



# Teaching & Learning Policy

2022-23

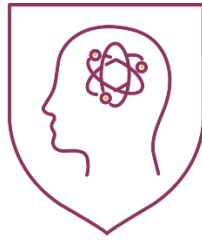
**Date last reviewed** | June 2022

**Review period** | Annually

**Lead Reviewer** | Vice Principals



***“Empowering students to aspire, create and excel in the world that is, so they can help create the world that will be”***



The Science of Learning



Social Enterprise



Student Agency and Innovation

## Introduction

At **GEMS Wellington Academy, Al Khail**, we believe in the concept of lifelong learning; that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; that through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices and live happy and fulfilled lives.

Quality teaching and learning is a fundamental aspect of our school. It provides the foundations for our curriculum and gives the context in which all other policy statements should be read for the benefit of all stakeholders within our school community.

This policy is a statement of aims, principles and strategies for quality teaching and learning within our school. As an inclusive and reflective community, committed to development and improvement, we strive to constantly review and improve our academic provision for every pupil.

## Aims and objectives

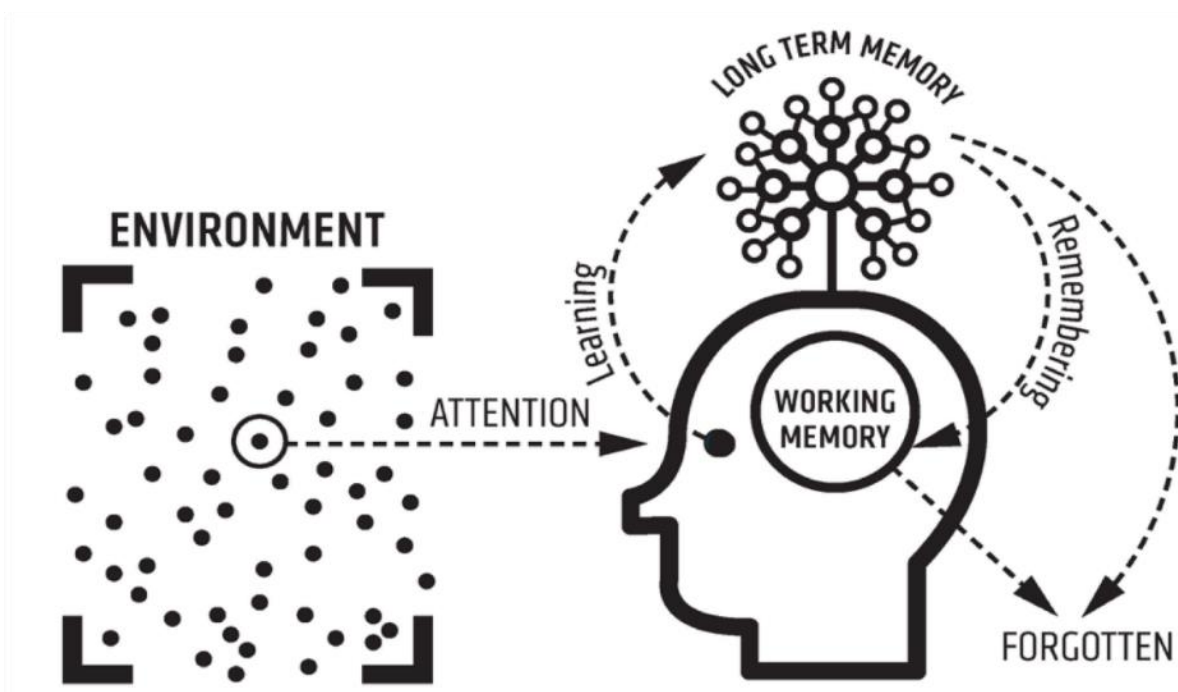
We believe that people learn best in different ways. At our school we aim to:

- provide a rich, varied and creative learning environment that allows children to develop all their skills and abilities;
- enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners;
- foster children’s self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people;
- develop children’s self-respect and encourage children to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others;
- show respect for all cultures and, in so doing, to promote positive attitudes towards other people;
- enable children to understand their national and international community and help them feel valued as part of this community;
- encourage our students to become resilient and to view failure as an opportunity to continually improve;
- help children to grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens;
- facilitate innovation through thinking, doing and reflection.

## The Model of Learning

In order for teaching and learning to be effective, it is important that all staff members at The Academy understand how learning happens. This understanding then allows teachers to select the best pedagogy based on the learning process and the content being studied. While pedagogy may look different and varied across subjects and year levels, we ensure there is a common Academy approach to the learning process.

The Academy has adopted a simple model for how memory works and how learning happens which is based upon the concept of building schemata in our long-term memory. All staff have a consistent understanding of this process and the language used when describing The Model of Learning.



(Oliver Caviglioli et al, 2019)

The Model of Learning can be described as four simple stages:

**Filtering:** Selecting information from our environment to use within our working memory

**Encoding:** Processing information from our working memory to our long-term memory

**Consolidation:** A biological process in which information is embedded in our long-term memory

**Retrieval:** Bringing back stored information into our working memory from our long-term memory



## The Academy Teaching Principles

Using the model for learning, The Academy draws upon our Teaching Principles in order to highlight the key features of effective teaching and learning. These principles were agreed by The Academy teaching team and are formed from the following:

- Research on how the brain acquires and uses new information
- Research on the classroom practices of those teachers whose students show the highest gains
- Findings from studies that taught learning strategies to students

<p><b>Plan Retrieval Opportunities</b></p> <p>Regular and frequent retrieval is an important component of instruction. It helps strengthen the connections of material learned. Automaticity also frees working memory for more effective problem solving and creativity. The effort involved in retrieving information from memory ensures it is embedded in the long-term memory.</p> <p><b>Realising: Automaticity, Speed and Accuracy</b></p>	<p><b>Provide Focus and Expectations</b></p> <p>Directing students' attention to a particular skill or subject is key in gaining student attention and allowing them to filter out unnecessary information. Teachers, students and their peers all need to know both the knowledge requirements and the criteria for excellence in any performed task. Successful learners will be good at self-regulation, planning and monitoring their progress towards learning goals in a deliberate self-directed manner. Knowing the learning intentions very well is essential for that process to work.</p> <p><b>Meta-Thinking: Meta-cognition, Self-regulation, Strategy-planning, Intellectual Confidence</b></p>
<p><b>Present New Content</b></p> <p>Working-memory is small, only handling a few bits of information at once. Avoid overloading this by presenting new content in small lesson steps. Teachers explain, present and communicate new ideas clearly with concise, appropriate and engaging explanations. Proceed only when new content is mastered (80%+ accuracy). Some students may progress along the steps at a different pace. Students should have ownership of this pace.</p> <p><b>Analysing: Critical Thinking, Precision Problem Solving</b></p>	<p><b>Link Learning</b></p> <p>Linking material means activating student schema and putting things in context. By doing so, you will encourage your students' exploration of the content by relating it to prior knowledge. Student engagement requires intellectual involvement with the content or active construction of understanding. When student schema is activated, students are more likely to become engaged and capable of broad, deep thinking.</p> <p><b>Linking: Generalising, Connection Finding, Big Picture Thinking, Abstraction, Imagination, Alternative Perspectives</b>  <b>Creating: Intellectual Playfulness, Flexible Thinking, Fluent Thinking, Originality, Evolutionary and Revolutionary Thinking</b></p>
<p><b>Provide Models</b></p> <p>Students need cognitive support to help them learn how to solve problems and challenges. Modelling, worked examples, and cognitive apprenticeship (teacher thinking out loud) help clarify the expectations and steps involved.</p> <p><b>Meta-Thinking: Meta-cognition, Self-regulation, Strategy-planning, Intellectual Confidence</b></p>	<p><b>Ask Questions and Check Understanding</b></p> <p>Questions allow teachers to determine how well the students are learning. Teachers should ask a large number of questions, check the response of all students, and provide systematic feedback. Students should always be prompted to explain their answers and reason.</p> <p><b>Meta-Thinking: Meta-cognition, Self-regulation, Strategy-planning, Intellectual Confidence</b></p>
<p><b>Guide and Scaffold Student Practice</b></p> <p>Students need additional time to rephrase, elaborate analyse and summarise new material in order to encode and store new content in their long-term memory.</p> <p>Scaffolds are temporary supports to assist learning. They allow students to transition from guided to independent practice. They include modelling, cue cards, check lists and worksheet frames. These are all another part of cognitive apprenticeship.</p> <p><b>Meta-Thinking: Meta-cognition, Self-regulation, Strategy-planning, Intellectual Confidence</b>  <b>Realising: Automaticity, Speed and Accuracy</b></p>	<p><b>Allow Independent Practice</b></p> <p>It is important for all students to move towards Independent Practice at some point of their learning. Scaffolds and support need to be removed to allow time for generative learning (use of long-term memory) to take place. Independent practice produces 'overlearning' – a necessary process for new material to become automatic.</p> <p><b>Realising: Automaticity, Speed and Accuracy</b>  <b>Creating: Intellectual Playfulness, Flexible Thinking, Fluent Thinking, Originality, Evolutionary and Revolutionary Thinking</b></p>
<p><b>Provide Feedback that Moves Learning Forward</b></p> <p>Feedback is only successful if students' learning improves. However, the goal is to change the students' capacity to produce better work, not just to improve their work. Self-reflection and peer assessment is also important. If students are still reliant on external feedback to tell us if we've succeeded, then we've still got a long way to go. Effective learners can link their work to the criteria and generate their own ongoing self-correcting feedback narrative.</p> <p><b>Meta-Thinking: Meta-cognition, Self-regulation, Strategy-planning, Intellectual Confidence</b></p>	



## Learning Skills and Metacognition

### Advanced Cognitive Performance Domains (ACPs)

While the Teaching Principles are created by teachers for teachers, it is only natural that students will be exposed to and increasingly become involved in pedagogical approaches within lessons as they progress through The Academy.

As a *World-Class High-Performance Learning School*, we ensure that students are actively involved in the learning process and develop the mindset, cognitive knowledge; and practical strategies on how they can support themselves to be successful. The ACPs identify 20 ways of thinking (grouped into 5 categories), shared through student-friendly language, associated with high performance (See Appendix 2 for further details). The ACPs are implicitly embedded within the Teaching Principles of Instruction and explicitly shared and focused on with students when appropriate. Regular opportunities within lessons are provided for students to engage, explore and develop these.

Meta-Thinking	Linking	Analysing	Creating	Realising
Meta-cognition Self-regulation Strategy-planning Intellectual Playfulness	Generalising Connection Finding Big Picture Thinking Abstraction Imagination Seeing Alternative Perspectives	Critical and Logical Thinking Precision Complex and Multi-step Problem Solving	Intellectual Playfulness Flexible Thinking Fluent Thinking Originality Evolutionary and Revolutionary Thinking	Automaticity Speed and Accuracy

## Planning for Learning

Planning takes place half-termly, with reference to the National Curriculum, Early Years Foundation Stage, Arabic and Islamic Curriculums, Moral Education and Social Studies.

**Yearly Overviews:** Curriculum maps allow departments and year groups to identify the learning journey for students across the academic year to ensure curriculum coverage. The sequencing of topics ensures that schema is built upon existing knowledge acquired in the previous terms.

**Medium Term Planning:** Termly/half-termly plans, schemes of work and lesson planning allow a teacher to collaboratively design learning opportunities. Plans are based on assessment data, pupil need and subject expectation. Curriculum time can be planned as continuous study throughout the term, or as blocks of study.

**Weekly Planning:** Weekly and daily planning is completed through the resources that area created for lesson to be successful and engage all learners. No formal written plans are required for weekly planning, but the resources should be purposeful and allow all learners to access learning successfully.

**Daily Planning:** Resources and presentations created by year groups and departments must be adapted in relation to individual classes, students considering the progress made in previous lessons. No formal written



plans are required for daily lessons, but the resources and presentations should be purposeful and allow all learners to access learning successfully.

**Learning Intention:** Every lesson must have a Learning Intention. This LI is created by the teacher and describes clearly what the teacher wants the students to know, understand, and be able to do as a result of learning and teaching activities.

**Learning Steps:** Learning Steps are metacognitive and break down the learning process within a lesson. Sharing Learning Steps with students supports them to understand the key milestones that will take place within the lesson to assist them in understanding the new learning. As Learning Steps are metacognitive, Learning Steps should be heavily linked to HPL ACPs (see above).

**Success Criteria:** Success criteria is a set of features a teacher wants to see in a child's activities throughout a lesson or project that evidences the learning has been successful. Identifying Success Criteria ensures that teachers and/or students know what is expected and sets the standard of challenge. Based on the context/subject of the learning, Success Criteria can be presented in a variety of ways including, rubrics, checklists, examples, models, or a set of instructions

## Roles and Responsibilities

### GEMS School Support Centre

GEMS determine, support, monitor and review the school policies on learning and teaching. In particular, they:

- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively
- ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful learning and teaching
- monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations
- monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment
- ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching
- monitor the effectiveness of the school's learning and teaching policies through the school self-review processes. These include reports from subject leaders and the Principal's report to governors as well as a review of the in-service training sessions attended by our staff

### The Principal/ALT team

The Principal and the ELT oversee the quality of Teaching and Learning within the school. In particular, they:

- Provide all staff with the opportunity to attend suitable CPD opportunities in line with their own professional development needs
- Carry out lesson observations and ethos walks which provide formative feedback and lead to clear and achievable targets for the improvement of Teaching and Learning which are effectively reviewed.
- Support Teaching and Learning Leaders in creating opportunities for internal CPD opportunities and the sharing of good practice.

### Teaching and Learning Leaders

The Teaching and Learning Leaders will seek to enhance and develop the quality of Teaching and Learning across the school. In particular, they will:

- Provide internal CPD which is relevant at whole school, phase and individual levels.



- Develop opportunities for the sharing of best practice throughout the school community.
- Identify appropriate external CPD which will meet the needs of individual teachers.
- Carry out formative lesson observations and ethos walks which provide clear and achievable targets for the improvement of Teaching and Learning.
- Organise appropriate peer mentoring and coaching schemes to support individual teacher development.

### Phase, Year Leaders, Curriculum and Subject leaders

Phase and curriculum leaders will ensure that Teaching and Learning within their chosen area is consistently of the highest possible standard. In particular, they will:

- Carry out formal lesson observations and ethos walks which provide formative feedback and lead to clear and achievable targets for the improvement of Teaching and Learning.
- Informally monitor the quality of Teaching and Learning, assessment and feedback, climate for learning and use of additional adults on a day to day basis.
- Provide internal support and mentoring to enhance the development of individual teaching practice.
- Lead on the development of innovative schemes of learning which meet the needs of all students within their phase/curriculum area.

### Teaching staff

Teaching staff will be responsible for the quality of Teaching and Learning within their classroom. In particular, they will:

- Personalise their planning to ensure that it best meets the needs of all learners within their classroom.
- Create appropriate and innovative resources and learning experiences which lead to students being actively engaged with their learning.
- Provide regular marking and feedback in a variety of forms which support the progress of individual students.
- Develop strong relationships with the students in their care which are based on mutual respect.
- Lead the additional classroom support effectively; supporting and challenging them to be able to enhance the learning experience of the students.
- Create opportunities within their teaching to allow students to develop the different attributes of the learner profile and to allow students opportunities to think about and verbalise the different learning process.
- Be willing to share best practice to aid in the professional development of others.
- Take an active role in their own professional development, seeking out internal and external opportunities which will enhance their own practice.

### Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistants will support and enhance the Teaching and Learning within their classroom / classrooms. In particular, they will:

- Respond actively to the planning that they are provided with, taking initiative in responding to the needs of students within the classroom.
- Develop strong relationships with the students in their care which are based on mutual respect.
- Take an active role in their own professional development, seeking out opportunities which will enhance their own practice.

### Students

Students are at the centre of this policy and have a responsibility to make the most of the learning experiences with which they are provided. In particular, they will:



- Attend all of their lessons and always be ready to learn.
- Respond appropriately to instructions that they have been given.
- Have ownership and understanding of both their learning and their further learning targets.
- Strive to become enthusiastic and active participants as well as reflective learners.

### Parents

We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies.

We would like parents to:

- Ensure that their child has at least 96% attendance record.
- Ensure that their child is punctual for the start of the school day.
- Ensure that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and PE kit.
- Do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school.
- Inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour at school.
- Support the school in its efforts to ensure that all students reach their individual potential.
- Promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general.
- Fulfil the requirements set out in the home/school agreement.



## Appendix 1

# TEACHING PRINCIPLES

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**1 Plan Retrieval Opportunities**

REALISING

Regular and frequent retrieval is an important component of instruction. It helps strengthen the connections of material learned. Automaticity also frees working memory for more effective problem solving and creativity. The effort involved in retrieving information from memory ensures it is embedded in the long-term memory.

**2 Provide Focus and Expectations**

META THINKING

Directing students' attention to a particular skill or subject is key in gaining student attention and allowing them to filter out unnecessary information. Teachers, students and their peers all need to know both the knowledge requirements and the criteria for excellence in any performed task. Successful learners will be good at self-regulation, planning and monitoring their progress towards learning goals in a deliberate self-directed manner. Knowing the learning intentions very well is essential for that process to work.

**3 Present New Content**

ANALYSING

Working-memory is small, only handling a few bits of information at once. Avoid overloading this by presenting new content in small lesson steps. Teachers explain, present and communicate new ideas clearly with concise, appropriate and engaging explanations. Proceed only when new content is mastered (80%+ accuracy). Some students may progress along the steps at a different pace. Students should have ownership of this pace.

**4 Link Learning**

CREATING LINKING

Linking material means activating student schema and putting things in context. By doing so, you will encourage your students' exploration of the content by relating it to prior knowledge. Student engagement requires intellectual involvement with the content or active construction of understanding. When student schema is activated, students are more likely to become engaged and capable of broad, deep thinking.

**5 Provide Models**

META THINKING

Students need cognitive support to help them learn how to solve problems and challenges. Modelling, worked examples, and cognitive apprenticeship (teacher thinking out loud) help clarify the expectations and steps involved.

**6 Ask Questions & Check Understanding**

META THINKING

Questions allow teachers to determine how well the students are learning. Teachers should ask a large number of questions, check the response of all students, and provide systematic feedback. Students should always be prompted to explain their answers and reason.

**7 Guide & Scaffold Student Practice**

REALISING META THINKING

Students need additional time to rephrase, elaborate analyse and summarise new material in order to encode and store new content in their long-term memory. Scaffolds are temporary supports to assist learning. They allow students to transition from guided to independent practice. They include modelling, cue cards, check lists and worksheet frames. These are all another part of cognitive apprenticeship.

**8 Allow Independent Practice**

CREATING REALISING

It is important for all students to move towards Independent Practice at some point of their learning. Scaffolds and support need to be removed to allow time for generative learning (use of long-term memory) to take place. Independent practice produces 'overlearning' - a necessary process for new material to become automatic.

**9 Provide Feedback that Moves Learning Forward**

META THINKING

Feedback is only successful if students' learning improves. However, the goal is to change the students' capacity to produce better work, not just to improve their work. Self-reflection and peer assessment is also important. If students are still reliant on external feedback to tell us if we've succeeded, then we've still got a long way to go. Effective learners can link their work to the criteria and generate their own ongoing self-correcting feedback narrative.



## Advanced Cognitive Performance Characteristics (ACPS)

### META-THINKING



<b>Meta-cognition</b>	The ability to knowingly use a wide range of thinking approaches and to transfer knowledge from one circumstance to other.
<b>Self-regulation</b>	The ability to monitor, evaluate and self-correct
<b>Strategy-planning</b>	The ability to approach new learning experiences by actively attempting to connect it to existing knowledge or concepts and hence determine an appropriate way to think about the work
<b>Intellectual confidence</b>	The ability to articulate personal views based on evidence

### LINKING



<b>Generalisation</b>	The ability to see how what is happening in this instance could be extrapolated to other similar situations
<b>Connection finding</b>	The ability to use connections from past experiences to seek possible generalisations
<b>Big picture thinking</b>	The ability to work with big ideas and holistic concepts
<b>Abstraction</b>	The ability to move from concrete to abstract very quickly.
<b>Imagination</b>	The ability to represent the problem and its categorisation in relation to more extensive and interconnected prior knowledge
<b>Seeing alternative perspectives</b>	The ability to take on the views of others and deal with complexity and ambiguity

### ANALYSING



<b>Critical or logical thinking</b>	The ability to deduct, hypothesise, reason, seek supporting evidence
<b>Precision</b>	The ability to work effectively within the rules of a domain
<b>Complex and multi-step problem solving</b>	The ability to break down a task, decide on a suitable approach, and then act

### CREATING



<b>Intellectual playfulness</b>	The ability to recognise rules and bend them to create valid but new forms
<b>Flexible Thinking</b>	The ability to abandon one idea for a superior one or generate multiple solutions
<b>Fluent thinking</b>	The ability to generate ideas
<b>Originality</b>	The ability to conceive something entirely new
<b>Evolutionary and revolutionary thinking</b>	The ability to create new ideas through building on existing ideas or diverting from them

### REALISING



<b>Automaticity</b>	The ability to use some skills with such ease as they no longer require active thinking
<b>Speed and accuracy</b>	The ability to work at speed and with accuracy