

Teaching and Learning Policy

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THE JO RICHARDSON

SUCCESS FOR ALL

C O M M U N I T Y S C H O O L

ACHIEVE

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Teaching and Learning at JRCS

Aims of the policy

- To describe the vision of teaching and learning at JRCS
- To outline the way the school will monitor and support the quality of teaching and learning
- To ensure a consistency of approach
- To establish our expectation of students as learners
- To establish JRCS' expectation of teachers as facilitators of learning
- To describe the key features of excellent lessons (Teaching techniques / methods)
- To ensure a safe, stimulating and motivating learning environment for all.
- To provide a range of different teaching and learning approaches which reflects different student starting points and learning needs

Our aims and vision for teaching and learning at JRCS

At JRCS we believe it is our moral obligation to broaden the horizons of our students by teaching them knowledge that will prepare them for the next steps in their education and develop their cultural capital. The focus is always on student learning, which is defined as an alteration in the long-term memory. When teaching new knowledge and skills, we know that explicit instruction is the best and most effective way of helping our students make good progress and avoid confusion and misconceptions. Lessons will build 'bottom up' which means that teachers break down content into small manageable chunks and then sequence lessons in a logical order to help students make connections and links, to support understanding and progress. Teachers routinely check student understanding at each stage to ensure the lesson can progress, and where students do not show good understanding, the teacher will use further strategies to support instruction and develop understanding. Lesson tasks are designed to ensure students are busy thinking hard and not just busy doing activities. Independent practice is an important part of lessons for students to test their understanding. We also recognise that the more competent students become, there is less reliance on structured guidance and worked examples. At this stage in the learning support is gradually removed, and students are given varied practice to further deepen their knowledge and understanding.

Our approach to teaching and learning at JRCS is underpinned by research on cognitive load, Rosenshine's principles of instruction and explicit instruction. The deployment of any teaching strategy will always happen with the following aims:

- All students, regardless of their backgrounds, circumstances, individual needs or prior attainment make rapid and sustained progress and achieve well, over time
- All students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported by their lessons
- Expectations are high of all students with an emphasis on thinking, learning and remembering more; students should be challenged by their learning. A student working is not the same as a student learning or practising their learning
- Students' understanding is systematically and effectively checked throughout lessons by teaching staff and teachers intervene with striking impact, where appropriate
- Reading, writing, communication and numeracy are taught effectively across the curriculum
- There are high levels of engagement and commitment to learning in lessons

Lesson Structure

There is no set lesson structure at JRCS, but the following is likely to be present in all lessons and is a good place to start lesson planning. The phases below may appear several times in lessons. All lessons should be punctuated by teachers assessing the understanding of students and intervening accordingly.

- Starter: visible to students as they enter the classroom and linked to prior learning or designed to build a foundation and inform the teacher of a baseline for which the lesson will follow
- Explicit instruction: the teacher is the expert and will explain new knowledge, providing examples and modelling intended outcomes
- Practice: students apply the new knowledge, skills or understanding to secure, deepen or enhance learning
- Feedback: instruction or practice will be followed by an opportunity for the teacher to receive feedback about the level of understanding in the classroom. This will dictate the next actions.
- Reflection: an opportunity to reflect on what has been learned

The teaching 'bottom line'

Although teachers are free to choose their approach to individual lessons, this document contains guidance on how JRCS expects to see the various strategies used, when they are employed. Six areas of teaching are included on this document. For each there is a '**bottom line**' - these are the things that will happen in most lessons, although there are often multiple ways of employing each strategy and it may be subject specific.

Teaching and learning quality assurance

To assess the quality of teaching at JRCS, we need to be able to do the following:

- Provide feedback to teachers, HODs and SLT so they are aware of standards and are consistently improving them
- Quickly identify staff who need support, and put that support in place
- Allow staff the opportunity to build evidence to support them through the appraisal process
- Gather data to make sure that the departmental and school SEFs are up to date and accurate

Monitoring and supporting the quality of teaching and learning at JRCS

Learning walks

- Likely to involve SLT and HOD. They will visit a range of lessons and record what they find on capture documents. External partners may help carry out learning walks to secure SLT / HOD's knowledge of standards
- No more than 20 minutes in any lesson
- No grades applied to staff or lessons
- No more than three SLT led learning walks in a department in a year.
- Learning walks should aim to visit each person in the department at least twice, but not more than three times.
- Learning walks will usually take place over more than one day, but should go on for no longer than one week
- Information collated by SLT / HOD.
 - Summary feedback document to whole department identifying areas of strength and development should be sent straight after the learning walk
 - Feedback and areas for development for individual staff should be provided, in writing, in good time following the learning walk

One hour observations against teachers' standards:

- ECTs / SD / ITT have these throughout the year, as per induction programmes
- Staff undergoing capability procedures, as per support programme
- Individual teachers, HODs or the Headteacher can arrange up to three one hour observations against teaching standards in the course of an academic year. Teachers may want to arrange to be observed to help them gather evidence for the appraisal process or to enhance their knowledge of standards. The Headteacher may decide one hour observations should be carried out if serious concerns are raised through the process of learning walks and book checks.

Pupils' books / student voice

- Book checks – three per year led by SLT. Feedback to staff alongside feedback from learning walks at the end of each term
- Student voice
 - Year group specific student voice (multiple subject), led by SLT / HOY, evidence collated and then any subject specific details shared with HOD
 - Subject specific student voice (multiple year group – including sixth form), led by HOD / SLT LM

Data

- After data collection points, full analysis of performance by subject, teacher and year group
- Staff should analyse their own class performance and record interventions on data sheets
- HODs should analyse departmental performance
- SLT / HOD will identify teaching groups / student groups that are underperforming and raise with teaching staff, HODs as appropriate

General principles

In every classroom, teachers will insist on high expectations of students. This is not only for general behaviour and punctuality, but also the level of engagement, focus, participation and commitment to each lesson. There are strong routines across the school with the start of each lesson and the general structure. It is important for students that they know what is expected of them, but also what they can expect from their teachers. Establishing good habits is important for all aspects of students' learning. Whilst consequences will be put in place when students do not meet our high standards, their successes will also be celebrated using praise and rewards.

Bottom line strategies

- Classrooms are set out in the 'horseshoe' shape to give teachers the best view of all students. Teachers will not sit behind their desk, unless using the visualiser, and instead will pivot in the middle of the room to check on students.
- At the start of lessons teachers should meet and greet students at the door of the classroom (for teachers teaching in more than one room this, understandably, will be hard to achieve)
- For every teaching group staff should have a seating plan and the coloured school data sheet. The seating plan should be carefully considered, with a pedagogical underpinning. Students should not just sit with their friends
- Upon entering the room students should get their planners and equipment out and put them on their desks
- Staff should make a note of any students arriving after the bell has gone and make sure they are set a twenty minute detention for lateness at an appropriate point during the lesson. Classes should not be released early, with the exception of staff on break duty, and should not be released late
- Students should not be allowed to leave the classroom to go to the toilet or to get a drink. The only exception to this is if a student has a medical condition, recorded in their planner and countersigned by Student Services or HOY
- A starter should be visible to students **straightaway**. It should be challenging and engaging and ensure students are focused immediately. The starter is likely to review prior learning or take the form of a 'low stakes' quiz
- If writing is to take place in a lesson, the title and date should be written down and underlined.
- Homework should **always** be labelled 'homework' in the margin.
- At the start of the lesson staff should make the objectives clear to students as well as how the lesson fits in with their programme of study, but students do not copy these down.
- At transition points in the lesson, all students should stop working, stop talking, empty their hands, and make eye contact with the teacher (for students with autism, an expectation of eye contact may not be appropriate). Only then should the teacher continue. This is very important. Students who are not in receipt of the explanation/instruction that comes at the start of a new learning phase will not be able to effectively engage with it. We encourage staff and students to adopt the 'SLANT' approach in lessons to ensure students do not demonstrate passive learning behaviour.
- SWAT should be applied consistently in all classrooms – each stage should be made explicit to students
- Staff should circulate the room and check understanding throughout the lesson (more information in the 'checking for understanding' section on p.9)
- If students have not engaged in the learning or not made sufficient progress, this should be addressed
- All teachers should have a system that rewards good learning. Credits should be awarded for students who demonstrate a great attitude towards learning or good progress in a lesson, and more significant rewards for demonstrating these over a longer period of time such as LOCs or positive phone calls home.
- There should be an opportunity for reflection or learning should be summarised at the end of most lessons

Explicit instruction

General principles

Teachers are experts, and they deliver new content in a knowledge rich curriculum through explicit instruction. Teachers plan lessons using a 'bottom up' approach which means the content of the lesson is broken down into small manageable chunks and then sequenced in a logical order to help students build their knowledge and make connections, helping them to learn and remember more. This approach enables students to experience success early in their lessons which provides them with motivation to pursue learning and make good progress. These small, manageable chunks are delivered to students through explicit instruction from the teacher, which is supported with clear examples and modelling throughout. Teachers will also highlight misconceptions to students to help them navigate their way through the learning without making common mistakes that result in confusion.

Teachers are mindful of the expertise reversal effect. As students develop competence in particular areas, teachers will refrain from supporting with explicit instruction and modelling. Instead, students are given the opportunity to test their understanding by responding to questions and solving problems in varying contexts.

Bottom lines

- Teachers think carefully about the end point of their lesson and then work backwards thinking carefully about the building blocks that need to be in place to ensure students are able to make progress towards the intended learning outcome.
- Teachers think carefully about the sequence of the lesson to ensure each component part builds logically to help support student understanding.
- Teachers consider common misconceptions and points in the lesson where students might struggle.
- Teachers plan explanations and questions carefully to support students understanding throughout the lesson, and at particular points they have identified where misconceptions could occur.
- Teachers deliver explicit instruction in the classroom clearly, concisely and consistently.
- Explicit instruction is supported with clear examples and modelling.
- Teachers will model on the whiteboard or the visualiser. As well as modelling the task, teachers will also model their thinking.
- Teachers adopt the 'I do, we do, you do' approach to modelling.
- When teachers identify a misconception or recognise gaps in understanding they will return to the front of the class to resolve the issue. Teachers will explain in the same way, but with further examples and models.
- Teachers are considerate of cognitive load and will keep instruction consistent and simple to support understanding.

General principles

Following explicit instruction and modelling from the teacher, students will be given some practice to do on the particular area of learning. This will often be led by the teacher and guided, but students will be more independent as they develop more knowledge and understanding around a topic. An “I do, we do, you do” approach may be used and teachers will check for understanding at each stage before moving the lesson on. It is important to develop a high success rate when students begin to learn new material. Lesson tasks will be high quality and designed to ensure teachers are encouraging students to think hard, rather than just keep them busy. This is to ensure students can understand and retain as much of the information as possible.

Bottom line strategies

- Students will always be given clearly modelled examples or explanations before being asked to complete a task; they may be asked to apply knowledge but will not be asked to ‘discover’ something for themselves
- The task given to students follows on directly from the teacher’s instruction and is something students should feel confident to attempt; this will build in difficulty as a lesson or sequence of lessons progresses
- The early stages of practice will be heavily guided by the teacher with an emphasis on getting all the details right to ensure misconceptions do not arise early on
- The teacher will check at regular intervals whether the students have understood the task and will stop the lesson and offer more support if required (see checking for understanding page 9)
- Lesson tasks are designed to develop procedural fluency through practice
- Within this practice, students will be given a range of areas to develop their fluency not just the same type of question or task over and over again (unless through assessment this is required)
- Lesson tasks will not allow students to be passive, or just keep them busy e.g.: copying lots of information off the board
- Lesson tasks may develop to be more open ended, and students will be more independent as they develop their understanding or fluency
- ‘Thinking hard’ strategies will be used to ensure students are actively thinking, and also support students with retention of knowledge, e.g.: transform, reduce etc

Checking for understanding

General principles

As mentioned above, teachers will break lesson content down into small manageable chunks and then sequence this in a logical order to help students learn and remember more. Alongside this, teachers use a range of strategies to routinely check the understanding of students at each step and use this information to inform the next stage of the lesson. If students have not understood something, it is important the teacher identifies this as soon as possible and addresses it with the class. There is no point moving forward with the lesson if students have not grasped an earlier key component that is crucial for their success in the lesson. When checking for understanding, teachers use strategies that offer opportunities for the whole class to provide tangible evidence which demonstrates their understanding. Teachers do not make decision about the next steps of their lesson based on the opinion of a few students. Additionally, staff will not simply ask the class if they understand and move forward based on their opinion without evidence.

Bottom lines

- Teachers think carefully about their lesson and identify moments where new content is introduced and where complexity for students builds. At each of these stages, teachers use an effective strategy to obtain tangible evidence from the class about their level of understanding.
- If teachers discover that understanding is good, they will proceed with the lesson as planned. If confusion and misconceptions are identified, teachers will address the issue (see explicit instruction page 7)
- The strategies that teachers use to check understanding will survey the entire class or a wide sample size.
- The strategies that teachers use to check understanding will provide them with tangible evidence about the level of student understanding. Decisions about the next steps of the lesson will not be based on student perception of their competency.
- Below are a range of strategies that teachers will use in lesson to check for student understanding:
 - Questioning - Pose, pause and pounce, giving students thinking time.
 - 'No hands up' – teachers cold call to check on all students, not just those confident to answer.
 - Think, pair share – students discuss responses to increase engagement. Teacher circulates to listen to responses and then pairs feedback to the class.
 - Circulate the class – teacher circulates the room during an activity checking student work.
 - Multiple choice questions with common misconceptions included.
 - Hands up or finger voting – surveying the opinion of the full class.
 - Mini whiteboards – students hold up responses for teachers to check.
 - Low stakes testing – teachers will ask students to show their hands for questions they answered correctly to identify areas for improvement within the class

In addition to the above, each department has a feedback policy that should be followed by teachers in that subject area. The following points should be noted:

- All peer and self-assessment should be carried out in green pen, as should responses to task marking
- General classwork KS3 should not be marked grades or 'Life after Levels' (LAL) statements, all feedback should be formative. At the end of a unit the LAL statement is highlighted on the milestone sheet at the start of the unit and recorded in staff mark books for the purpose of data collection and reporting to parents
- Students should have work regularly checked (at least every six hours of teaching). Subsequently, this should be followed up in class with teaching that addresses the areas for development along with a task which should be responded to in green and then checked by the teacher.

Adaptive teaching: support and challenge

General principles

Whilst we understand that students often have different starting points, or may learn at different rates, our high expectations are the same for all our students and we embrace our motto of “success for all” in every classroom. Students will have the same expected learning outcomes and pre judgements will not be made about students before the lesson, but during a lesson teachers will adapt their teaching to support students in meeting these when required, but also extend students’ learning beyond these outcomes when this is required too. It will always be teachers who adapt their teaching, rather than adapt their expectations or the work for the student in order to support students who are finding things difficult. Teachers will make a good use of co-educators in a classroom and communicate effectively to ensure they are equipped to support SEND students they are working with in the lesson.

Bottom line strategies

- When planning lessons teachers should take the following into account:
 - Prior attainment and learning – this may be assessed in previous lesson to determine a starting point
 - Recent assessment: formative and summative to gauge an appropriate starting point for the lesson
 - Learning profiles (available from heads of department at start of year, from SDD or in shared area)
 - The needs of EAL students
 - Literacy data, such as standardised reading scores (on data sheets)
 - Any information provided by SDD which will help planning for SEN students, including behavioural and emotional needs
- The learning outcomes should provide challenge for all students and should not be modified for different individuals or groups of students
- Teachers build ‘bottom up’ with their instruction to ensure that if they start small, they involve all students, and all students can experience early success in each lesson
- Checking for understanding will inform how and when teachers need to adapt teaching; this should be done regularly throughout a lesson
- The use of Co-Educators should be carefully planned, and they should be fully informed about the lesson to ensure they can offer effective support. The teacher should check in with the students the co-educator is working with and not leave them to work separate to the rest of the class.
- Instructions will be kept concise and clear to avoid confusion or misconceptions
- Once teachers have assessed students’ understanding they may support or extend students by employing one of the strategies below:
 - Adapt the initial explanation given and offer an alternative way of thinking about something, without offering too many different ways which would likely have the opposite effect
 - Re model something again at the front
 - Break a concept down further or into smaller chunks as it may have not been broken down enough
 - Establish the last point where the student did understand and re explain from there
 - Offer another example, or use a model example from a student under the visualiser to support understanding
 - Work 1:1 with a student to support them whilst the rest of the class is set a task
 - Teachers will know what exceptional performance looks like and they will create opportunities in the lesson for students to demonstrate or develop knowledge and skills that lead them to this.

Bottom line strategies

Across all subject areas...

- Teachers employ a range of reading strategies and are explicit to students about the process of reading in their subjects.
- Teachers should prepare students before reading a text, support them during reading and have methods of evaluation after reading to check understanding.
- If the question demands an extended explanation of an idea, teachers give literacy specific targets and feedback to written work, in line with departmental and whole school policies.
- Students have the opportunity to engage in extended writing, in line with departmental and whole-school policies
- Students are challenged on inaccurate use of spoken English, particularly slang and wrong use of tense, eg, 'we was going to...' rather than 'we were going to...'
- All staff consciously model good literacy in their own spoken English within the classroom
- Good listening skills are promoted via paired, group and whole-class discussion
- Students read a range of high quality reading materials with fluency. Weaker readers are supported through differentiated materials and/or teacher support
- Students should be encouraged to answer questions in full sentences
- Key words and subject-specific vocabulary are embedded in students' written work
- Teachers give literacy-specific targets and feedback on written work, in line with departmental and whole-school policies. These are responded to in green pen. Literacy errors are marked using universal marking symbols:

Sp	spelling mistake
P	punctuation mark missing or incorrectly used
Exp	consideration to the way a student has expressed their point
^	word missed out of sentence
~	unclear meaning or grammar within a sentence
//	new paragraph required