

At St Mark's, we have instilled a culture of professional learning at the centre of our school improvement and evaluation plan. Setting clear, realistic, measurable and achievable goals, underpinned by the principles of cognitive science, is key when designing training sessions. Grounded on this principle, we have developed a well-designed whole - school CPD programme as well as a more tailored one for Beginner Teachers who were in greatest need of the support that would enhance their instructional skills and classroom management. Our New Starters and Early Career Teachers programme ensure that all new staff regardless of their experience are inducted into the school and that they are given tools to develop their own subject knowledge effectively. There is also a tailored CPD offer for Teaching Assistants and a pastoral CPD in response to the range of safeguarding and SEN needs of our students. St Mark's has been awarded the CPD Gold Mark.

As the role of teacher learning communities is pivotal in ensuring that teachers are actively involved in the process of making changes and knowing how to make these changes, we have created a teacher learning community that provides 'supportive accountability' to achieve improvements not only in teacher quality but also in student outcomes. At the core of this learning approach is a collective of teachers at different stages of their careers, working collaboratively, as equals, to improve their teaching practice; they do so by using Instructional Coaching.

At St Mark's, Assessment is at the heart of our approach to Responsive Teaching and is part of a 3-part cycle which involves: 1) Setting clear goals and planning learning carefully in our curriculum and lesson planning; 2) Identifying what students have understood and where they are struggling and 3) responding-- adapting our teaching to support students to do better. This means that all assessment is meaningful and feeds directly into classroom practice. Our 2 data drops per year allow us to ensure that formative assessment is meaningful and based on a holistic picture of students knowing and remembering more over time. This enables us to share current progress and clear next steps with learners, parents and carers, whilst also adapting curriculum planning where necessary. For example, when summative assessments highlight a lack of knowledge in particular topic or key concept at a whole year group level, curriculum mapping is adapted.

This also happens on a smaller scale within classrooms: assessments are always followed up with therapy lessons which are planned to meet learners' individual needs, with further scaffolding and stretch put in place. Teachers also have a range of approaches in their responsive teaching toolbox to assess learning mid and between lessons and adapt their teaching where necessary: cold-call questions; Microsoft Forms homework quizzes; retrieval starters; exit tickets and hinge questions all allow teachers to assess the learning of individuals and adapt their planning to support. This approach enables us to focus on key groups, ensuring that our higher ability students are stretched, our lower ability or SEND learners are supported, and that all learners are taught in a way which enables them to make rapid progress, regardless of their starting points.

A tool which enables teachers to reflect on their individual learners' needs and plan daily intervention is our context sheets. These detail each learner in a class, their ethnicity/attendance/learning needs/current progress and allow teachers to pause regularly, consider each learner, and detail the intervention they will use to support and stretch where necessary. They are supported by SEND one-page profiles which outline the specific support that our SEND learners need to excel in the classroom. These are also handed to observers on entry into classrooms, allowing us all to hold each other to account to ensure that individual student needs are met. At St Mark's, context sheets have been a tool which have been instrumental in ensure our learners make consistently strong progress from starting points and that teachers have a deep knowledge of the students that they teach.

A consistent approach to behaviour management is used all classrooms allowing all students to excel within the academy ensuring a common use of language which starts with the assumption that any behavioural breaches are not deliberate and offers students a reminder to rectify their conduct. All reminders given to students are supported by staff members informing students how they can display positive learning behaviours. This has built trusting relationships between staff and students fostering a calm and respectful climate for learning. Escalation of the behavioural structure culminates in the issuing of a reset which gives the staff member the opportunity to have a one-to-one conversation with the student to re-balance their behaviour and focus on their learning in the classroom. The system is managed centrally by the Pastoral Team to support staff workload and wellbeing, giving them the time to focus their time on teaching high quality lessons.

At St Mark's we believe in the transformative power of knowledge and vocabulary. Because so many of our learners arrive at SMA with low reading ages and a limited vocabulary, we use research- informed approaches to rapidly close gaps in knowledge and ensure our learners are supported to become articulate global citizens who are decode and engage in the word around them. At KS3, learners' reading ages improve as a result of their high engagement in Accelerated Reader. At KS4 and KS5, they read challenging non-fiction and fiction texts which are designed to improve their vocabulary and cultural capital. Furthermore, in classrooms across the school, teachers and TAs use Direct Vocabulary Instruction and the principles of Cognitive Theory and Memory to systematically teach tier 2 and 3 words, and ensure that learners encounter these words again and again in different contexts.

An exceptional extra-curricular programme has been designed to support students' cultural capital and extend learning beyond the classroom. Across the week there are over 50 enrichment clubs running for students across KS3-5 including Inclusion Homework Support, Script Writing, Portuguese, BMX biking and Latin. At KS4/5 there are also academic enrichment opportunities available to support students with their subject studies. The Sixth Form have dedicated enrichment time built into their timetable to support them to develop their skills in preparation for UCAS/Apprenticeship applications. We are proud that our tailored enrichment programme allows for bespoke support for our SEND learners, through inclusion homework clubs where they are guided to access areas of the curriculum that they find challenging. Enrichment is also used to ensure that our High Prior Attainers have access to supra curricular opportunities through clubs such as the Scholars Programme which enable them to experience a degree level study project preparing them for applications to Russell Group universities. The attendance to enrichment is analysed regularly to ensure no group fails to access these transformational opportunities.