



South Downs Learning Trust



# RATTON

# CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT POLICY

Date adopted by the Trust and approved by Trustees	June 2021
Date of next Review	June 2022
Status	Statutory
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## OUR VISION

A community of primary and secondary academies that are the first choice for students and families in Sussex, with an outstanding reputation for high aspiration and high achievement

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# Introduction

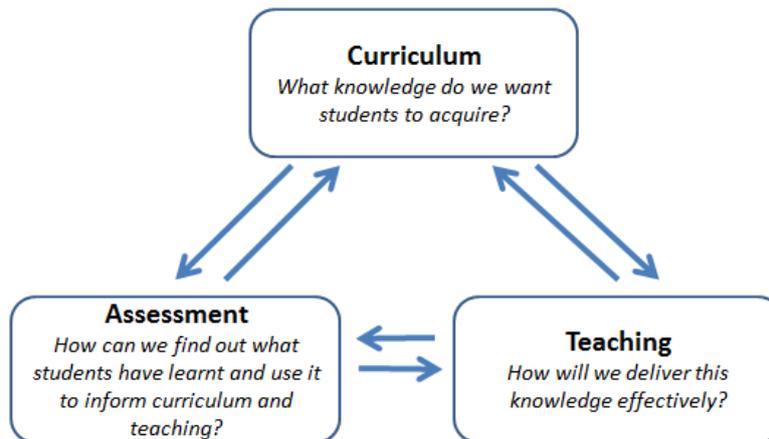
Students at Ratton School are entitled to a curriculum and quality of teaching that matches or exceeds that provided by any other state sector or private sector school in the country.

· Our intent is to ensure that through curriculum, teaching and assessment all students, especially those in at-risk sub-groups, will:

1. Make significant academic progress over their 5 years at Ratton School.
2. Develop and retain the knowledge (declarative i.e. knowledge you can think about and say and procedural i.e. knowledge you can do) and cultural capital (including relevant tier two and tier three vocabulary) that will enrich their experience and empower them to access, the next stage of their education, find suitable employment and participate in a democratic society.
3. Value learning for its own sake and develop a range of skills, aptitudes, and personal qualities to take into life. These will include non-cognitive skills (such as taking responsibility for one's actions, resilience, working with others, acceptance of feedback and compassion), metacognitive skills (such as planning, monitoring and evaluation) and study skills (such as retrieval practice, spaced practice, and dual coding).

· It is essential that decisions about curriculum, teaching and assessment are informed by the best available evidence, CPD and the practical wisdom of the most effective teachers.

## The links between curriculum, teaching and assessment



Curriculum, teaching, and assessment are inextricably linked. When all three are aligned and of the highest quality, they should facilitate effective learning for all students, irrespective of their starting points. In turn, this should translate into all students making good progress and achieving strong academic outcomes. This matters, because it gives them the best possible life chances.

The curriculum and our Knowledge and Skills Maps outline the key knowledge that students need to learn over their time with us in order to be successful; this will then drive what and how we teach. A challenging curriculum will require students to think deeply about subject and lesson content. In other words, the level of challenge in the curriculum sets the level of challenge in our classrooms.

Next, we need to consider how to enable effective learning. When we talk about learning, we mean the retention and recall of knowledge so that it can be applied in different contexts. It should be durable and flexible. For this to happen, a deep understanding of the ‘active ingredients’ of teaching based on the best available research evidence is required. This is what our six pedagogical principles aim to do; however, these must be contextualised within Knowledge and Skills Maps to different curriculum areas.

Assessment can be seen as the bridge between teaching and learning. Dylan Wiliam describes this well: “It is only through assessment that we can find out whether what has happened in the classroom has produced the learning we intended.”

Valid and reliable assessment should inform our planning as teachers and leaders. For example, if assessment reveals students have not fully learnt a particular topic, then it would seem sensible for a class teacher to re-teach that topic or relevant aspects of that topic. On a wider scale, it would also be worth reviewing the curriculum to see how that particular topic is being covered - e.g. is the level of challenge too high or too low? Is it in the right sequence relative to other topics that are needed to understand it?

# Curriculum

<b>Objectives</b>
<p><b>The curriculum should be challenging in its depth and breadth so that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All students acquire knowledge that takes them beyond their experience.</li><li>• All students are encouraged to appreciate the value of each subject and content of lessons.</li><li>• All students are well-prepared for terminal exams at the end of five years of study.</li><li>• All students build their academic background knowledge and cultural capital by acquiring <a href="#">tier two and tier three vocabulary</a>.</li><li>• At each key stage, all students acquire and retain the foundational knowledge required for the next key stage at the very least.</li></ul>
<b>Underlying Principles</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The curriculum must provide a Knowledge and Skills Map that directs what knowledge should be taught and when it should be taught. However, this should also allow some flexibility for teachers to respond to the differing needs of their classes.</li><li>• The curriculum must be taught in a coherent and step-by-step sequence that allows for the incremental development of knowledge within each subject/topic.</li><li>• When possible, each new unit of learning should build upon previous units.</li><li>• Broad and deep factual knowledge is usually the prerequisite for skills such as critical thinking, creative thinking, evaluation and analysis.</li><li>• Learning and performance should not be confused. Curriculum design should support real learning which requires durable changes to long-term memory.</li><li>• New tier two and tier three vocabulary should be incorporated into curriculum planning.</li></ul>
<b>How do we achieve this?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Each subject/team should develop a long-term Knowledge and Skills Map that clearly lays out the curriculum across the relevant key stages, so that the knowledge students are expected to acquire each academic year is made explicit. This knowledge should build cumulatively from year 7 to 11 in terms of its breadth and depth.</li><li>• Subject/teaching teams should identify the concepts that are central to the mastery of each subject. They must then maintain an unrelenting focus on helping students to learn this knowledge.</li><li>• Regular <a href="#">retrieval practice</a> and <a href="#">spaced practice</a> should be built into the curriculum to help students form durable long-term memories.</li><li>• CPD, specifically through TL teams must maintain an unrelenting focus on improving and evolving the curriculum, and ensure that all teachers are developing their subject pedagogical knowledge.</li><li>• Each unit of work must be supported by a Knowledge and Skills map that stipulates with precision the material-to-be-learnt. This must include relevant tier two and tier three vocabulary and should be used consistently across each department.</li><li>• Where appropriate, strategies must be in place (e.g. check lists) to support students in self-regulating their learning of the curriculum.</li><li>• <a href="#">Homework</a> should be planned into the curriculum and consistently applied across teams. It should provide students with the opportunity to practise, embed, extend upon or apply the knowledge that they have been taught in lessons, or provide the opportunity to improve a piece of work.</li><li>• Key curriculum documents must be centralised and made available for students, parents and carers via the Ratton School website.</li></ul>
<b>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</b>

- Curriculum Leaders and SLT must be responsible for the quality-assurance of curriculum plans and Knowledge and Skills Maps.
- Curriculum provision will be reviewed as a part of Learning Walks and Curriculum Team Reviews.
- Curriculum content provision must be evaluated and reviewed each academic year.
- Homework will be monitored by the curriculum leader
- Curriculum Leaders must regularly review and remap the curriculum in response to the effectiveness of its delivery.
- Each year, the curriculum must be formally evaluated and reviewed.

# Teaching

Objectives
Effective teaching leads to students acquiring, retaining and applying curriculum knowledge in the classroom and beyond.
Underlying Principles
<p>Learning happens when students connect new knowledge to what they already know. To achieve this, teaching must involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Challenge</b> so that students have high expectations of what they can achieve.</li> <li>• <b>Explanation</b> so that they acquire new knowledge.</li> <li>• <b>Modelling</b> so that students know how to apply their knowledge (including explicit modelling of metacognitive strategies and the thinking processes of adults).</li> <li>• <b>Questioning</b> so that students are made to think hard with breadth, depth and accuracy.</li> <li>• <b>Feedback</b> so that students further develop their knowledge.</li> <li>• Purposeful <b>practice</b> so that students think deeply and eventually achieve fluency.</li> <li>• Positive and effective classroom climates and relationships. A structured and safe classroom environment where relationships are valued and built on mutual respect.</li> <li>• Students are taught how to <b>store and retrieve</b> knowledge using learning strategies such as retrieval practice and spaced practice.</li> <li>• Students are taught how to develop <b>metacognitive</b> strategies to support long term memory.</li> </ul>
How do we achieve this?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through a ‘tight but loose’ approach so that the six principles above are contextualised to the subject/topic and the profile of the students.</li> <li>• Through an explicit instruction approach that includes specific practices such as reviewing previous learning, providing <b>models</b> for students, retrieval <b>practice</b>, planning in adequate time for students’ deliberate <b>practice</b>, ensuring appropriate <b>challenge</b> for all students and the effective scaffolding of this challenge.</li> </ul>

- By teachers asking both lower and higher cognitive **questions** to embed and develop knowledge.
- By teachers **modelling** and **explaining** metacognitive processes by making excellence explicit, demonstrating the thinking processes of experts, and breaking down and solving problems. This should support the development of students' planning, self-monitoring and self-evaluation skills.
- Through written and verbal **feedback**, which should be an element of every lesson - as outlined in each department feedback policy.
- By teaching [metacognitive strategies](#) explicitly.
- Teachers teach tier two and tier three vocabulary explicitly through sentence stems, test sentences, images and other explicit instruction strategies.
- Through collaborative CPD (subject based where appropriate e.g. SPDS) that maintain a consistent focus on developing pedagogical subject knowledge. These sessions should focus on how to effectively teach the curriculum over the next fortnight.
- By creating and maintaining a productive classroom climate through positive interactions with students, active and early parental contact and adhering to the school behaviour policy. The most effective way of motivating students is to enable meaningful achievement.
- Through the explicit instruction of cognitive science strategies including [retrieval practice](#), [spaced practice](#), [dual coding](#), [interleaving](#), [concrete examples](#) and [elaboration](#).

#### Monitoring & Evaluation

- Termly teaching and learning reviews that involve a combination of lesson observations, data analysis and work sampling.
- Appraisal targets and actions that are aligned to teaching principles.
- CPD that is consistent and have an unrelenting focus on subject knowledge and pedagogy development.
- Fortnightly T&L briefings.
- Lesson visits (including Bright Spots).
- Connect data.
- Tracking point data.

## Assessment

#### Objectives

**Formative and summative assessment is used to measure the acquisition of knowledge and serve teaching so that:**

- Leaders and teachers at all levels know the gaps in student knowledge and can adapt their leadership, intervention, planning and practice accordingly.
- Students know the gaps in their own knowledge and can adapt their study accordingly.

- Students have a clear understanding of how to improve their current and future learning.
- Students do not forget the feedback provided by the assessment.
- Leaders and teachers at all levels have a clear picture of how students are performing and can intervene appropriately.

#### Underlying Principles

- Assessment operates on two layers:
  - **Formative** - ongoing assessment of small chunks of the curriculum to find out what students know and understand to inform teaching and planning.
  - **Summative** - less frequent assessment of larger chunks of the curriculum to provide reliable information about student learning and performance.
- Assessment must be principally **formative** in nature as this will have the greater impact on learning. Where summative assessment is used, the outcomes must be used to inform teaching, feedback\* and learning.
- Assessment must support teaching and curriculum rather than drive it.
- Assessment must support and inform the cumulative and sequential mastery of the curriculum.
- Assessment must be tailored to the subject and carried out with fidelity by all teaching staff in the department.
- Assessment must focus on the composite parts of complex procedures and not just the final outcome - i.e. with extended writing.
- Assessment must find a balance between reliability (consistency of outcomes and judgements within and across classes) and validity (provide teachers with the information they are looking for). There is no perfect balance between the two.
- Testing causes learning; therefore students will learn more when they are regularly tested.
- Assessment must provide useful and timely data in order for effective intervention at whole-school, subject and classroom level.

\*feedback does not only mean written marking and is inclusive of: verbal feedback; whole-class feedback; adaptations to teaching; live-marking or any other method fit for purpose.

#### How do we achieve this?

- To ensure validity and clarity of purpose, subjects/teams retain control over the shaping of their assessments.
- To ensure reliability and fidelity of summative assessment, subjects/teams standardise the conditions of delivery and moderate the accuracy of judgements to derive a %. This way, consistent inferences can be made.
- There should be sufficient summative assessments to inform data capture and tracking points throughout academic year per year group. However, these should not be at the expense of teaching a broad and deep curriculum.
- Regular assessment of tier two and tier three vocabulary through low-stakes quizzing.
- Teachers give formative feedback on summative assessments. This could include individual and/or whole-class feedback.
- An appropriate range of strategies must be used to regularly assess and improve retention of knowledge. For example, low-stakes quizzes, multiple-choice questions, short answer questions and completing blank knowledge organisers.
- Formative assessment happens regularly in the classroom through teacher questioning, live marking, discussion and peer feedback.
- Questioning in class is used to assess strengths and weaknesses in student knowledge and understanding and inform future teaching.
- Summative assessments must be cumulative. This means that termly assessments include the testing of knowledge covered in previous units as well as the most recent.
- Assessment should be shaped by, but not necessarily identical to, the final assessment e.g. KS2 SAT tests or GCSE exams. Often, component parts require a narrower assessment focus e.g. how to write an effective story opening rather than a whole story; how to execute a relay handover, rather than the whole race.

## Monitoring & Evaluation

- Assessments must be regularly evaluated by the curriculum leader and line manager to check reliability, validity and fidelity.
- Subject/team tracking must provide leaders and teachers with actionable and portable data.
- Tracking points must be used to monitor academic outcomes.
- Assessment data should be used to inform the actions and targets of teachers and departments.
- Assessment must be evaluated and reviewed each year.
- Teaching and learning reviews will demonstrate that the principles are in use and embedded.

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