



Rugby Free

Secondary School



Teaching and Learning Policy 2025-26

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1. Curriculum Vision

We intend to provide a broad, inclusive and ambitious curriculum that empowers our students to make both academic and personal progress. As a school with a diverse demographic, our aim is to ensure that all students achieve an excellent standard of education that not only prepares them for GCSE and A Level examinations, but ensures they are 'set for life' beyond the gates of Rugby Free Secondary School. As a consequence, all of our work is underpinned by our core values of: Kindness, Respect, Curiosity, Resilience, Collaboration and Endeavour.

2. Rationale

This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for teaching and learning within Rugby Free Secondary School. It is the method through which we offer a broad and balanced curriculum in which students know more, remember more and do more, as a consequence of its intent and implementation. This is because the curriculum, and its implementation, is the responsibility of all the members of the school community. The aim of this document is to help the teachers in the school become the most effective pedagogical practitioners they can be by using principles established from research, cognitive science and experience. The impact of quality teaching and learning is the progress students make, and the outcomes they achieve, from their relative starting points.

3. Purpose and Aims

Our curriculum aims to:

- Fully support our students to be happy, healthy and safe in the modern world
- Empower our students to know more, remember more, and do more
- Inspire our students to strive for excellence throughout their lives
- Promote inclusion of all students no matter their background, prior attainment or barrier to learning, to ensure access to the same ambitious curriculum content
- Provide the widest possible options available at GCSE and A Level in order to suit the needs of our students, and the local and national requirements
- Ensure the implementation of consistent planning & logical sequencing of content that leads to long term knowledge retention and learning
- Deliver a quality-first wave approach to teaching & learning, that promotes high expectation and inclusive classroom practice
- Supports the personal & character development of our students, enabling students to be 'set for life', and therefore having a positive impact on the community and the world around them
- Enables opportunities for students to develop socially and creatively
- Ensures that all students are numerate and literate, and develop a confidence for

reading

Our teaching and learning aim to:

- Ensure students develop deep understanding, by helping students connect new knowledge with existing knowledge so they are fluent and competent at applying their knowledge
- Ensure students embed learning into long-term memory
- Equip students with the cultural capital they require to be global citizens
- Enable students to confidently articulate what they have learned, ask questions and respond to others' ideas
- Enable our students to become confident and interested learners, who actively engaged in their own learning and the learning of others
- Develop the core values of our students

4. Planning for Learning

At RFSS, we have a series of curriculum documents that outline the learning our students should undertake. These include Curriculum Roadmaps, Curriculum Schemes of Learning and Implementation plans, Sequencing documents and Assessment overviews. Using these documents, teachers carefully plan learning opportunities that build on and deepen understanding, regularly requiring students to apply what they have learned to a range of different contexts. Individual lessons are planned, with a set of underlying principles underpinning classroom practice. These include: The sequential components and composites, the learning intention and contextualisation, key vocabulary, oracy & reasoning; planned assessment opportunities and the specific learning episodes for students.

5. The Science behind the Learning

Our working memory can only hold short sections of information at once, and too much information can cause cognitive overload. Working memory lasts for around fifteen seconds, and only begins to become longer from the age of sixteen upwards. As a result, we encourage lessons to be planned to present a small amount of new material at one time so that each point is considered and worked on, before the next point is introduced. New vocabulary is explicitly taught so that children use precise, subject specific vocabulary at key points in lessons and sequences of lessons. Opportunities to check for students' understanding are planned for in each episode. Awareness of ourselves as learners helps us to learn more effectively therefore metacognition is embedded into each lesson. Teachers ask questions and narrate their own thought processes to support learning.

6. Structuring Learning

The following structure may happen within a single lesson or over a sequence of learning:

- Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning (SET task). This is an opportunity for retrieval and recall activities based on previous learning. Effective

teaching recalls knowledge from previous lessons to establish a baseline starting point.

- Provide models: Providing students with models and worked examples can help them learn to solve problems faster. For students to know what success looks like, teachers will show worked examples and ensure children have a good understanding of why this is a good example. Teachers will then use a range of modelling strategies and metacognitive strategies (showing thoughts) to demonstrate the steps needed to achieve the intended learning. This may take the form of demonstrating how to solve a Maths problem; how to construct a sentence or paragraph or unpick key ideas from a text. (I do)
- Guided practice is used as an opportunity for students to build confidence with new learning; ask questions to clarify their thinking and for teachers to address any misconceptions. Guided practice could be in the form of worked examples, partner work or additional teacher guidance with the aim of preparing them for independent learning. Teachers' assessment for learning will decide whether children need additional scaffolds, teacher support or are ready to move on to independence. (We do)
- Independent practice is a vital part of learning. Practice is needed in order to become fluent and automatic in the recall of knowledge or a skill. Independent practice should involve the same material as the guided practice so children secure and embed learning. To ensure children are successful, teachers may use a range of scaffolds to support individual learners, and must give criteria on time and expectations. (You do)
- Questions allow teachers to know whether the learning has been secured and whether students are ready to move on. Questions may also uncover misconceptions allowing teachers to re-teach material or give further examples. Teachers will ask key questions at every stage of the lesson. Effective questions may ask students to: Summarise their learning, explain the procedure or process of learning, justify their thoughts, link their response to something else or someone else's response. By checking for understanding at each stage of the learning, teachers will ensure that learning is successful. Research suggests that the optimal success rate to be about 80% - as judged by oral responses during guided practice and individual work. It shows that pupils are learning the material and that they are being challenged.
- Students need regular practice in order to apply their knowledge and to develop schema in their long-term memory. When knowledge on a particular topic is large and well-connected, it is easier to learn new information and prior knowledge is more readily available for use.

More information about our principles can be seen below:

7. Classroom Talk & Question

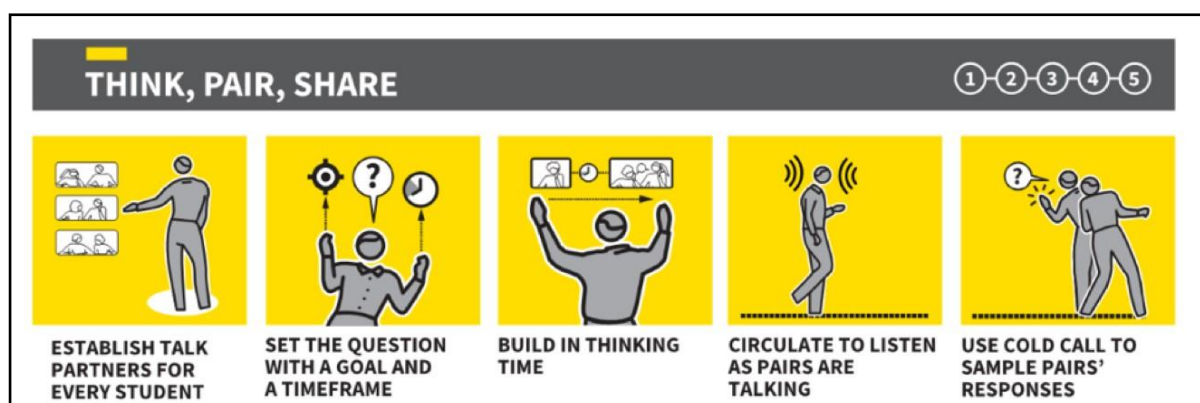
Rugby Free Secondary School Teaching Toolkit for Supporting Sub-Groups											
1	Key Learning & Reading	- Present key learning at the start of a unit, so students are aware of the components and composites. - Contextualise key learning so that students are aware of what they are learning and why. - Display key words during the lesson so that students are aware of key terminology and its meaning in context. - Ask students to use key words and terminology in their responses to demonstrate understanding. - Use the key reading strategies in lesson, which are:	2	Time	- Give students sufficient 'wait time' when posing a question, so they have time to formulate a response. - Ensure students are aware of the length of time they have to complete a task. - Provide reminders of how long is left on a task. - Ensure the times of learning episodes are varied, to ensure the pace of learning is kept high. - Write the start and finish times of assessments on the board, like in an external examination. - Provide additional time for students to complete assessments who have access arrangements.	3	Direct & Check	- Refer to the individual mechanisms of SLANT, so that students are continuously developing their habits of attention. - Provide information about what the lesson sequence looks like, so students know what to expect and how they can make links. - Model what is expected of students and utilise 'I do, We do, You do'. - Check for understanding using a range of strategies such as: questioning methods, mini whiteboards and sharing student work. - Circulate the classroom and actively support students who require this. - Regularly share what good looks like.	4	Visual Cues & Support	- Use dual coding to ensure that powerpoint slides are not overloaded with text. - Use Images to support those students who have low-levels of Literacy and who are EAL. - Use body language cues in order to support delivery. - Use icons to explain what type of task something is. - Know your key students and support them at the outset of a task. - Use Bloom's Taxonomy to facilitate greater depth in learning.

Effective questioning and classroom talk is essential for students to connect new learning to existing knowledge and consequently develop a more secure understanding. Teachers will ask key questions alongside the most effective questioning strategies, based on Tom Sherrington's Walkthroughs. The core Walkthrough strategies, which are to be embedded in every lesson, are:

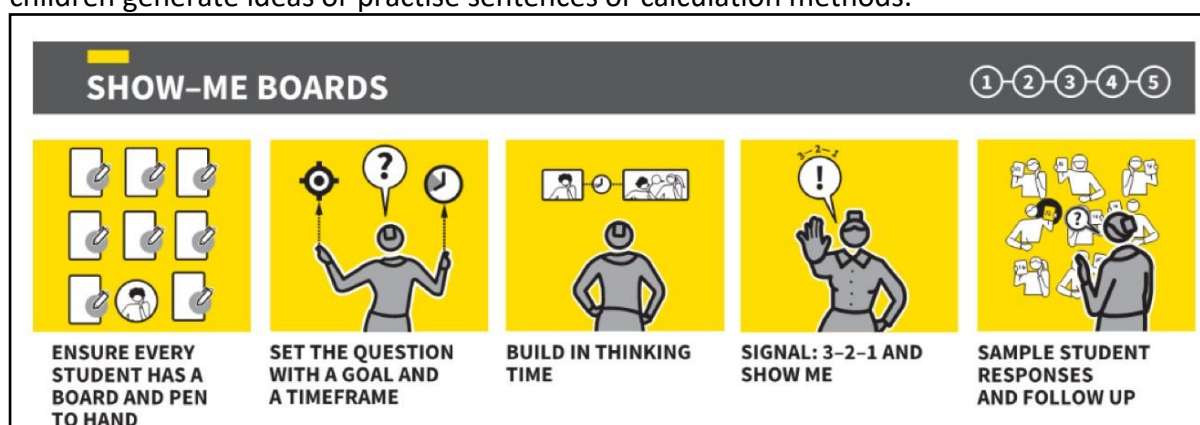
Cold Calling: This technique helps address two main purposes of questioning: making all students think and providing feedback to the teacher about how things are going. Cold calling allows teachers to choose who answers, keeping the whole class involved and giving teachers better information to plan next steps.



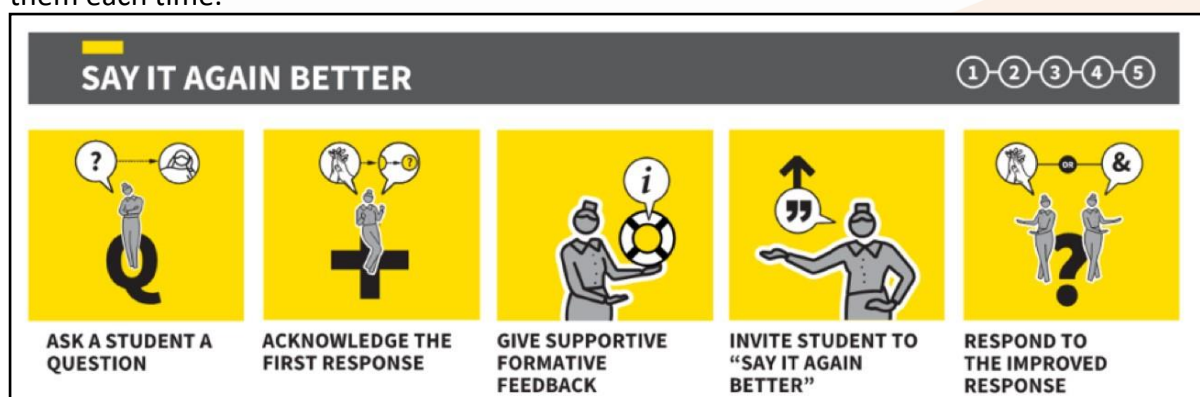
Think, Pair, Share: There are many times when it is beneficial for students to engage in a structured discussion. Pairs are a powerful way to involve all students in rehearsing and sharing ideas.



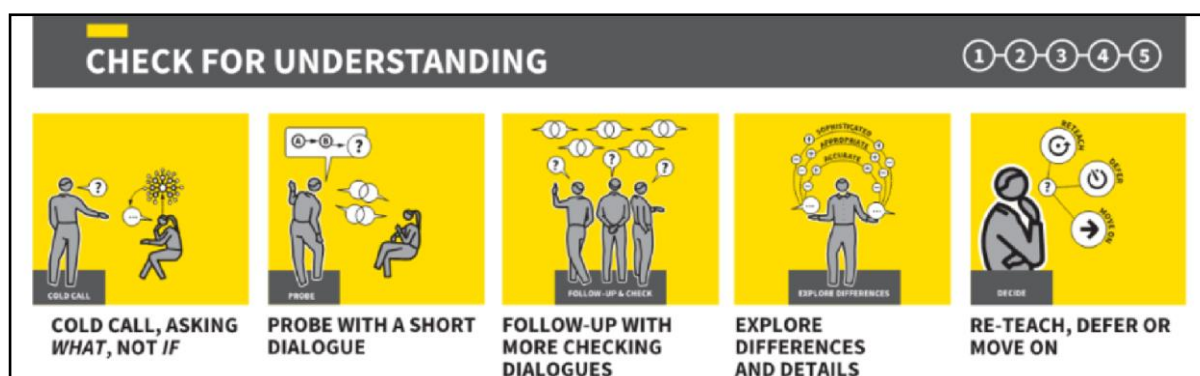
Show Me Boards: Sample responses from a whole class using mini whiteboards. Students write on boards in response to questions and simultaneously show their responses. This gives feedback to teachers about the range of student responses. Mini whiteboards also help children generate ideas or practise sentences or calculation methods.



Say It Again, Better: This supports children to produce high quality verbal responses. If teachers accept shallow responses without further development, children will half-form answers are the norm. With Say It Again, Better, you accept initial responses but develop them each time.



Checking for Understanding: Effective teachers systematically check for understanding from students. Teachers cannot assume students have understood unless they get feedback telling them what they have understood. The information informs the next steps in a learning sequence. The information informs the next steps in a learning sequence.



8. Adaptive Teaching and Learning

With everything we teach, we aim to support our students to gain a deeper understanding of the learning, supporting them to move from being a novice to an expert learner. In every class, however, there will be students at different stages of their learning journey, with varying starting points, contextual knowledge, vocabulary and expertise. Adaptive teaching supports and challenges all students to build expertise and become more proficient, but especially those students with Special Educational Needs (SEND) Adaptive teaching may involve:

- Temporary supports or scaffolds, which may include word banks, writing frames, sentence stems, concrete or pictorial resources, checklists, worked examples
- Additional modelling of smaller steps
- Additional adult support
- Pre-teaching of vocabulary or methods
- Smaller group teaching
- Targeted support
- Targeted questioning
- Additional time
- Personalised feedback

In addition to this, there are a number of SEND Teaching and Learning principles in classrooms, such as dual coding, pastel-based backgrounds, and overlays.

To support further, Learning Support Assistants should be informed of the specific needs of students and of planning in order to understand the role they are to carry out. They must be given clear and explicit instructions as to the concepts, facts and information being taught and the intended learning outcomes, and may adopt a 'velcro' or 'helicopter' approach where necessary.

9. Assessment

Effective assessment and evaluation improve the quality of teaching and learning and as such is integral to the whole process. In conjunction with this policy, please also read the Feedback and Marking Policy and the Assessment Policy. The school particularly values assessment as an on-going process and use a range of assessment for learning strategies within each lesson.

Staff should encourage students to self-assess and peer assess their work against the success criteria, especially with home learning.

Our principles of summative assessment can be found below:

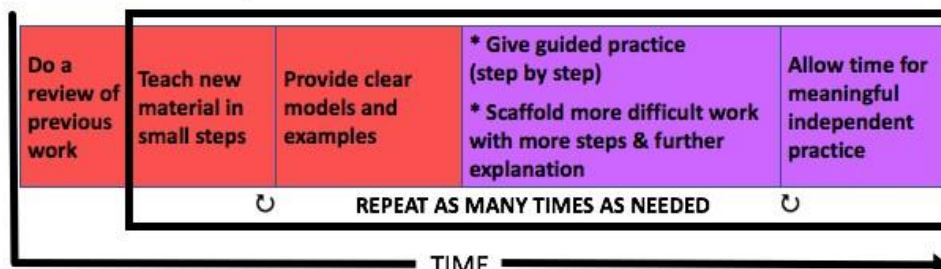
Rugby Free Secondary School: Assessment at RFSS Key Information & Headlines							
Contextual Information	- National reforms in assessment methods at Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3, and Key Stage 4 have informed RFSS' new assessment system: a) KS2 Introduction of Scaled Scores. b) KS3's increased rigour. RFSS used this autonomy to develop a system suited to our students. c) KS4 qualifications overhaul, meaning increased levels of challenge. - Our approach reflects the time period following 'Life after Levels'. - Post 'Life after Levels', RFSS adopted a developmental approach to feedback, centred on strong, constructive dialogue aimed at improving the depth and quality of students' work, and therefore progress.	Progress Summary	- Rugby Free Secondary School sets aspirational and ambitious progress targets (defined by Flight Path / FFT Aspire) for individual students, in all subjects at Key Stage 3 and 4, based on their prior achievement at Key Stage 2 (Scaled scores for Year 7 from September 2016 onwards). - The emphasis is on the on-going journey throughout their five years of study in Key Stages 3 and 4. - Additionally, baseline tests also provide the basis of target setting. These may include Departmental baseline assessments, and national tests such as CAT4 assessments.	Assessment Sequencing	- The KS3 curriculum links directly to GCSE specifications, so in effect a 5-year curriculum, establishing key knowledge, skills and understanding, is in place. - The KS4 curriculum links to the KS5 curriculum where appropriate, in order to create a potential 7-year learning and assessment journey. - Department areas map out their assessments linked to topic areas in each year group. - Rigorous assessments, matched to new GCSE criteria, are standardised. - Students receive regular feedback to ensure they understand the next steps that they must take to progress further.	Reporting	- Progress is reported indicating how well a student is achieving in relation to their target grade at each termly assessment point in the academic year. - This will be an indication of whether they will meet, exceed or fall short of their personal target at the end of each year, if they continue to make progress at the current rate i.e. their progress falls in line with their flight-path (Years 7 – 11). - Progress and Attitude to Learning data will be reported 3 times per academic year. - Progress in Key Stage 3 is defined through the terms 'Developing, Secure & Exceeding'. - Progress in Key Stage 4 is defined through national 9-1 grading.

10. The Learning Environment

In classrooms, the learning environment should be conducive to effective teaching and learning. Displays should reflect content currently taught with key vocabulary and school values displayed. Teachers should use display and resources to positively impact on learning; through consolidation/reminder of previous learning and introducing new information and knowledge. Pupils should know how to easily access resources in the classroom to support learning, where applicable. All displays should reflect the school's high expectations and ambition for all.

11. Teaching and Learning Model

RFSS Lesson Structure:



Repeatedly:

