

Clear Learning Objective

The Learning Objective should be

- Prominently displayed, and written in crystal clear language, without mental action words.
- Frequently referred back to
- Linked to appropriate curriculum standard
- Leaves no doubt about how mastery of the objective will be assessed

Cold Call

Call on students without letting them raise their hands, to shift cognitive load from teacher to students

Do Now

A short activity you have written on the board or placed on students' desks for them to do as soon as they enter the classroom. See Ofsted box for the level it needs to be at!

Emotional Constancy

Manage your emotions to consistently promote student learning and achievement

Format Matters

Help your students to format responses to your questions grammatically, in complete sentences and audibly

No opt out

Make students accountable for trying to get the answer right

Positive Framing

Narrate the classroom you want and show your faith in students even while making corrections consistently

Sanctions and rewards

An effective, consistently applied system of sanctions (detentions) and rewards (merits and praise postcards) underpins our management system

Seating Plans

Girl and boy; horseshoes; progress or attainment; rows – have a plan and stick to it.

Strong Voice

Affirm your authority through intentional verbal and nonverbal habits, especially at moments you need control

Teach to the level above

Teaching to the level above ensures pace and stretch occurs in every lesson

Threshold

How students enter your space: needs to be positive, efficient and well drilled

Call and Response

You ask (call); the class answers in unison (response). Do it to build energetic, positive engagement and to spread the work around the room

The Outer Circle

Check for Understanding

While you teach, constantly assess what your students understand. Correct misunderstandings as quickly as you can

Climbing the Mountain

Be unapologetic in articulating our mission and how the learning helps achieve it. We **are** climbing the mountain to University.

Everybody writes

Prepare your students to engage rigorously by giving them the chance to reflect in writing before you ask them to discuss

Exit Ticket

End each class with an explicit assessment of your objective that you use to evaluate your (and your students') success

Homework routines

Set homework in the same way, at the same time, every time. Give the same timescales each time you set. Establish a powerful, regular routine to ensure compliance and eliminate incompetence and opportunism.

Right is Right

When you respond to answers in class, hold out for answers that are all the way right

Shortest Path

In planning lessons, find the most direct and effective route by which students can reach a goal

Stretch it

Reward right answers with follow up questions that test for reliability, challenge students, and extend knowledge. Oh, and they also show you were listening!

Tight Transitions

Maximise time and energy for learning by instilling tight routines for transitioning from one classroom activity to another

Wait Time

Allow students time to process before answering. If they aren't productive with that time, narrate them into being more productive

What to do

Use specific, concrete, sequential and observable directions to tell students what to do, instead of what not to do

Appendix 2: Ofsted Framework

Ofsted Criteria		Outstanding (1)	Good (2)	Requires Improvement (3)	Inadequate (4)
Achievement	Progress	Substantial and sustained for almost all.	Consistently strong, all groups of learners are making progress which is improving towards that of peers with similar starting points.	Some pupils make expected progress. Progress is broadly in line with national from similar starting points.	Some, or all pupils are under-achieving considerably given their KS 2 starting point or starting point in the subject.
	Learning	Pupils learn exceptionally well.	Pupils learn well.	Pupils' learning is satisfactory.	Learning limited; pupils underachieve
	Attitudes	High levels of engagement, interest, resilience, confidence, independence, courtesy, collaboration, and cooperation.	Most pupils are motivated to participate. They are resilient, confident, independent, considerate, respectful and courteous.	Most pupils want to work hard and to improve. They work cooperatively.	Pupils, or specific groups (inc D & SEN), are not excited, enthused or engaged by the teaching.
Teaching & Assessment	Subject K&U	Demonstrates deep understanding of subject	Secure	Insecure	Poor
	Planning	'Astute'	'Effective'	Adequate	Planning fails to take account of needs
	Use of time	Very well used with adequate time for pupils to practice and embed new skills	Time is used productively; pupils given sufficient time to apply, review and develop their learning.	Little time is wasted	Time is wasted by some or all pupils
	Challenge and match to needs	Tasks are challenging; match pupils needs 'accurately'	Tasks are clear and challenge pupils	Individual needs are 'usually' met.	Challenge is inappropriate for some or all pupils
	Activities	Well-judged and often imaginative	'Effective'	Mostly appropriate, but do not meet all needs	Not sufficiently well matched to pupils' needs
	Expectations	Determined and consistently high.....of all pupils	High	Sufficient for satisfactory progress	Not high enough
	Interventions	Sharply focused and timely. Match individual needs accurately. 'Notable impact'	'Appropriate'. Good impact on learning	Additional support is deployed carefully	Additional support has little or no impact on learning – failing to narrow gaps
	RWCM and other skills	'Exceptional'. Every opportunity taken to develop 'crucial' skills, including RWCM	Very effective. A range of skills, including RWCM, is taught.	Some support for skills, but provided inconsistently.	Pupils cannot use RWCM skills as well as they should
	Assessment of prior learning	Systematic and accurate	Accurate	Careful, but may lack rigour. Some repetition of work/lack of challenge	Assessment takes too little account of pupils' prior learning of understanding
	Assessment during the lesson	Systematic. Identifies pupils' common misconceptions and ensure they are corrected	Progress is assessed regularly and accurately. Teacher questions skilfully...to reshape tasks...to improve learning. Tackles misconceptions	Work is monitored in the lesson. General misconceptions are picked up. Plans are adapted, but this is not always timely or relevant	Assessment takes too little account of pupils' prior learning or understanding
	Homework	Age-appropriate and challenging. In-line with STA policy. Consolidate learning and deepens understanding.	Appropriate and regular homework contributes well to learning	Appropriate homework is set. This contributes reasonably well to learning, including for D&SEN	Homework is not set regularly or it does not contribute to learning
Feedback and marking	Incisive feedback in line with STA policy. Pupils use it effectively to improve knowledge and skills.	Feedback is in line with STA policy; pupils use it well, knowing what to do to improve.	Pupils are informed about their progress and how to improve. This is usually timely and encouraging.	Pupils are rarely, if at all, informed about progress. Many do not know how to improve. Marking is minimal.	
Behaviour and Safety	Disruption to learning	Lesson proceeds without interruption.	Disruption to lesson is 'unusual'.	Major disruption is uncommon; there may be occasional low-level disruption, major disruption to learning is uncommon.	Persistent low-level disruption occurs 'more than occasionally'. It hinders learning. The lesson is disorderly.
	Pupils' response	Pupils love the challenge of learning and thrive in lessons. They are resilient curious. They are eager to know how to improve	Pupils focus well on their learning because teachers reinforce expectations for conduct, setting clear, challenging tasks	Pupils respond promptly to the teacher's directions. Nearly all students are engaged in learning.	Some or all pupils are not engaged by the teaching.
	Behaviour management	Behaviour management is highly effective and consistent.	Behaviour management strategies are applied consistently.	Clear procedures for managing behaviour; usually applied, but not always consistently.	Procedures for managing behaviour are not clear or are not used consistently
	Safety	Pupils understand unsafe situations and are highly aware how to keep themselves and others safe.	Pupils understand unsafe situations and how to stay safe.	Pupils know the main risks they face and understand how these may threaten their own/others' safety.	Pupils do not understand risk and may endanger themselves or others.

