St George's | British International School

Teaching & Learning Policy
Version Number 1.1

Version	Author(s)	Position(s)	Date
1.0	PR	HSS	November 2019
1.1	PR	HSS	March 2021

March 2021

Contents

Executive Summary

Audience

As teaching and learning is our key business, this policy should be read by all members of the school community - governors, teachers, support staff, parents, pupils and alumni. Non educators may well find this executive summary sufficient to gain an understanding of the approaches encouraged at St George's.

Key Points

- Through a focus on:
  - A broad, deep and balanced curriculum;
  - Effective teaching and learning;
  - The development of the Nine Cs;
- ...the school attempts to develop in its pupils:
  - A love of learning;
  - A foundation of knowledge;
  - A body of skills;
  - An enthusiasm for the world beyond the classroom;
  - A respect for difference.
- To help to achieve this, this policy outlines:
  - A shared definition of learning;
  - The school's commitment to evidence-informed practice;
  - An (evolving) body of core research that shapes the school's actions;
  - A summary of the characteristics of great teaching drawn by synthesising the core research findings;
  - The organisational structure, responsibilities, monitoring and evaluation that facilitate the promotion of great teaching and learning;
  - The role of feedback, prep and practice (homework) in supporting great teaching and learning.

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Policy Statement

It is the policy of the school to provide a **rich and varied learning environment** that allows children to develop their **knowledge, skills and abilities** to their full potential. To be an exceptional and successful school we appreciate the need to have a **shared vision** of **key habits** and **characteristics** that will define effective learners. Students, staff and parents must be aware of the role they play in enabling and supporting high quality learning.

The majority of impact will come as a result of classroom based learning and associated **prep and practice** (homework). However the wider co-curriculum and learning beyond the classroom is equally important in providing students with a variety of learning experiences which increase their awareness of learning as a life skill beyond school and help prepare them to become the leaders of tomorrow.

By ensuring our curriculum is **broad, deep and balanced** and well matched to **pupils' abilities and interests**, and by delivering teaching that is **challenging and inspiring**, we will provide the platform for our students to excel and develop into respectful, compassionate and aspirational young people.

1.2 Aims

Through our teaching we aim to engender in our pupils:

- a **love of learning** for its own sake;
- a **foundation of knowledge** and **body of skills** with which to understand and question the world we live in and to prepare them, through an innovative approach to education, for the world they are likely to inhabit in the future;
- an **enthusiasm for the world beyond the classroom** – in particular, sport, music and the performing and visual arts;
- a **respect for difference** in others and a recognition that the efforts and achievements of every individual in our community are valued equally.

Section 2: Practice and Procedure

2.1 Key Principles

St George's British International School adapts the best of **National Curriculum of England and Wales**, alongside the **International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme**. We value both tradition and innovation, delivered by inspiring and knowledgeable teachers who are actively engaged with developments in international education.

2.2 A Definition of Learning

The primary goal of instruction should be to facilitate long-term learning — that is, to create relatively permanent changes in comprehension, understanding, and skills of the types that will support long-term retention and transfer.

Soderstrom and Björk (2015)[1]

---

[1] Source: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275355435_Learning_Versus_Performance_An_Integrative_Review

2.3 Research and Evidence Informed Practice

St George's British International School is committed to developing an **evidence-informed approach** to teaching and learning. We also recognise that the specific context within which the school operates is unique, and therefore encourage all teaching staff to engage critically with research and where possible engage in their own further study and school based **action research projects**. The following key texts are essential in underpinning the teaching philosophy at St George's British International School. This list of key texts is regularly reviewed and updated as new research becomes available.

- Barak Rosenshine: Principles of Instruction[2]
- Rob Coe: What makes great teaching[3]
- James Ko: Effective Teaching[4]
- Daniel Willingham Why don't kids like school?[5]
- The Education Endowment Foundation Toolkit[6]
- Education Endowment Foundation report on Metacognition: by Professor Daniel Muijs[7]
- Robert Bjork: Desirable Difficulties[8]
- John Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory[9]
- Gazzaley and Rosen: The Distracted Mind[10]

---

[2] Available here

[3] Source: https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/What-Makes-Great-Teaching-REPORT.pdf

[4] Source: https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/EducationDevelopmentTrust/files/98/98ad6340-0ef6-4e1d-a541-db6018afce7d.pdf

[5] Available here

[6] Source: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit

[7] Source: https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/31617/1/EEF_Metacognition_and_self-regulated_learning.pdf

[8] **Bjork, R. A.** (2013). *Desirable difficulties perspective on learning*. In H. Pashler (Ed.), Encyclopedia of the mind. Thousand Oaks: Sage Reference.

[9] See: https://impact.chartered.college/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Cognitive-Load-Theory-and-its-application-in-the-classroom.pdf

[10] **Gazzaley, A. and Rosen, L. D.** (2016) The Distracted Mind, MIT Press

2.4 Planning and Preparation

Postholder(s)	Responsibilities
Strategy Team and School Leadership Teams	■ Create and maintain an environment of **excellent behaviour** for learning which promotes **effective learning**, **high standards** of achievement, and **self-discipline**. ■ Determine, organise and implement a **full, deep and balanced curriculum**, in line with the National Curriculum of England and Wales and IGCSE and IB specifications and which allows pupils to excel. ■ Ensure that our values of the **Nine Cs** are embedded through a range of teaching and learning opportunities. ■ Ensure that effective and appropriate **support, stretch and challenge** is available and planned for all students. ■ Ensure that all staff have access to **high quality training** to improve the quality of provision through all subject areas. ■ Create and maintain an **effective partnership with parents** and carers to support excellent student outcomes and positive personal development and well-being. ■ Ensure regular **celebration of student achievement** – sporting, cultural and academic. ■ **Translate, summarise and publicise key evidence-based research to ensure that all teachers are engaging with research to evolve and develop their practice.**
Heads of Department and Phase Coordinators	■ Have in place **curriculum plans** that show progression in terms of knowledge and skills throughout the school. These must set out subject or unit learning objectives, suggested activities, cross curricular opportunities for literacy, numeracy and ICT, and a clear framework for assessment. ■ Ensure that curriculum plans and resources are tailored to accommodate the **learning needs of all**. ■ Lead the department or phase by example and set excellent standards. ■ Ensure that the **Nine Cs** are embedded through a range of teaching and learning opportunities. ■ Set learning and teaching priorities and targets for the department within the context of the department improvement plan and school development plan. ■ Engage in **appropriate training** and disseminate information to staff efficiently, effectively and promptly. Identify professional development requirements within the department and utilise meeting time to develop the standard of teaching and learning. ■ Ensure **assessment procedures** provide information to inform future planning and intervention, including rigorous and consistent use of the assessment policy. ■ **Publicise key evidence-based research to ensure that all teachers are engaging with research to evolve and develop their practice.**
Teachers	■ Endeavour to demonstrate the research-informed **Characteristics of Great Teaching** (see **section 2.5**) in their practice. ■ **Plan effectively** and deliver lessons appropriate to every individual within the teaching group, ensuring **support, stretch and challenge** as appropriate. ■ **Monitor pupils' progress** through frequent formal and informal,

	written and oral feedback and the maintenance of effective records. Provide opportunities for pupils to assess their own and others' work in accordance with a clear criterion. ■ Use technology selectively and appropriately to enhance the teaching process, increase pupil ICT capability and motivate students towards developing a positive attitude to their learning, thus enabling them to take more responsibility for their own learning. ■ Ensure that assessment information, and any other documentation about each class is well organised and accessible in the classroom. ■ Follow the Behaviour and Assessment Policies rigorously. To set regular and meaningful prep and practice (homework) tasks, in line with school policy. ■ **Engage with research to evolve and develop their practice.**
Support staff	■ Work collaboratively with the class teacher in planning for learning and teaching. ■ Support students with specific aspects of their learning as agreed with the class teacher and Director and Student Services Communicate effectively with teachers to meet the needs of the learners. ■ **Engage with research to evolve and develop their practice.**

Table 2.1: Planning and Preparation

2.5 Characteristics of Great Teaching

#	Characteristics
1	Teachers have **unwaveringly high expectations** every lesson every day; they use the whole school behaviour policy consistently; **they explain to students why they're learning what they are**, and teachers are in charge in the classroom.
2	Teachers **know the students in front of them**. Individual needs are known and planned for.
3	Explanations are **highly effective** as teachers have excellent subject and curriculum knowledge; **outcomes are clearly defined**; explanations are fully guided: **teachers model excellence** and how to achieve it.
4	All teachers have a **comprehensive understanding of their subject area** and are actively engaged in **further reading, research or study**, teachers take responsibility for their role as teachers of literacy, both within their subject area and as a means to effective communication.
5	Teachers make **connections between underlying concepts**; students are made to think hard as memory is the residue of thought; **deliberate practice is employed** to embed knowledge in long term memory; regular **low stakes testing**; learning is interleaved with **high challenge** starts to lessons.
6	**Questioning** is used to develop thinking. Questions are planned and suitable time is given for thinking time and response.
7	Teachers **pitch high** ('I do') by **modelling the new learning and outcomes**; teachers provide support with a guided ('we do') phase and then pupils do independent deliberate practice in the ('you do') phase.
8	**Feedback is timely** to maximise learning; **formative assessment** is embedded throughout lessons; comments are specific, accurate and clear; teachers give time to reflect and act upon feedback.

Table 2.2: Characteristics of Great Teaching

2.6 Feedback and Assessment

It is vital that students take ownership and are able to manage their own learning. However, teachers have a key role in providing **effective feedback** to allow students to develop into independent, confident and self-aware learners.

Feedback from staff can take several forms including informal verbal comments in lessons, responses to questions and answers, written comments on marked work, results (grades or comments) on assessments, verbal feedback at parents' evenings, report grades and comments.

Feedback is **most effective** when:

- It **reduces the gap** between current and desired outcome;
- It provides **challenging and specific goals** for the student to act on;
- Time is built into lessons to allow students to **reflect and act upon the feedback**;
- It allows students to **redraft their own learning**;
- It is **clear** and given a **short while** after the learning has taken place;
- It is **motivating and supportive** to students, **rewarding effort and strategy** not innate ability;
- It forms a **positive two way process** between student and teacher;
- It results in more effort, thought and time for learners than teachers.

2.7 Prep and Practice (Homework)

Prep and Practice is an important factor in supporting the development of pupils' learning. Tasks set should support in-class learning, allow students to research ideas, revise and review key concepts and develop effective approaches for independent study. Tasks should be easily identifiable as either **prep** (preparation for future learning) or **practice** (to help develop competence and mastery of learning already undertaken).

Cathy Vatterott (2010)[11] identified five fundamental characteristics of good homework: purpose, efficiency, ownership, competence, and aesthetic appeal (see **table 2.3**).

#	Characteristic	Details
1	**Purpose**	All Prep and Practice assignments are meaningful and students must also understand the purpose of the assignment and why it is important in the context of their academic experience.
2	**Efficiency**	Prep and Practice should not take an inordinate amount of time and should require some hard thinking.
3	**Ownership**	Students who feel connected to the content and assignment learn more and are more motivated. Providing students with choice in their assignments is one way to create ownership.
4	**Competence**	Students should feel competent in completing Prep and Practice. In order to achieve this, it's beneficial to abandon the one-size-fits-all model. Prep and Practice that students can't do without help is not good Prep and Practice.
5	**Aesthetic Appeal**	A well-considered & clearly designed resource and task impacts positively upon student motivation.

Table 2.3: Characteristics of Good Homework (after Vatterott, 2010)

---

[11] **Vattercott, C.** (2010) *Five Hallmarks of Good Homework*, in Educational Leadership vol. 68(1), pp.10-15

Section 3: Assessment and Record Keeping

3.1 Monitoring and Evaluation

We believe that rigorous, frequent and transparent self-evaluation and strategic planning are vital components of ongoing school improvement. In short, the aim of self-evaluation and strategic planning at St George's is to ensure constant improvement in the quality of education provided to our children by:

- Ensuring that areas for development within the School's provision are rapidly identified and mitigated;

- Encouraging all members of staff working within the School to be reflective practitioners and professionals;

- Ensuring that the School has a constantly evolving short, medium and long term strategic vision;

- Ensuring that self-evaluation and strategic planning are non-threatening processes which are central to a dynamic and forward-thinking organisational culture.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning at St George's are inextricably linked. Targets for improvement are identified through a wide range of self-evaluation mechanisms and initiatives aimed at achieving these improvement targets are implemented through strategic planning. The results and/or progress of the initiatives are then reviewed through further self-evaluation mechanisms.
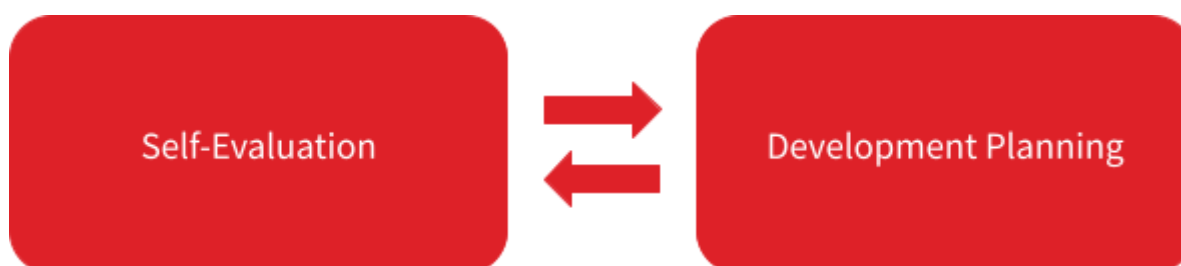
A wide range of self-evaluation mechanisms are used to inform the school's approach to assessing and developing its own performance. These mechanisms include:

1. **Lesson visits**, to inform judgements on the quality of teaching and learning at the school and provide constructive coaching to all teachers;

2. **Learning walks**, to either inform judgements on an agreed area of focus or identify more general areas for review;

3. **Work trawls**, to assess the quality of work produced by pupils of all ages and abilities;

4. **Assessment and marking scrutiny**, to make judgements on the quality of assessment and the effectiveness of the school's Assessment Policy;

5. **Planning scrutiny**, to make judgements on the quality of planning and the effectiveness of the school's Teaching and Learning Policy;

6. **Pupil focus groups** and discussions with pupils about their work, to either inform judgements on an agreed area of focus or identify more general areas for review;

7. **Pupil pursuits**, to make judgements on the provision for and experiences of identified groups of pupils;

8. Parents, pupil and staff **questionnaires**, to ascertain the views of key stakeholders;

9. **Statistical analyses** of a range of data sources (including: admissions, assessment, progress, value added, attendance, punctuality, behaviour, lesson observations, performance management, rewards and sanctions, and complaints and grievances);

10. **Policy scrutiny**, to make judgements on the effectiveness of key policy documentation;

11. **Case studies**, to provide a narrative for identified areas for improvement;

12. **Curriculum reviews**, to make judgements on the quality of provision;

13. An analysis of the progression and effectiveness of any specific **support plans** that may be in place.

A **self-evaluation timetable** ensures a rolling cycle of data collection.

Section 4: Staffing and Resources

1. **All members of the School community** play an important role in promoting exceptional learning and the development of the Nine Cs.

2. The **governing body** is responsible for approving, reviewing and supporting this policy.

3. The **Principal**, working with the **Strategy Team** and the **school leadership teams**, is responsible for ensuring that:

   a. This policy is implemented across the school.

   b. Learning and teaching are of the highest standard possible.

   c. Appropriate monitoring and evaluation is in place.

4. **Heads of Department** and **Phase Leaders** are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented in their subject area or phase.

5. **Teaching staff** are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented with their classes and for being aware of whole school and subject-level guidance on all aspects of learning and teaching.

6. **All staff** are responsible for supporting, cooperating with and encouraging their colleagues and students to promote outstanding learning.

7. Staff training and support will be managed through general training and the annual **professional review process**.

Section 5: Linked Policies

1. 102 Academic Curriculum Policy

2. 103 Academic Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy

3. 104 Academic Learning Support Policy

4. 107 Academic Learning Environment Policy

5. 201 Safeguarding Child Protection Policy

6. 202 Safeguarding Behaviour for Learning (Rewards and Sanctions) Policy

7. 203 Safeguarding Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Policy

8. 209 Safeguarding Digital Safety and Acceptable Use of Technology Policy

9. 210 Safeguarding Trips and Visits Policy

10. 211 Safeguarding Attendance and Punctuality Policy

11. 212 Safeguarding Sex and Relationship Education Policy

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed by the **Head of Senior School** in **September 2022**.

Approved by

The **Principal** on behalf of the school

The **Chair** on behalf of the Board of Governors

Change History Record

Version Number	Description of Change	Author(s)	Date of Issue