Learning and Teaching Strategy

Learning and Teaching at Sydney Russell School

The learning and teaching culture at Sydney Russell School pursues dynamic, engaging and purposeful learning experiences for all our pupils and staff. We are committed to ensuring access to the curriculum which enables all pupils to realise their academic potential. This is reflected in our Yr 7-11 banding structure; Fast Track, Upper Band, Middle Band and AS (Academic Support). This banding structure enables teaching to support and challenge individual pupils, personalising their learning in order to achieve their targets which reflect good progress from their starting points on transition from primary.

Detailed programmes of study (PoS) underpin our curriculum. Explicit learning objectives, detailed pedagogy of learning phases and strategic use of assessment particular to each lesson ensures progress is carefully planned, reviewed and evaluated.

Quality assurance of PoS and the quality of learning and teaching incorporates termly phase/department reviews, lesson visits, work scrutiny, analysis of student progress data and student voice. Triangulating evidence informs phase/departmental priorities, interventions and planning for CPD.

Learning and Teaching Strategy

At Sydney Russell School we keep it simple: assess, plan, teach.

Assess – feedback is given regularly, it is diagnostic and ensures a secure overview of where students are in their learning.
Plan – lesson plans are clear and consider 'why' students are learning; a quality first approach.
Teach – instructions are explicit to ensure students know what is being asked of them, engage with the lesson and act on feedback.

Quality of implementation is guided by various models, for example, Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction and DRICE (deepening thinking, role modelling learning, impact on learning, challenging expectations, engagement with learning).

The Sydney Russell School Lesson model

Our lesson model is underpinned by Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction.

1. Do now: prompt lesson starts ensure swift and purposeful student engagement in learning

2. Learning Objectives: To know / to understand / to be able to… - learning centred, developing students' knowledge, understanding and skills

3. New learning presented in small steps with explicit language for instructions

4. Modelling: providing cognitive support to help learners learn how to solve problems, how to develop their thinking and how to deepen their questions

5. Questioning: deepening, challenging and checking learners' thinking and understanding

6. Building learning power: a range of learning experiences are available which enable students to develop their resilience, resourcefulness, reciprocity and reflectiveness. The learning habit/behaviour that is being exercised is explicit.

7. Practise: opportunities for learners to practise new learning, collaboratively and/or independently

8. Checking understanding: evidence gathering of learners' understanding and progress towards the learning objectives to inform the teacher's immediate interventions and future planning

9. Feedback: links explicitly to self, peer and teacher assessment. Feedback is acted upon to enhance learning and progress. EDIRT (Enough Dedicated Improvement and Reflection time) is the mechanism through which students reflect on and improve their work (see Assessment Strategy)

10. Reflect and review: identifying progress in learning and next steps linked to post-lesson challenges (homework) and future learning

DR ICE

Practice and pedagogy is underpinned by the DR ICE model. Colleagues share a common language around teaching and learning, which is centred around the DRICE model.

Deepening thinking, **R**ole modelling learning, **I**mpact on learning, **C**hallenging expectations and **E**ngagement in learning. This is a common language used across the school when reflecting on pedagogy and practice and when working collaboratively with colleagues.

SRS Learner

We believe that effective learners develop a range of essential skills:

- **Collaboration** – listening, understanding, and contributing effectively
- **Reflection** – assessing progress and planning next steps
- **Resilience** – persevering through challenges, solving problems, and consolidating learning
- **Resourcefulness** – making connections, asking questions, and working independently

During form time, students are explicitly taught how to demonstrate and apply these learning skills. Teachers further promote their development by designing lessons that purposefully nurture and embed these attributes.

Attitude to Learning

Through the implementation of the curriculum, we aim is develop our young people as life-long learners. Teachers reflect on students Attitude to Learning and enter a grade alongside their formal assessment grade. Students are encouraged to reflect on their Attitude to Learning, to ensure that know how to maintain or improve their grade.

Effort Grade	Descriptor	Descriptor guidance
1	Outstanding	• The student is always ready to learn with all necessary equipment including books and folders. • The student consistently works hard, takes initiative, and completes all tasks, including extension tasks. • The student often volunteers constructive contributions to lessons. • The student is fully focused, attentive and cooperative at all times, helping fellow students to learn and staff to teach. • Homework is always completed on time and to the best of their ability.
2	Good	• The student is often ready to learn with all necessary equipment including books and folders. • The student generally works hard and completes all tasks. • The student sometimes volunteers constructive contributions to lessons. • The student is fully focused, attentive and cooperative at all times, helping fellow students to learn and staff to teach. • Homework is typically completed on time and to the best of their ability.

3	Inconsistent	• The student is sometimes ready to learn. They usually have all necessary equipment, such as books and folders, but occasionally forget items.
		• The student's effort is inconsistent, and they often need prompting to complete tasks.
		• The student rarely volunteers constructive contributions to lessons.
		• The student is generally cooperative but can sometimes cause low-level disruption. They may lose focus at times and require reminders to stay on task
		• Homework is usually completed but not always on time or to the best of their ability.
4	Poor	• The student is often not ready to learn. They frequently forget necessary equipment.
		• The student's effort is low, and they often need regular prompts to complete tasks.
		• The student very rarely volunteers constructive contributions to lessons.
		• The student can be uncooperative and regularly causes low-level disruption. They often lose focus and require reminders to stay on task
		• Homework is rarely completed on time and often not to the best of their ability.

Curriculum Hub Model

To continue to refine and improve our curriculum we have introduced curriculum hubs. Curriculum hub meetings are an opportunity to work with Heads of Departments on a weekly basis, to drive school improvement and departmental priorities. The rationale for the hubs is to support curriculum leads with getting the work done, providing support and guidance and providing continuing professional development and learning. Meetings are planned according to whole school improvement priorities.

Subject CPDL

Subject professional development meetings are now built into the school day, ensuring that each department has one hour of CPDL per week. The focus and facilitation provided through the curriculum hubs will strengthen the quality of subject-specific CPDL by further developing the expertise of curriculum leads. While curriculum leads determine the

focus of their department's CPDL sessions, the guidance and support from the hubs will help maintain a consistently high standard of professional development across all subjects.

Monitoring the quality of practice

Learning and teaching is rigorously monitored through:

- Quality assurance of Programmes of Study (PoS)
- Lesson visits
- Department reviews
- Analysis of student progress data
- Student voice
- Staff surveys
- Collaborative Improvement Strategy
- CPD & evaluations
- Reporting to Principal and Governors

Department Reviews

Formal lesson observations and work scrutinies are conducted once per term by curriculum leads, key stage leads, and members of the senior leadership team. Each review comprises a one-hour lesson observation and a detailed scrutiny of students' work, focusing on the development of learning, the level of challenge, the quality of teacher feedback, peer and self-assessment, and presentation. These departmental reviews enable the identification of exemplary practice, which is then celebrated and shared to promote consistency and excellence across the school.

Early Intervention Plan

Concerns about teacher underperformance and the quality of teaching raised through Department Reviews will initiate an Early Intervention Plan. This is an informal support mechanism which has a 'formal structure', including lesson visits and ongoing professional learning opportunities. The Early Intervention Plan aims to intervene swiftly through an agreed action plan and coaching support to ensure the quality of teaching improves and meets the Teachers' Standards.

Cause for concern

Where there are concerns about teacher underperformance and the quality of teaching, the school would look in the first instance to offer that teacher informal support (see Early Intervention Plan). The school believes that 12 weeks is a reasonable timescale for a teacher to show improvement. Where concerns remain following this process a 'Cause for concern' will be triggered and the teacher will be placed on formal capability procedures.

A cause for concern will outline the concerns, set targets, identify training and actions and agree review points. It will result in an agreed increase in school support and monitoring, above what is usually provided. Being placed on the formal capability procedures could lead to dismissal.