TORQUAY
ACADEMY

13 CASE STUDIES

2018/19

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every second counts

Foreword

I am delighted to once again write the foreword for this impressive collection of case studies. The very best schools take time to reflect on their practice and to share with others the best of their work. This collection is both an exciting compendium of some of the excellent developments happening at Torquay Academy, as well as representing a wonderful celebration of what has been achieved over the last 12 months at the school. It demonstrates a determination to reflect on professional practice and continuously improve. It marks an important milestone as the academy continues its rapid journey to become a great school.

I commend this to staff within the academy and those beyond.

Andy Buck
Managing Director – Leadership Matters

Leadership Leverage
Steve Margetts, Principal

Rationale
In this case study, I will outline how we made changes to leadership within TA to leverage greater change in the future. If I am honest with myself, there was relatively little distributed leadership as I held 121s with every member of SLT. I felt this was a necessary leadership model when I arrived to ensure the rapid changes that were required within the school.

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                    SRM
EBW HGL JAB OWG MAG NJS GXP ECP MPB GDH PMH TFT CEB
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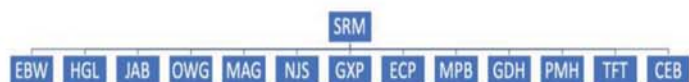
This provided me with clear lines of sight with every member of the team and ensured we were all working towards the same plan. Areas of responsibility could be quite blurred as SLT took on responsibility for activities that weren't necessarily aligned to their core responsibility, but I felt they were best placed to undertake that role at that particular moment in time. The leadership model, with all conversations going through me, allowed for this to happen.

As the organisation has matured I believed now is it was the right time to move towards a model that is more distributed with Vice Principals taking greater responsibility for clearly defined areas.

I want the line management of SLT to improve. I want us to be better at holding to account those we line manage. Line managers must be complete experts in the areas they line manage, for example, someone who line manages a subject area will:

- Have a deep understanding of the exam and assessment schedules.
- Know examiners' reports and be able to relate our students' performance against national trends and be aware of where improvements can be made to student responses.
- Have performance management targets that are aligned to the success of the students in the areas that are line managed.

- Use our new model of curriculum improvement to ensure they are fully aware of any changes that can be made that will lead to an improvement in the quality of the curriculum taught and student outcomes.
- Work with subordinates to ensure the focus of leadership time is always on aspects that will lead to an improvement in student outcomes. This will ensure a strategic focus rather becoming bogged down in the operational.
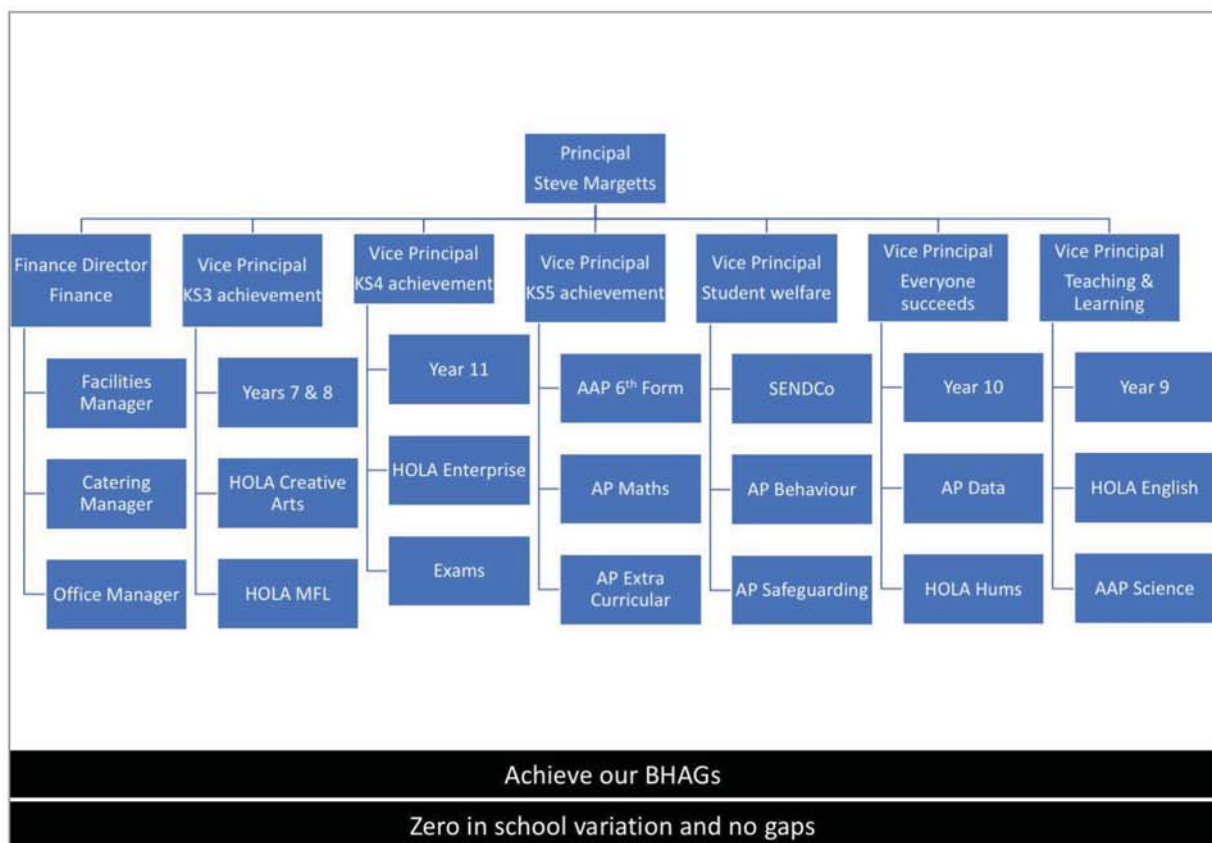
Given my expectations of our line managers, it was clear to me that I do not have the capacity to line manage in the way that I want people to be line managed. We have great capability in our senior team and I believe that we will be able to achieve better outcomes with a change in our leadership structure.

I also feel that the proposed changes would better place us to retain our best talent for longer. The model of school improvement at TA has always been built upon having the best leaders and teachers; this will preserve that model.

Proposed structure
It is proposed to increase the number of Vice Principals and add a new role into the school, Associate Assistant Principal. The new role would enable our very best middle leaders, who have a significant whole-school responsibility or a pivotal role in the success of our students to join the SLT to ensure they are better placed to have the impact we need them to have. The proposed model can be summarised at the top of the next page.

There might be some tweaking of the areas of responsibility as I wanted to ensure that all of the team are best placed to make maximum impact.

Organisation chart:

- **Principal** — Steve Margetts
  - **Finance Director** — Finance
    - Facilities Manager
    - Catering Manager
    - Office Manager
  - **Vice Principal** — KS3 achievement
    - Years 7 & 8
    - HOLA Creative Arts
    - HOLA MFL
  - **Vice Principal** — KS4 achievement
    - Year 11
    - HOLA Enterprise
    - Exams
  - **Vice Principal** — KS5 achievement
    - AAP 6th Form
    - AP Maths
    - AP Extra Curricular
  - **Vice Principal** — Student welfare
    - SENDCo
    - AP Behaviour
    - AP Safeguarding
  - **Vice Principal** — Everyone succeeds
    - Year 10
    - AP Data
    - HOLA Hums
  - **Vice Principal** — Teaching & Learning
    - Year 9
    - HOLA English
    - AAP Science

Achieve our BHAGs

Zero in school variation and no gaps

With the proposed structure I would be able to have weekly 121s with the Vice Principals, rather than the bi-weekly 121s I have with all SLT members at present.

I currently meet every week for a strategy meeting with the Vice Principals; this would continue with the larger team. This would ensure a joint discussion can take place in all areas of strategic importance.

The SLT morning briefing would continue to take place for all members of SLT.

Monday SLT meetings would be split into two meetings. SLTo (operational) would take place from 4.30-5.15pm; this would be an opportunity for all operational matters to be discussed with the whole group. SLTs (strategy) would then take place from 5.15-6.00pm and the team would be divided into impact groups that would be tasked with specific projects. In all likelihood, these would be led by a Vice Principal.

I took this proposal to our governors to approve. I was then able to make the appointments during the summer term to ensure we had the new team in place for our SLT seminar in July and to be ready to move forward in September.

Sixth Form – Moving Forwards

Mark Bindon, Vice Principal

Rationale

With the 6th Form growing year by year and potentially having numbers of 180, the decision was made, last year, to reflect on **what** and **how** we deliver our curriculum. A lot of time/thought had gone into KS3/4 regarding the curriculum/planning & learning cycles. How would the curriculum be delivered? How would we feed back and assess? These processes were formulated over a period of time, mapping out exactly where these points would be for each subject and the whole school.

After discussion, the decision was that it would be beneficial for our students if Y12 & 13 teaching practices/processes aligned themselves with KS3/4

Context

At present KS3/4 are being taught in 4 cycles per year. Each cycle consisted of 9 teaching weeks - 7 weeks teaching, an assessment week followed by a Super Teaching Week. Teaching in the 6th form was an improving picture but lacked the clarity and focus that the other key stages demonstrated. Within the cycles, depending on the subject contact time, yellow stickers were formulated to frame feedback to students, enabling them to respond (in purple) and thus make improvements. Green stickers were being used to frame the cycle for the students, signposting what the cycle entailed and learning expectations
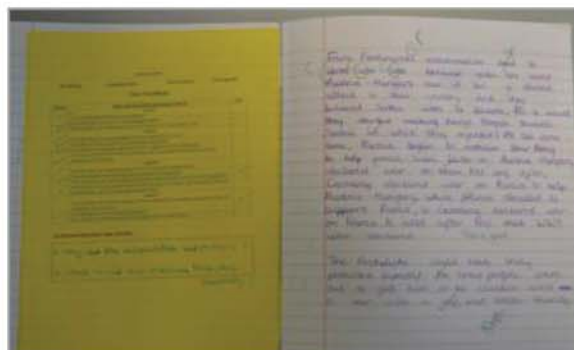
Strategy

I met with all HOLAs and listened to how they were delivering, feeding back and assessing KS5 students. From these discussions, who was the actual lead for KS5 in this subject? From this in certain areas appointments were made to ensure KS5 was a priority and would be driven forward.

It was then decided that a curriculum audit was needed. This gave subjects time to reflect on what was being taught and when. A number of questions also came to light from this.

- Are we using the correct exam board?
- Sequencing of teaching - are we teaching in the right order?
- How will feedback be given?
- When will feedback be given?
- How will the students know what they will be learning in the cycle?
- What will our assessments look like?
- Homeworks - are they planned?
- Study centre - planned work needed?

The template below was devised to audit the curriculum and to start to address any gaps that the subject/course may have had.

Departments used the template to complete their audit and reflect on areas that needed amending or creating - Yellow feedback stickers, Green Cycle stickers. Below is an example of Geography using the template to audit & reflect.

Business Studies

Y12 & 13 Curriculum Audit   September 2018-19

Subject: Physical Geography   Staff Completing: VF SN SM   Class: Student in Class Work Books: Y N   Student Assessment Folders: Y N

Year: 12 13   Cycle: 1 2 3 4   Revision: Student Books: Y N   Student Homework Books: Y N

Green Sticker Unit:	Completed: Y N	Incomplete: (actions – who/dates)

Week	In Class Topic	Study Centre Task/Topic 45 mins per week	Homework 1hr 15 mins per week	Yellow Sticker Weekly
1	Water Cycle and Carbon Cycles as natural systems and their application and processes. Lesson 1- The water cycle and carbon cycles as a system. Lesson 2- The distribution of the world's water and water stores, drainage basin and change in land use. Lesson 3- The carbon cycle and major stores of carbon and the carbon budget. Lesson 4- Water and carbon and life on Earth and case studies	Read and make notes on pages 24-29. This will provide a great introduction to the Carbon Cycle and its stores. Research the global distribution of fossil fuels. How is the distribution likely to affect local and regional carbon cycles? Find out about the recent decision to exploit oil in Alaska. How would this impact the carbon cycle?	All homework in homework booklet, week by week break down. Tasks will include: • Key words/definitions • Prior learning task/question • Current learning task/question • Flipped learning and research task • Exam style exam question marked in lesson and purple pen.	Exam style exam question marked in lesson and purple pen. Outline the potential impacts of water abstraction on the water cycle
2	Coastal systems and landscapes, processes and cycles	Using the text book and other resources, research high	All homework in homework booklet, week by week break	Exam style exam question
	Lesson 1- Introduction to coastal systems and landscapes. Lesson 2- Sources of energy in coastal environments. Lesson 3 & 4- Coastal geomorphological processes	energy and low energy coastlines within the UK and refer to examples.	down. Tasks will include: • Key words/definitions • Prior learning task/question • Current learning task/question • Flipped learning and research task Exam style exam question marked in lesson and purple pen.	marked in lesson and purple pen. Exam Question: Explain the concept of feedback in relation to the carbon cycle
3	Coastal landscape development and coastal landforms. Lesson 1- Coastal landscape characteristics and landforms. Lesson 2- Origin of coastal deposition and landform development. Lesson 3- Landscapes in coastal settings and sea level changes. Lesson 4- Submergence and emergence and future impacts	Using the text book page 112 and the US Geological Survey, research the South Carolina Coastal Erosion study. What can you find out about the components involved?	All homework in homework booklet, week by week break down. Tasks will include: • Key words/definitions • Prior learning task/question • Current learning task/question • Flipped learning and research task Exam style exam question marked in lesson and purple pen.	Exam style exam question marked in lesson and purple pen. Exam Question: Explain a negative feedback mechanism in the coastal system
4	Coastal management, approaches to flood risk and sustainability. Lesson 1- Human intervention on coastal landscapes- Hard and soft engineering	Use Google Earth and the text book to identify two stretches of coast in the UK and compare with two stretches of coast around the	All homework in homework booklet, week by week break down. Tasks will include: • Key words/definitions • Prior learning	Exam style exam question marked in lesson and purple pen.
	Lesson 2- Case studies for hard engineering. Lesson 3- Case studies for soft engineering. Lesson 4- Sustainable approaches to coastal flood management	world. What coastal features and landforms can be identified? Describe the overall landscape and similarities/differences.	• Current learning task/question • Flipped learning and research task Exam style exam question marked in lesson and purple pen.	
5	Quantitative and qualitative skills and coastal landscapes and Case Studies of coastal environments	Using pages 132/133 and any extra research, complete skills activities number 8 and chose either a sand dune or a saltmarsh and describe characteristics formation and vegetation succession. Use key terminology and ensure if reflects this academic level	All homework in homework booklet, week by week break down. Tasks will include: • Key words/definitions • Prior learning task/question • Current learning task/question • Flipped learning and research task Exam style exam question marked in lesson and purple pen.	Exam style exam question marked in lesson and purple pen. Exam Question: Assess the role of deposition in the development of the Morecambe Bay coastal landscape
6	Question practice- key skills and spearman's rank	Exam technique and exam practice. Look over mark schemes for the A-level papers, to refresh your memory and help get your head around how to answer extended writing questions.	All homework in homework booklet, week by week break down. Tasks will include: • Key words/definitions • Prior learning task/question • Current learning task/question • Flipped learning and research task	Exam style exam question marked in lesson and purple pen. Exam Question: To what extent do soft
			Exam style exam question marked in lesson and purple pen.	engineering techniques represent sustainable approaches to coastal management?

Assessment	Completed: Y N	Incomplete: (actions – who/dates)

It was decided that KS5 would align itself with KS4, ensuring there were yellow feedback stickers and green cycle stickers. The majority of our 6th Form is 'home-grown' and have been used to this way of learning. It therefore made sense to develop this approach in KS5 benefitting our students and streamlining workload for our staff.

Business Studies

12 Mark Answer
- A balanced answer in which knowledge points are developed
- **Pe CAn**
- Clear links between your answer and the scenario given
- To consider the consequences / impact of the points made
- Arguments presented in a logical manner
- A definite conclusion no 'Sitting on the fence'!

Evaluation:

Decision – Make one! Which is the best option, preferred strategy, most suitable approach?

Justify – Why is this the best and most suitable option? What evidence / context supports this decision? Why did you not choose the alternative? What factor(s) could influence the success of your chosen option?

In the future – what further actions may be considered in the future?

Level	Mark	Award up to 12 marks.
	0	No rewardable material.
1	1-3	• Demonstrates isolated knowledge and understanding of relevant information; there may be major gaps or omissions. • Provides little evidence of application and links between relevant information. Evaluation likely to consist of basic description of information. • Conclusions may be presented, but are likely to be generic assertions rather than supported by evidence. • Meaning may be conveyed but in a non-specialist way; response lacks clarity and fails to provide an adequate answer to the question.
2	4-6	• Demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding of relevant information with a few omissions. • Evidence of application demonstrating some linkages and interrelationships between factors leading to a judgement/judgements being made. • Evaluation is presented leading to conclusions but some may be lacking support. • Demonstrates the use of logical reasoning, clarity, and appropriate specialist technical language.
3	7-9	• Demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding of relevant information with a few minor omissions. • Evidence of application demonstrating linkages and interrelationships between factors leading to a supported judgement/judgements being made. • Displays a balanced evaluation demonstrating an awareness of competing arguments, leading to conclusions. • Demonstrates the use of logical reasoning, clarity, and appropriate specialist technical language.
4	10-12	• Demonstrates accurate and thorough knowledge and understanding of relevant information; any gaps or omissions are minor. • Evidences thorough application leading to balanced evaluation drawing on linkages and interrelationships between factors. • Displays a well-developed, balanced and coherent evaluation, demonstrating a thorough grasp of competing arguments, leading to supported conclusions. • Logical reasoning evidenced throughout response which is clear and uses specialist technical language consistently and fluently.

Staff to Student Feedback (this box will be standard for all subjects)

WWW:

EBI:

Do this now:

Green stickers have been sporadically used and at best have just given the course overview.

A-level physics – overview of year 12 and year 13

Y12 cycle 1
Mechanics Part 1
Vectors and their treatment are introduced followed by the development of the student's knowledge and understanding of forces.
Particles and Radiation
This section introduces students both to the fundamental properties of matter and to electromagnetic radiation and quantum phenomena. In studying this, students will appreciate the importance of collaboration in physics research.

Y12 cycle 2
Mechanics Part 2
Vectors and their treatment are introduced followed by the development of the student's knowledge and understanding of energy and momentum.
Waves and Optics
Students deepen their knowledge from GCSE of wave phenomena through a development of knowledge of the characteristics, properties, and applications of travelling waves and stationary waves. Topics treated include refraction, diffraction, superposition and interference.

Y12 cycle 3
Materials
This section continues with a study of materials considered in terms of their bulk properties and tensile strength.
Electricity
This section builds on and develops earlier study of these phenomena from GCSE. It provides opportunities for the development of practical skills at an early stage in the course and lays the groundwork for later study of the many electrical applications that are important to society.

Y12 cycle 4
Further Mechanics
The earlier study of mechanics is advanced through a consideration of circular motion and simple harmonic motion (the harmonic oscillator).
Radioactivity
This section builds on the work of Particles and radiation to link the properties of the nucleus to the production of nuclear power through the characteristics of the nucleus, the properties of unstable nuclei and the link between energy and mass.

The use of the effort boards in lower school have now been adopted for KS5 students. This enables key staff to have further conversations with individuals about their effort

Impact

The impact has been that departments have had to reflect on what needs to be taught, sequence of delivery, feedback and assessment processes. This has therefore aligned the 6th Form (with a small degree of flexibility) with the teaching process in KS3/4

Ensuring departments fully plan homework, which is checked, was essential to student progress. Previously this had been variable between departments and thus across the school. Also subjects setting work for students to complete in timetabled Study Centre sessions. Again, planned by departments in advance to ensure student progress.

The desired impact will be that student grades at the end of Y13 will have improved. We need to ensure we get the right students on the right courses, taught by passionate/committed teachers, delivering well planned lessons. I am confident we have made huge strides in achieving this.

The whole reflective process has been to ensure that there is a consistency across KS5, which is aligned with the lower key stages.

Excellent work has been produced from Science with their 'Beast Books' and run in revision sheets

Also ensuring that students attend their Private Study lessons which are registered. If they do not attend, physically chase up and send a message home. On the whole these lessons have been well attended. A caveat to this is that we must ensure that all subjects provide enough meaningful and accessible work for them to complete

In essence the main driver to be successful has been; greater focus on the curriculum, what is being taught/when, lesson planning and ensuring the students have planned homework and Study Centre work. This has enabled us to have an overview of what is occurring and a degree of accountability.

Reflections & Next Steps

We must now endeavour to use the Curriculum Improvement Week to reflect on our current improvements and continue to drive these relentlessly forward. This is with a real focus on, sequencing of curriculum (mapping), green and yellow stickers, assessments, lessons, homework and Study Centre work.

Coupled with this, building upon the character programme of the lower school - developing a strong character programme for the 6th form. This will be underpinned by the Pixl LORIC skills (Leadership, Organisation, Resilience, Initiative & Communication)

Other foci:

- Homework will increase to 3hrs per subject per week
- Study Centre tasks to increase to 2hrs per subject per week
- Data systems - what, when, who, fit for purpose - actions
- Y11 GCSE results - ensuring students are on the right courses
- Staff accountability through robust line management - to ensure consistency
- Clarity of responsibility/roles/tasks - Y12 & 13 Heads

All of the above has been with the support Emma Hosking - Head of 6th Form

Homework, Knowledge Organisers and Revision

Evan Pugh, Vice Principal

What are Knowledge Organisers?

They contain the knowledge needed to underpin the learning during each learning cycle and that which is tested at the end of the cycle. Knowledge Organisers make very clear to students the *specific knowledge they need to learn* for each subject in each learning cycle. Knowledge Organisers can also then be used as revision tools shortly before the end of cycle tests.

The major innovation this year is that we have designed a book for students to complete their homework in. Each page is dated so there is full transparency; teachers, students and parents know what needs to be completed for each day. If there are blank pages we know students have not completed their homework.

Each page is divided into 2 columns, one column for a question and the other for the answer. Students are expected to create 10 questions and answers for each subject on their homework timetable for that evening.

Homework Timetable

| Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
English	Geography	Science	Design & Technology	Geography	Reading
Sparx Maths	Maths foundation	Sparx Maths	Sparx Maths	Sparx Maths	
Science	History	RS	History	Science	
MFL	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	

Once they have completed their test, they fold the answers under and try to answer the questions from memory on the next page. They then check their answers and write any that were incorrect out in purple pen.
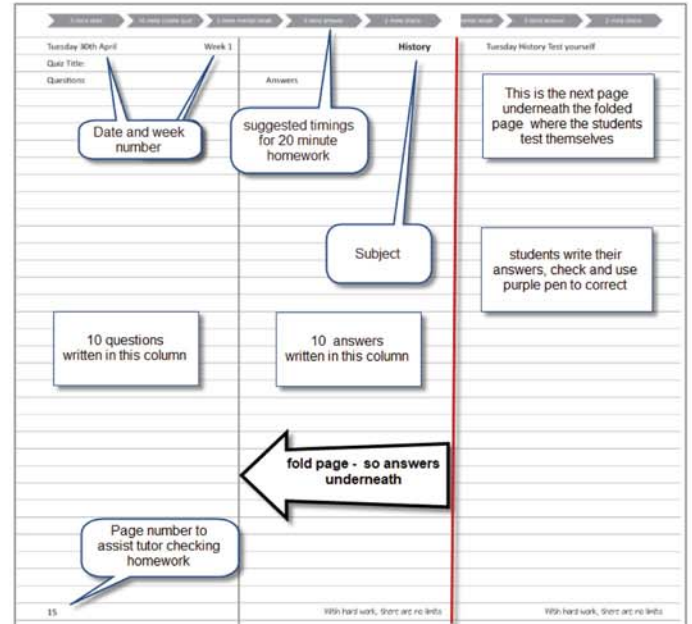
This is an example of a Math's page and a quizzing page:

This is an example of the quiz page, answers folded underneath and their retrieval answers:
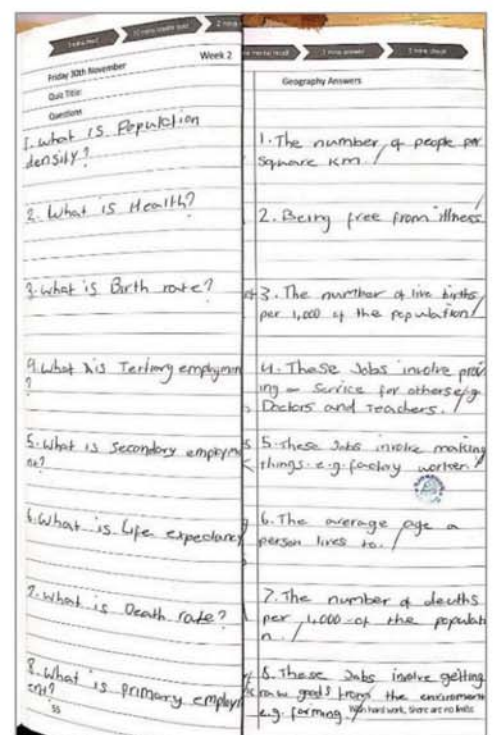
Year 7 and 8 have 1 hour 20 minutes of homework per day. This consists of 2 x 20 minutes of knowledge organisers quizzing for subjects, 20 minutes reading and 20 minutes of SPARX maths.

Years 9-11 have 1 hour 30 minutes per week. This consists of a thirty-minute subject written homework and three 20 minutes of subject knowledge organisers. This is checked in tutor time by tutors. Year 7 and Year 8 have introduced a peer checking system to improve their own homework and to enable other activities to take place in tutor times.

This year also saw the introduction of SPARX Maths homework for Year 7 and Hegarty Maths for Years 8-11. The homework book has a squared page for each Maths homework.

The TA Way

Each year we begin with a day devoted to expectations for the year. Each Year group has an hour session about homework in the sports hall where they are given their homework books and Knowledge Organisers for the first cycle. The session consists of how to complete the homework effectively and why we use quizzing.

Students in the sports hall for the TA Way homework session

This year we also supported Year 7 with their homework for the first four days of week 1. Year 7 stayed after school for an hour and members of the Senior Leadership Team ran sessions with each tutor group. The students were guided through how to complete the quizzing homework. By the end of the sessions each Year 7 student knew how to complete their homework effectively.

The study centre

Students can use the Study Centre before school, break and lunchtime to complete their homework. Between 3.00pm and 4.15pm we employ a teacher to support students with their homework.

Retrieval Practice, Interleaving and Spaced Learning

The homework is organised so students learn independently to do retrieval practice. Homework is followed up in classes with 'Do now's which are based on their knowledge organiser.

Homework is interleaved because their homework timetable ensures they study different subjects each evening. Spaced learning is achieved through spacing out and returning to the same knowledge throughout the cycle.

English have trialled a system based on the Ebbinghaus forgetting curve with Year 10 and are rolling this out to other Year groups.

All subject areas are revising their knowledge organisers to be able to ensure students re-visit knowledge through the cycle and I am going to edit the homework book so they are forced to set their quizzes on information from this week, last week four weeks ago etc. There will be prompts for each questions e.g. this week, last week etc. To make it easier for students to look back at previous cycle's knowledge organisers we are going to print a full year's knowledge organisers in one book.

English have created a PowerPoint slide which is used to explain how to use the knowledge organisers using the Ebbinghaus forgetting curve.

So rather than revise one week then move on it ensures you keep going back over old knowledge to ensure it lodges in your long term memory.

For example **look at the way you will now continue to recap the content in week one**. You will still be going over this right up to week 6, by which point, it should have really stuck.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Week 1 Context	Week 2 Context	Week 3 Context	Week 4 Context	Week 5 Context	Week 6 Context	Week 7 Context	Week 7 recap 1
Week 1 Point 1	Week 2 Point 1	Week 3 Point 1	Week 4 Point 1	Week 5 Point 1	Week 6 Point 1	Week 7 Point 1	Week 7 recap 2
Week 1 Point 1	Week 2 Point 1	Week 3 Point 1	Week 4 Point 1	Week 5 Point 1	Week 6 Point 1	Week 7 Point 1	Week 6 recap 1
Week 1 Point 2	Week 2 Point 2	Week 3 Point 2	Week 4 Point 2	Week 5 Point 2	Week 6 Point 2	Week 7 Point 2	Week 6 recap 2
Week 1 Point 2	Week 2 Point 2	Week 3 Point 2	Week 4 Point 2	Week 5 Point 2	Week 6 Technique	Week 7 Technique	Week 5 recap
Week 1 Technique	Week 2 Technique	Week 3 Technique	Week 4 Technique	Week 5 Technique	Week 5 recap	Week 6 recap	Week 4 recap
Previous Cycle W7	Week 1 recap 1	Week 2 recap 1	Week 3 recap 1	Week 4 recap 1	Week 4 recap	Week 5 recap	Week 3 recap
Previous Cycle W7	Week 1 recap 2	Week 2 recap 2	Week 3 recap 2	Week 3 recap	Week 3 recap	Week 4 recap	Week 2 recap
Previous Cycle W6	Previous Cycle W7	Week 1 recap 1	Week 2 recap	Week 2 recap	Week 2 recap	Week 3 recap	Week 1 recap 1
Previous Cycle W5	Previous Cycle W6	Previous Cycle W7	Week 1 recap	Week 1 recap	Week 1 recap	Week 2 recap	Week 1 recap 2

Checking and consequences

This is now more transparent as each page in the homework book is dated and tutors have a stamp to show the work has been checked. Non-completion of homework is picked up through the behaviour recording system "Classcharts". Heads of Academic Progress follow up persistent non-completion of homework.

Alongside Homework

The quizzing homework is the minimum we expect. This year we have had bespoke flashcards printed so that students can experience a different way of retrieval practice. Many students complete these on top of their homework. This type of revision is modelled in a variety of subjects such as Science and English. In a year we have given out over 200,000 flashcards. To support students using flashcards effectively we have had bespoke boxes made for students to sort their flashcards in so they can use the Leitner method of using flashcards effectively for retrieval practice.
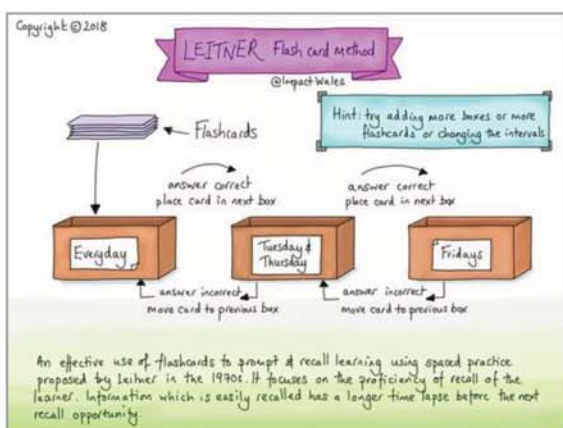
They are affectionately called 'Ollie' boxes as the idea arose out of a conversation with a Year 11 student called Ollie.

Revision

We set Year 11 specific revision to do over the Easter break. Students had to complete two and a half hours of revision over 11 days. They were given a timetable that interleaved their learning and subjects provided a resource book with specific tasks which they judged to be the key skills and knowledge students needed for their exams. Students were asked to mark off each session they completed so they didn't 'break the chain'.

The key areas for development are:

1. To create homework books that encourage spaced learning.
2. To create knowledge organisers to map the Ebbinghaus forgetting curve.
3. To create a book containing all of the knowledge organisers for the 4 cycles to support retrieval based on the Ebbinghaus forgetting curve.
4. To celebrate the fantastic work students are doing at home, e.g. homework of the week /cycle per tutor group/ year group etc. Praise point for homework excellence, exemplars displayed.
5. To ensure the Academy are intervening for students not completing homework or struggling to complete homework.
6. To explain retrieval practice, spaced learning and interleaving during the TA way so students understand why we are asking them to do homework in a certain way.

Investing in our Curriculum

Harrison Littler, Vice Principal

Background and Context

Our approach to teaching and learning is founded on three core areas: a rigorous, ambitious and knowledge-rich curriculum; skilled classroom pedagogy, and regular, meaningful assessment which drives progress. A culture of continuous improvement ensures that we continue to advance these three elements at every opportunity.

Over the last few years, staff have established and built upon a strong centrally planned curriculum. We firmly believe in the transformative power of central planning and have been reaping the benefits of this as a school for the last few years. Firstly, our students have been guaranteed a well-planned and coherent curriculum. This has benefitted from the input of a number of experienced teaching staff, who have been able to pool their subject mastery and exam specific expertise. Central planning also ensures that all students are exposed to an ambitious curriculum and 'teaches to the top'.

Our staff also benefit from this approach. We are passionately committed to ensuring that our staff are able to maintain a healthy work-life balance. This means that we have a responsibility to ensure that teachers are able to teach consistently outstanding lessons without working excessive hours or suffering from stress. In many schools, the end of a long day's teaching can feel like just the beginning of a mountain to climb in preparing for the next day's lessons. Our commitment to central planning helps to significantly ease that daily planning burden. Perhaps just as significantly, trainee teachers, those recently qualified, and those who

occasionally teach outside of their main specialism, are supported by a rigorous framework and the combined expertise of their colleagues.

The hard work involved in crafting a central curriculum cannot be underestimated. Vast amounts of thought and time are required to make this happen in each subject. Departments have to ensure that the curriculum is coherent and does justice to the knowledge-rich foundations of each subject. They have to generate the hundreds of high quality lessons, complete with rigorously planned Do Now activities, comprehensive suites of low stakes quizzes, and increasingly, pre-populated exercise books. As a result, it's essential that we are very clear and deliberate about how and when staff will be afforded the time to invest in the curriculum. There are three principal ways in which we have made this investment in the curriculum.

1. Curriculum Improvement Week

Perhaps the clearest and boldest of these has been the move to create four non-pupil days at the end of the summer term in 2018-19.

These four days saw staff feverishly discussing subject pedagogy, writing and refining curriculum maps, and carefully honing the mid and end-of-cycle assessments they would be using throughout the next year. In preparation for these four days, we published a booklet entitled 'Curriculum Expectations' which sought to codify and share the stand-out good practice across the academy. This was accompanied by a Twilight CPD session in June which supported this document, illustrating some of the themes and giving teams some time to plan how they would approach the four days ahead of them.

It was true to say in June 2019 that students across all subjects and all years were already experiencing a consistency of approach, which reflected the elements set out in out in our teaching and learning model. For example, 'do now', low stakes quizzing, mid and end-of-cycle assessments and the use of Teach Like a Champion techniques and routines was well established. The focus of improvement therefore was on the following:

a) The quality, rigour and impact of each of these individual elements.

b) How coherently these elements hang together and feed into and from each other.

This second question is absolutely critical to a successful curriculum design. It is perhaps the most difficult to achieve as it involves simultaneous scrutiny of all parts of the model, rather than a piecemeal approach to improvement. The process feels like the weaving of a tapestry. For example, it is impossible to create a curriculum map without a view of the body of knowledge you wish to teach, but it is equally difficult to write an effective knowledge organiser without considering the sequencing and pace of delivery that a curriculum map considers. To put it another way, it involves asking (and attempting to answer) three key questions at the same time. Namely, what to teach, in what order, and how it will be assessed. This is set out in the table below.

Key Question: What knowledge and skills do we want students to learn?	Key Question: How is this going to be most effectively taught (delivery, order)?	Key Question: What is the most effective way to assess and feed back on this content?
Key Output: • Knowledge Organisers	Key Output: • Curriculum maps • Green stickers	Key Output: • Yellow stickers and student tasks • End of cycle assessments

The key document that ties these questions together is the Curriculum Map. The map contains an overview of the rationale for the cycle. Why are we teaching this content? Why in this sequence? Why are we delivering it in this way? The response to these questions, particularly for KS4 and KS5, is often 'because that's what we have to teach' or 'we're just following the specification'. This response belies the reality that leaders have, in fact, put a great deal of thought into these questions, although they may not necessarily have stopped to think of it in these terms. As an example, our English Department has developed the approach of teaching a text through the exploration of key themes alongside the text itself. Their *An Inspector Calls* unit for example, is delivered through the lens of weekly themes such as: exploitation, suppression, patriarchy and hypocrisy. This approach is very successful in schooling students in the wider historical and social context of the themes in the play.

The remainder of the Curriculum Map then breaks up a cycle of learning into chunks of around 5 lessons. It is at this level of a week of lessons (two weeks or more for some options) that we interrogate the curriculum. The diagram below indicates the questions that we ask of the curriculum. The result of this process is what we have described as a *manual* for the effective teaching of that

discrete series if lessons. It attempts to bottle the elements of teaching that demonstrate real mastery of a subject so that these can be shared and consistently put into practice.
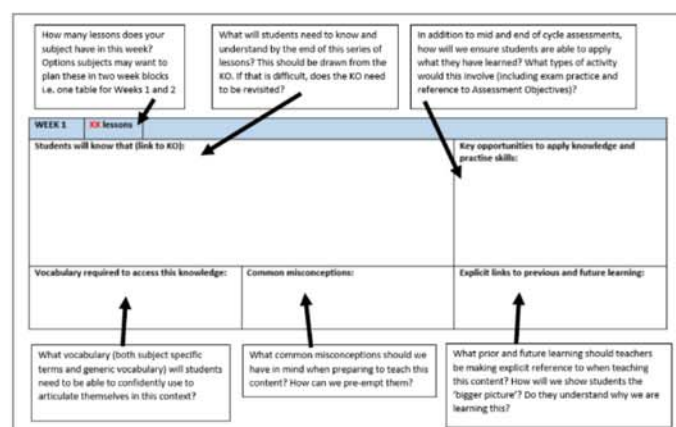
2. Weekly Subject Based CPD

While the Curriculum Improvement Week acted as a catalyst for the process described, we recognise that the job is never done and that ongoing work is required to:

a) Continue to refine and improve the curriculum by asking the questions from the model above.
b) Support staff to engage with and deliver the curriculum as planned.

Every Monday after school, our subject teams meet with the explicit purpose of reviewing and developing the curriculum. Throughout the previous week, staff have been teaching the centrally planned lessons, adapted for the needs of their classes. At the same time they will have been annotating and updating their copy of the curriculum map for each year group and subject. With the benefit of the combined reflections of each member of the team, Subject CPD meetings look back at what has been delivered to ask:

• What was successful? What had the most impact?
• What needs work? What had less impact?
• What did *students* find challenging to learn?
• What did *teachers* find most challenging to deliver?

Heads of faculty or subject leads then play the role of incorporating that discussion into an updated central curriculum map as well as creating actions going forward for adapting the approach to say, an assessment, or the examples used to illustrate a concept.

The discussion is also forward looking. Examining the upcoming series of lessons, the team will discuss:

• Previous experience of teaching any key concepts and implications for pedagogy.
• Strategies for effective delivery of concepts or skills from lesson series.

- Key misconceptions from the lesson series and how to overcome them.
- Key links to previous and future learning which should be made.
- Key vocabulary and how it can best be taught explicitly.

One additional strategy sometimes employed is an exercise borrowed from Maths Mastery meetings. Asking staff to have a go at a carefully selected, timed exam question, which reflects what students will be asked to do in the week ahead. This is a really effective way of stimulating a pedagogical discussion. When teachers put themselves in the position of students in this way it can reveal some of the inherent challenges they may not have considered, along with some of the tacit understandings that perhaps ought to be made more explicit to students.

3. A Collegiate Approach to Ongoing Curriculum Improvement

The third initiative to support continuous curriculum improvement is a process which intends to evaluate the impact of the previous two. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and ultimately our curriculum improvement efforts need to have a tangible impact on classroom practice and the experience of students. Here, the role of Heads of Learning Area (HOLAs) and their senior line managers are critical. Their role is to ensure that both the planning and the delivery of the curriculum continues to move forward. They do this by joining department meetings and visiting classrooms, armed with the Curriculum Map - our manual for teaching – looking for indicators of success.

So, what are the indicators of success? One success indicator is staff engagement. To what extent, and how regularly are staff engaging with curriculum maps, and annotating them with their thoughts? Linked to this, how effective are Subject CPD meetings in generating actions and outcomes from the contributions of the whole team?

Inevitably then, there are a range of measures which can only be seen in the classroom: all of the indicators of what has been described above as *subject mastery*. For example, what evidence is there of:

- Explicit connections being made between concepts.
- Explicit links being made between current, prior and future learning.
- Anticipation of common misconceptions and efforts to overcome them.
- Exam specific expertise and reference to specialist 'examiner knowledge'.

While it may be impossible to quantify the degree of improvement in something like 'anticipation of common misconceptions', we have a very clear idea of what we're looking for. This reflects the reality of our coaching of staff, which is based on a range of techniques and a common language to describe them based. around the Teach Like a Champion books. Therefore, we have employed similar methods in what might be best described as 'curriculum coaching': visiting classrooms with HOLAs to evaluate the delivery of curriculum. In this way, line managers support HOLAs to implement their curriculum vision. Just like our coaching model, the process is entirely non-judgemental and supportive, so that the only concern is to improve outcomes.

No Need to Exclude - Creating an Alternative Provision

Ben Chadwick, Vice Principal

Background and Context

The title for last year's case study was 'ensuring a consistent approach from Years 7 to 13'. Looking back over the last 12 months, it is clear to see that a huge amount of time and effort has been put into ensuring students are given the same clear messages and the same expectations by all staff in all subject areas as well as outside the classroom. From morning line up to tutor time, transition, do now starters, lesson structure, dismissal, unstructured time, intervention and homework - students and staff are clear on how and why we do each aspect in a particular way. We talked a lot about marginal gains and why at TA we do things differently to other places. There is always a reason and once understood, it becomes part of our everyday routines.

Our focus for the next 12 months is based on reflecting from my case study in 2014/15 entitled 'Getting behaviour right, every time'. Although the vast majority of lessons are disruption free, we have certain groups of students who 'reoffend' and are in a negative cycle. They can disrupt others' learning and fall behind in their own learning.

Back in 2014/15 we did have alternative external support in the form of youth services, support workers, CAMHS, YOT, family support etc. but over the years these services have shrunk due to financial reasons and there has been an increase in the number of young people (and families) who are struggling and at crisis point. In most cases schools are the only consistent service in their lives and the onus has been put on school to 'fix' society's issues. Traditionally exclusions have been used as a consequence to poor behaviour but research shows this has an adverse effect and actually compounds the problem.

"For children who really struggle at school, exclusion can be a relief as it removes them from an unbearable situation with the result that on their return to school they will behave even more badly to escape again. As such, it becomes an entirely counterproductive disciplinary tool as for these children it encourages the very behaviour that it intends to punish. By avoiding exclusion and finding other solutions to poor behaviour, schools can help children's mental health in the future as well as their education"

Professor Tamsin Ford

Nationally there has been a 40% increase in the number of students permanently excluded in the last 3 years.

"Today we face the scandal of ever-increasing numbers of children being excluded and being left abandoned to a forgotten part of our education system which too often fails to deliver good outcomes for those young people."

Rt Hon Robert Halfon
Chair of the Education Committee
Excluded are the Forgotten Children

Our focus is to reduce the number of fixed term exclusions by 50% over the next 12 months and provide an alternative which is beneficial to the individuals.

How can this be achieved?

Children may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. (The SEN code of practice 2015).

Our real focus is to get to the root of the issues with each individual and foster a sense of belonging and buy in from them towards the Academy but more importantly towards themselves. Lots of research has been conducted on mental health and the stress young people are under.

'Children who grow up in stressful environments generally find it harder to concentrate and to follow instructions. These have a direct impact on their performance in school' (P. Tough - How Children Succeed)

From September 2019 we will be providing a specialised alternative programme for up to 10 students at a time per learning cycle. Students have been selected from data gathered throughout the year. These students have been excluded, have had failed managed moves and are known to a number of outside agencies.

The timetable will consist of Mathematics and English daily as well as an activity session (PE, Art or Music). The key to success is offering a daily mindfulness session and a session on self-awareness and self-worth. We will offer a physical, emotional and psychological safe place, and foster a sense of community and pride.

Positive relationships are not just the foundation of positive learning experiences but constitute important social learning. Mastering the ability to develop respectful adult relationships is necessary for successful progression into further education and employment (Department of Education 2017).

.b Mindfulness

Another challenge for the year ahead is to become a mindful community and give our students and staff, as well as parents/carers, the knowledge and practical skills to deal with stress, anxiety, worry and other negative aspects of their lives in a more positive way.

What is mindfulness?

At its basic level, mindfulness helps train your attention to be more aware of what is actually happening, rather than worrying about what has happened or might happen.

Here at Torquay Academy we believe we have a duty to look after the mental health and wellbeing of our students. This .b mindfulness course gives students a life skill which they can use and practice throughout their life. It offers them strategies to help to deal with the challenge of modern life.

The link between Effort and Attainment

Mark Gale, Vice Principal

Background and Context

One of our largest challenges is to support students to learn effectively, enjoy their education, and achieve good outcomes at GCSE and A-level. We have been trying to find different ways of identifying, at an early stage, students at risk of not succeeding, and we have researched a number of different ways of doing this.

Like most schools, we collect predicted grade data and use it to generate a predicted progress 8 score, but we found that there can be some variability in the accuracy of these grades. We have put processes in place to minimise prediction inaccuracy, but there will always inevitably be some uncertainty in predicted grades. It is often better to look for anomalies rather than outright grades.

While analysing the most recent set of GCSE grades it became clear that there was a very strong link between a student's effort over the last few years of their education and the progress 8 scores that they achieved in their GCSEs.

We collect effort grade data from all teachers four times a year. This involves collecting information about the students' behaviour and readiness to learn in lessons, their mindset (that is to say their willingness to persevere), and their homework. At a whole school level, we also collect information about their attendance.

These effort grades are then collated and averaged across subjects to give an average effort grade. we categorise the different average effort grades into First Class (average score 1.00-1.15), upper second (1.15-1.50), lower second (1.50-2.00), third class (2.00-2.50) and 'unacceptable' effort (below 2.50).

Students' effort grades are published quarterly and their unveiling is the cause of great anticipation.

What we discovered was that students who achieved first class second class or third class effort grades on

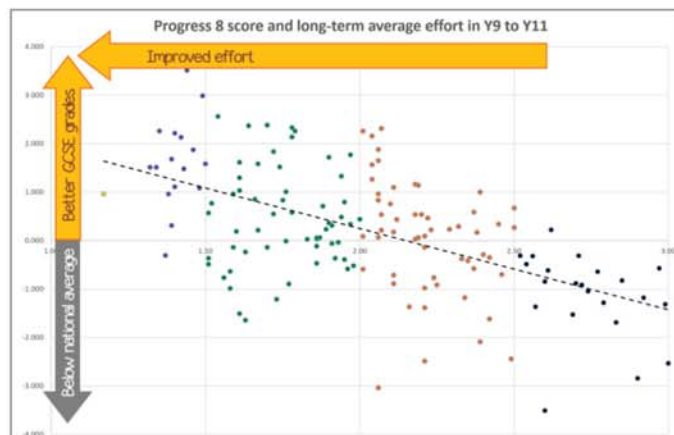average over the final 3 years of their education were much more likely to achieve positive progress 8 scores - with a correlation between progress 8 and effort category - whereas the students whose effort was in the 'unacceptable' effort category were far more likely to achieve negative progress 8 scores.

Progress 8 score and long-term average effort in Y9 to Y11

This graph shows that only one student with 'unacceptable' effort (black dots) achieved positive progress 8 score. Students with excellent effort (gold and purple) were almost certain to achieve strong positive progress 8 scores.

In this way, we had discovered a strong indicator of a child's likelihood of achieving a positive progress 8 score and thereby performing above the national average.

This meant that we now had a very clear means of predicting a student's likelihood of success and, equally importantly, communicating this information to students and parents.

The challenge was now to use this information to have a positive impact on students' behaviours, to improve their effort where necessary before it is too late. It may seem obvious that students who put in good effort every day will do better than those whose effort is poor, but we have found that a surprising number of students do not readily recognise this link for themselves. They assume that those at the lower end of the effort scale must be less able, or they explain away their lack of effort by making excuses.

The chart below has enabled us to bust the first myth, that lower-effort students must be lower-ability. It shows six students who all achieved the same SATs scores in year 6, but whose average effort grades from year 9 to year 11 differed markedly. By explaining the nature of progress 8 we have been able to show that the ones who put in better effort achieved far higher GCSE grades, and therefore have far more post-16 options available.

These students all got the same SATs results.

Name	Prog 8	Y9 Q1	Y9 Q2	Y9 Q3	Y9 Q4	Y10 Q1	Y10 Q2	Y10 Q3	Y10 Q4	Y11 Q1	Y11 Q2	Y11 Q3	% poor effort	GCSE grades
Student A	-0.881	2.75	2.75	2.68	2.75	2.75	2.61	2.75	2.69	2.39	2.82	2.75	91%	2 x grade 3, 6 x grade 2, 1 x Merit
Student B	-0.575	2.63	3.04	3.32	3.21	3.11	3.00	2.95	2.68	2.67	2.93	3.09	100%	1 x grade 3, 4 x grade 2, 1 x Merit
Student C	-0.421	2.00	2.18	2.22	2.18	2.29	2.56	2.31	2.18	2.68	2.72	2.58	36%	2 x grade 5, 4 x grade 4, 2 x grade 3
Student D	0.440	1.11	1.75	2.00	1.90	2.21	2.58	2.18	2.21	1.86	2.00	1.97	9%	3 x grade 7, 4 x grade 4, 2 x Distinction
Student E	1.332	1.47	1.71	1.75	1.90	1.71	2.18	2.15	2.04	1.93	2.25	2.25	0%	4 x grade 6, 3 x grade 5, 1 x Distinction
Student F	1.869	1.59	1.53	1.53	1.57	1.50	1.57	1.47	1.43	1.29	1.33	1.25	0%	4 x grade 6, 3 x grade 5, 1 x Merit

Moreover, we can explain that the students whose effort is better can receive stronger references from us, making them more likely to gain offers of employment.

We have instituted a 'three wave' effort system in which Heads of Academic Progress, SLT members and parents discuss students' effort and how it can be improved. If a student is in the 'unacceptable' effort category for two effort boards in a row, they are seen by the Head of Academic Progress (a year group leader) and set targets for improving their effort. This may be done through telephone consultations. Often a student will be placed on a simple effort monitoring report, perhaps issued through their SLT head of house.

Effort monitoring report

Name_____   Week beginning_____

Did this student work well in today's lesson? Please tick and sign.

- Consistently good levels of effort.
- Ready to learn.
- Kept going when the work got difficult.
- No disruption.
- Homework completed.

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5
Monday	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____
Tuesday	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____
Wednesday	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____
Thursday	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____
Friday	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____	Subject _____ ☐Yes ☐No Signed _____

Attitude to learning interventions – form 1 (student + HOAP)

Name

Student's explanation of why good effort is important:

Subject	Current effort grades + Specific actions to improve effort grade next time

☐ Letter 1 sent to parents.

☐ Week 2 monitoring catch-up took place on ....

☐ Week 4 monitoring catch-up took place on ....

☐ Week 6 review meeting took place on ....

Signed _____ student   _____ Head of academic progress

If students' effort does not improve by the time of the next effort board, they move to the second or third wave, which involves further target setting and ever closer monitoring of the student. The goal is to help students understand that making the choice to put in good levels of effort now (when more attractive alternatives may be available!) will make a huge difference to the options open to them in their future lives.

Establishing an Activities Week

Paul Hocking, Vice Principal

Objectives and rationale

Torquay Academy is home to the hardest working students you will find anywhere. Every second of the day is thought through and thoroughly planned. As the old saying goes 'work hard, play hard'. Activities Week is an opportunity for our students and staff to enjoy the final week of term, to enjoy a full range of extra curricular activities and just have fun! In reality this week in school is just as thoroughly planned as any other with clear learning objectives. It is an opportunity for staff and students to build relationships in different contexts and to develop those softer skills which benefit us all throughout our life.

Background and context

Historically TA has not had an activities week preferring instead to roll the timetable forward in July and beginning the academic years in the final month of the Summer term. The disruption this caused because of staffing changes and the cover implications has led to this practice falling out of favour. It was also strongly felt that our students would benefit enormously from a week of activities enabling a 'fun' end of year where in reality our students are learning to interact with peers and adults in different contexts. We are fortunate to live within a tourist area with many locations nearby suitable for trips which our students would find enjoyable. We are also in an area of high social deprivation and as a consequence many of our students have not been able to take advantage of these opportunities. The level of social deprivation also means that the activities need to be carefully planned to incorporate cheaper or free activities which are equally enriching.

Activities Week Models

Model	WWW	EBI
Free choice Students can pick any 5 day events	Students, parents and carers can tailor their week, controlling activities and costs, as they wish.	Organisation is very complicated and it is easy to lose track of where students should be.
Week long activities Students sign up to a week of activities	It is clear what each student is doing for the week.	Repetitive and the 5 day trips can get expensive.
Carousel of activities Students sign up for a suite of activities that rotate during the week	Variation in activity and costs can be controlled by mixing trips with in school free activities.	Finding the right mix of activities that attract students to sign up.
End-of-year festival Incorporation of Sports day and the music festival	Reduces the timetable impact of sports day and the music festival. Produces a end-of-year set of events.	Foreign trips are harder to plan with only 3 days available.

Free Choice Activities Week

In the last 7 years we have been through a number of models for activities week and we are constantly evaluating what happened in the previous year. We started activities week by offering a series of day drips, allowing the students free choice and then timetabling a week based on their preferences. Students were able to pick mountain biking one day and then craft the next. Students, parents and carers were able to have a tailored experience and control their own costs by mixing free and paid activities. This made the organisation very difficult as there was a timetable to be constructed and with everyone paying a different amount the finances were also very complicated.

Week long activities

To simplify the process, we decided to offer 5 day experiences for the students, making the choice easier and improving the efficiency of the organisational process. Largely this was a success as groups really bonded during the week and benefitted from the shared experiences. The development of soft skills was very apparent in some areas especially where students had really pushed themselves into adventurous activities. Some of these activities were quite expensive because they were lasting all week. In addition, the free activities were very repetitive. It became clear that it was hard for some of our students to enjoy 5 whole days of playing football or board games.

Carousel of Activities

The next development was to rotate the in school free activities and to offer a cheap, £5, end of week reward trip to a local theme park.

Day	Periods	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Monday	1 & 2	Film	Sport 5	Board Games	Sport 4
	3 & 4	Sport 1	Film	Sport 5	Board Games
	5	Board Games	Sport 1	Film	Sport 5
Tuesday	1 & 2	Sport 3	Board Games	Sport 1	Film
	3 & 4	Treasure Hunt	Sport 3	Board Games	Sport 1
	5	Sport 2	Treasure Hunt	Sport 3	Board Games
Wednesday	1 & 2	Crealy	Crealy	Crealy	Crealy
	3 & 4	Crealy	Crealy	Crealy	Crealy
	5	Crealy	Crealy	Crealy	Crealy
Thursday	1 & 2	Film 2	Sport 2	Treasure Hunt	Sport 3
	3 & 4	Quiz	Film 2	Sport 2	Treasure Hunt
	5	Sport 4	Quiz	Film 2	Sport 2
Friday	1 & 2	Board Games	Sport 4	Quiz	Film 2
	3 & 4	Sport 5	Board Games	Sport 4	Quiz
	5	Bake-Off	Bake-Off	Bake-Off	Bake-Off

The carousel mixed up the activities so students were able to sample a good number of different free activities. Running parallel to this were the previously established week long events run by an ever expanding group of dedicated and expert teachers. Every year someone adds another fantastic opportunity for the students.

End-of-term celebration

The end of term is a busy time with various events and activity days filling the calendar. At TA the 2 headline events are sports day and the music festival. Both of these events cause disruption at a time when students are preparing for synoptic assessments in their subjects. In addition, some of the adventurous 5 day activities were considered to be a bit expensive. We therefore reduced the length of the 'Activities week' to 3 days and incorporated the end of term headline events.

Monday 8th July				
Period	Session	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
1-2	1 - 8:30 - 9:00	Tutor Time	KOOTH Assembly (Hall)	SC Asssembly (S Hall)
	2 - 9:00 - 9:30	KOOTH Assembly (Hall)	Graduation Ceremony (S Hall)	Tutor Time
	3 - 9:30 - 10:00	Assembly DMJ (S Hall)	Tutor Time	KOOTH Assembly (Hall)
	4 - 10:00 - 10:45	Activities Week Briefings		
P3	Normal times	Sports day for all		
P4	Finish at 1:00 for Lunch			
P5	Normal times	Sports day (Non-competitors to spectate and support)		

Tuesday 9th July				
Period	Session	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
1	Normal times	Sports day for all		
2	Normal times			
3	Normal times	Sports day (Non-competitors to spectate and support)		
4	Finish at 1:00 for Lunch	Whole School Assembly		
5	Normal times	Music Festival - starts at 1pm		

Sports day runs with the heats in the mornings and then the finals in the afternoon. During the heats the non-competitors were involved in end of term pastoral activities in the morning and then spectating in the afternoon. We also introduced 'sports day for all' where all students take part in sporting activities while the heats continue. Just before lunch there are the main finals which creates a rousing atmosphere as the houses compete for top honours. The results are then collated and announced in the end of year assembly. As the top house is announced the band begins which marks the beginning of the music festival. Sports day and the music festival are jointly organised by our 6th form students as credit towards their level 3 qualifications. We then enter into a 3 day activities week containing a mixture of carouselled activities and 3 day trips and adventures.

Outcomes

Our current model has been successful in reducing the amount of disruption at the end of the year and also managing the costs for some of our students' families. We have a full range of trips and visits to suit all of our students. We have also used the week to promote our extensive list extracurricular clubs & societies. The intention is for every KS3 student to sign up for a club and many year 8s do just that having sampled some of the events in activities week.

Next Steps

Our aims for the future are to incorporate the clubs and societies much more into activities week so we can enthuse more and more students into joining when we return to school in September. This year we did not offer an overseas trip as it was felt that 3 days was not enough time to travel to the destination. However, with careful planning and a departure time just after sports day finishes we are looking to re-introduce this popular option.

Delivering an Outstanding Physical Education Curriculum at Torquay Academy

Gareth Harries, Assistant Principal

Background and Context

This case study is a continuation of the study that I wrote last year. It focuses on a project the PE Department has been working on in partnership with Sport England and the Association of Physical Education and is looking at how we can deliver an outstanding PE curriculum for all of our students.

The project included a grant of £20,000 from Sport England which was to be spent on research, staff training, gaining expert advice, as well as visiting other schools to see if there is any outstanding practice in said schools that could be adapted to our school community, as part of the funding we were also able to allocate money for admin support throughout the project.

Whilst it was not totally against the spirit of the project, Sport England discouraged big spending on equipment. However, we were able to justify that the purchasing of some equipment, for example: boogie bounce equipment and spinning bikes, would be a much more cost effective way of sustaining what we were going to implement, particularly as we intended to train our staff to use this equipment. We also purchased iPads for the department with this money.

Since writing last year's case study there has been a significant shift in the attitude that the powers that be i.e. Government, Ofsted, Sport England etc have towards Physical Activity and PE, there have been numerous initiatives and recommendations drip fed over the year which aim to change students' attitudes towards physical activity, health and mental wellbeing using Physical Education lessons as a tool to deliver these recommendations. Whilst there is nothing new in the results of the research it has now taken on more of an importance. As the recent publication (July 2019) of the Government paper entitled 'School Sport and Activity Plan' would indicate. The benefits to mental as well as physical health has been well documented, more recently there has been a lot of information regarding the benefits of physical activities during the GCSE and A level exam periods, again nothing new but the statistics regarding the lack of physical activity amongst teenage girls has also been brought to the fore.

As can be seen from the graphic below, taken from a Youth Sports Trust survey (June 2019), the drop off from Year 7 to Year 13 girls enjoying sport and physical activity is of concern. The popularity of trampolining, dance, football and dodgeball come as no surprise and indeed we have historically offered all of these activities in our curriculum.
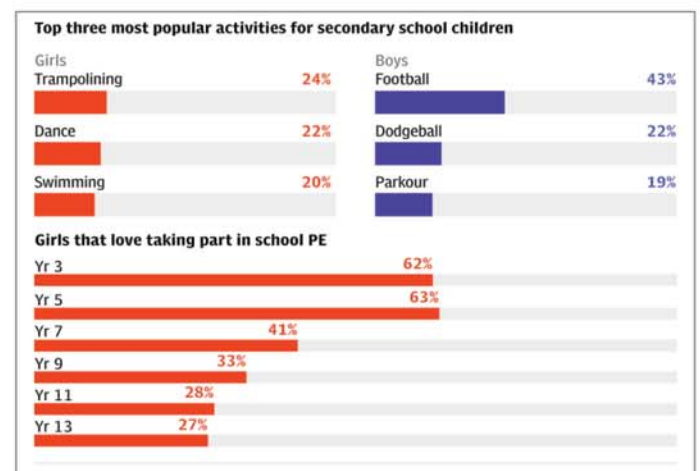
The graphic below outlines some of the benefits of physical activity and the effect that a lack of activity has on a child, again taken from a Youth Sports Trust survey (June 2019).
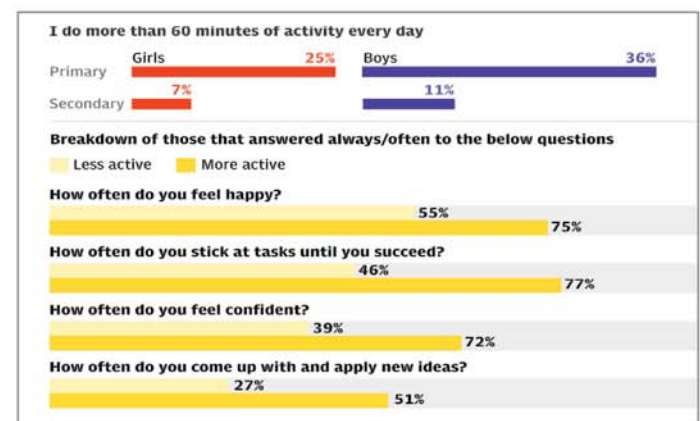
It is with all of this information in mind that the PE Department undertook the project. Firstly we had to agree as to what our curriculum would look like. We looked at each year group separately in terms of what activities we offered and the dynamics of the year group.

Questions we asked ourselves were:
- Should there be boys, girls only, mixed groups?
- Should we prescribe what the students do or give them a choice?
- Do we offer any different activities in addition to or instead of the more traditional activities?

We also took the decision cover PE lessons, when staff were absent, internally where possible. It was agreed that the inconvenience caused by this was far less than the inconvenience caused by non-specialists carrying out practical PE lessons, whilst at times this was difficult to achieve the Department did agree that it was the right decision to make. It also meant that we were able to carry on with the planned curriculum lessons, which was of benefit to the students.

We decided that in September the Year 7 and 8s would follow a very traditional curriculum although it would be fully inclusive in that girls would be able to do what are historically seen as boys' sports and vice versa, for example: rugby, football, dance. This has always been the case at Torquay Academy. They would be taught in single sex groups, this has not always been the case and is dependent on the boy/girls split within each year group, which in turn dictates class size.

We decided that Years 9-11 would be given a choice as to what route they followed, they would choose either a competitive route, a non-competitive route or a mixture of both, the activities would be decided based on what facilities were available and what the students and staff agreed between them. This element of choice was something that was highlighted by the Association of Physical Education as good practise as research suggests, girls in particular, seem to engage better when given the choice of activity. This was an easy process with Year 10 and 11 but more difficult with year 9. The group dynamics in Year 9 were not conducive to this type of choice and it was difficult to get some of them motivated, it seemed that they were not mature enough for choice at this stage, consequently after cycle 1 we reverted back to a more traditional curriculum with them.

Year 10 and 11 by and large bought into what we were doing. Some of the groups have had a full range of sports including girls' rugby, volleyball, softball, fitness and boogie bounce, whilst others have stuck to one or two sports such as football and softball. There have been less behaviour points and 'no kit' incidents recorded on class charts for Year 10 and 11 this year than the previous 2 years. This is also the case for Year 7 and 8. There is however still a problem with Year 9, in particular girls not engaging fully in their PE lessons.

List of Activities that our Year 7, 8 and 9 students took part in over the year 2018-19:

- Rugby
- Football
- Basketball
- Netball
- Dance
- Trampolining
- Gymnastics
- Table Tennis
- Badminton
- Dodgeball
- Handball
- Health Related Exercise
- Athletics
- Cricket
- Rounders

Examples of activities covered by Years 10 and 11 in 2018-19

Competitive - Rugby, Football, Netball, Softball, Basketball, Table Tennis

Non Competitive - Football, Dodgeball, Boogie Bounce, Fitness Suite, Rounders, Dance
Successes, attributed to both the project and curriculum design as well as staffing, would be:

- The introduction of boogie bounce onto the curriculum
- A more varied offer for year 10 and 11 girls
- A change in the use of positive language used by members of staff
- Engagement and progress made in lessons from year 7 & 8 has also been excellent.
- At the time of the study we were awaiting the delivery of spinning bikes, which it is felt will enhance the curriculum further.

Challenges that we have encountered include;

- The attitude of some year 9 girls towards their PE lessons.
- The trial of extracting some students out of their core PE lessons to have expert coaching in their chosen sports, the student did not necessarily buy into this as they wanted to try other sports that were on the curriculum.

Lessons learnt and priorities for next year, bearing in mind that we will be blessed with some outstanding

additional facilities such as a climbing wall, dance studio and the reinstatement of our MUGA. will be:

- Ensuring our curriculum takes advantage of all of these fantastic facilities.
- Addressing the non-participation of year 9 girls.
- Placing staff with sport specific expertise in front of the relevant classes.
- Ensuring that staff continue to develop good relationships with students and that every student looks forward to their PE lesson.

Conclusion

The project has given us a really good opportunity to look at ourselves as a Department and what we offer. In some respects, the project came 12 months too soon as our curriculum offer will be very different next year with the additional facilities. Although it will not come as a surprise, it is crucial to get the right teacher teaching certain groups as the relationship between pupils and staff is probably the single most important factor in delivering a successful PE curriculum and engaging disaffected students. The language staff use, the enthusiasm they have and the standards they set are all paramount.

Whilst there is still much to do in terms of consistently delivering an outstanding PE curriculum at Torquay Academy it is worth noting that the PE Department are continually looking for ways to improve their practice and what we offer the students. The numbers attending extra curricular clubs is increasing year on year and our tangible successes on the sporting field, in a number of sports, is the envy of many schools locally, the challenge is now to build on all of this.

A Time to Reflect

Glyn Penrice, Assistant Principal

Background and Context

This case study outlines the support the boys and girls at Torquay Academy receive in order to remove the barriers to their learning, progress and achievements and is probably the time to reflect upon the past five years.

Changes to Government policy and funding now means that teachers work in an environment where children with diverse needs are present in all classes.

In 2007, Tim Loreman wrote about the Seven Pillars of Support for Inclusive Education. He used the analogy of "pillars" as it evokes an image of factors working together to support a larger idea. In his case it was the idea of effective inclusive education. The pillars are interdependent and support little in isolation from one another. It highlights the importance of considering all aspects of the creation of essential conditions for inclusive education.

Loreman's pillars are as follows:
- Developing positive attitudes
- Supportive policy and leadership
- School and classroom processes grounded in research-based practice
- Flexible curriculum and pedagogy
- Community Involvement
- Meaningful reflection
- Necessary training and resources.

Initially I was going to use his pillars to reflect and audit the changes we have made until I then read a paper from the Government Social Research Group entitled "SEN support: Case studies from schools and colleges" written 10 years after Loreman's paper.

The report identifies seven key ingredients emerging from their research that support the education of not just SEN students but, arguably all students.

The seven key ingredients are:
- Culture Leadership and Management
- High Quality teaching (formerly "Quality First Teaching")
- Use of expertise
- Personalisation
- Flexible use of evidence-based strategies
- Use of evidence for tracking purposes
- Communication and collaboration

Some pillars and key ingredients as similar but there are subtle differences which are due to the ten years between the two papers and as Loreman accepts, the identification of his seven pillars does not preclude further identification for more pillars. As all cooks will tell us, recipes may contain key ingredients but it is how they are combined and how we embellish that makes the best food.

Let us look and reflect upon the key ingredients at Torquay Academy.

1.Culture, Leadership and Management

As with other schools there has been an SLT lead for SEND. This has been at the Assistant Principal level with support from a SENDCo but this now includes a Deputy SENDCo. This has resulted in a team approach and sharing of responsibility and expertise and a clear indication of the importance the Leadership team places on SEND. The team are now supplemented by a Governor with responsibility for SEND and they meet regularly with the team and, more importantly, with students and parents.

A high priority is placed on our commitment to SEND as we have found that specific strategies can be used with all of our students and lead to progress.

A new development is the planning of alternative provision within the school for students with SEMH

needs and is described by my colleague, Ben Chadwick, in his case study.

Since 2012 the school has increased the provision of THRIVE and Counselling available to our students. Four staff have been trained in Mindfulness and this has been delivered to selected students in Year 8 but will now be rolled out across year 7 this year.

2.High Quality Teaching
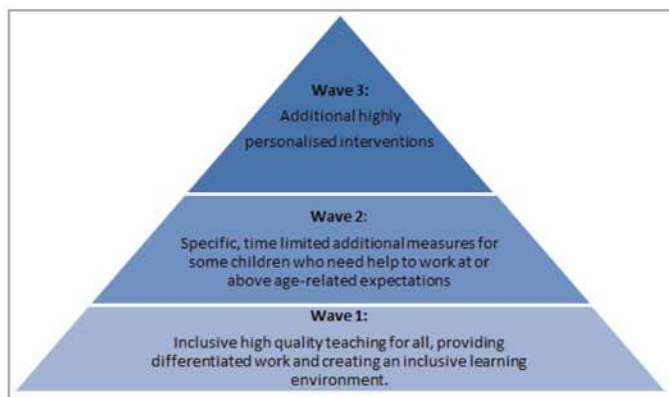
I am often asked the question "Why is Torquay Academy so successful?" My answer has been that we have the best teachers. This is part of our mantra that we have the best teachers for the best students in the best school. The school now invests heavily in the weekly coaching of all our teachers as outlined in previous case studies. INSET is now more structured and meaningful with a clear focus on using Doug Lemov's Teach Like a Champion strategies. Many of the TLAC strategies really support our SEND students and this has developed into Learn Like a Champion and will progress into Behave Like a Champion.

All teachers are also now responsible for the progress of all their students, not just Most Able, Pupil Premium, Boys, Girls and this includes SEND. Rigorous Line Management maintains the focus on all students.

3. Use of Expertise

All staff, not just teachers, are now more knowledgeable about SEND needs which means that our capacity to support SEND is not just left to the chosen few. We have developed INSET for Teaching Assistants; they are not just there to sharpen pencils. Growing numbers of support staff have been trained to support students with

autistic needs. This training is alongside with parents. A team is now delivering literacy interventions such a Lexia, Lexonic, Rise and Read, Maths-Whizz and Achieve 3000. The literacy is also support by the staff in the Learning Centre. There are staff with responsibility for Literacy and Numeracy across the school reinforcing that SEND is a whole school responsibility.

The SENDCo also coaches other staff on how the support their SEND students using a referral process from other coaches.

4.Personalisation

Individual tailored packages are in place for many of our SEND students, some developed and in place as part of the transition process from primary to secondary. The SENDCo is involved with students at Medical Tuition Service and plans their return to learning with our attendance team.

The school has high expectations in terms of progress and achievements. We believe that our students all have the potential to access higher education and go on to University. Their journey is a seven year one.

We have developed our links with parents and hold two SEND review days for all SEND students as part of our approach to Assess, Plan, Do review cycle. This again is a team effort involving the SEND team, the staff know the students.

All staff have access to Wave 1 advice on various areas of need that enables them to identify possible needs of their students and to inform their practice.

5.Flexible use of evidence-based strategies
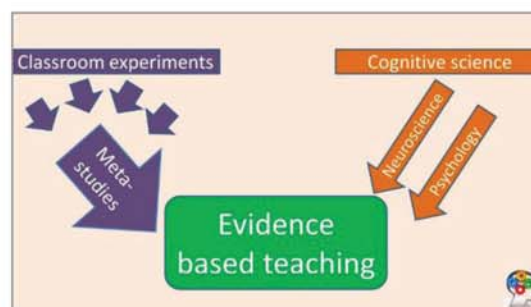
One of the big changes we made was the move away from class-based support to using evidenced-based

interventions. This was also highlighted by the Education Endowment Foundation and coincided with the boost to the teacher support through Coaching and TLAC. This has enabled our Teaching Assistants to become more specialized in the support we have and can deliver.

We have also considered when we conduct our interventions and utilise tutor time and also the use of Period 6 after school. Period 6 has not been the barrier we might have expected. We have used Period 6 for Key stage 4 students and it is now part of our school day for most students.

We provide Lego Therapy to more and more students and have adapted the process to enable larger groups to partake in a social skills programme.

In 2014-15 we became eligible for government funding as part of a national initiative to support the learning progress of those students arriving in year 7 with Maths and reading levels of less than a level 4. This funding was known as the Year 7 Catch-up premium and led to an average reading age increase of 2 years 5 months. The strategies and interventions developed as part of the funding remain in place.

6. Use of evidence for tracking students

Data of student progress is regularly gathered and analysed to facilitate early identification of need. This ranges from regular testing of reading and spelling but happens in all areas through our 4-cycle structure to teaching and learning. Students are assessed every 9 weeks and interventions identified and implemented during the following cycle.

Not only are individual teachers responsible for the progress of all of their students, progress is also collated, monitored and used to underpin decisions by our Heads of Academic Progress across the school. The research states that there should be clear systems of accountability for progress students with SEND but at Torquay Academy we have clear systems for all of our students regardless of status. The same applies for attainment of all students.

7. Communication and collaborating

We have developed our Pupil Passports which are written with our students so there is a sense of ownership on their part. They are all available to all staff through our online platform but also on paper as they form an important part of each Teaching Pack that all staff must have for all classes.

We developed the use of the Google Drive using shared folders for staff to access the information they need. This enables us to share essential information such as Action Plans following Educational Psychologist input. We also use the Drive to collaborate with our feeder schools during transition.

As previously mentioned, we hold two SEND Review days so that parents are also part of the process and the SEND team are available at all Parent Evenings.

The school has introduced Classcharts that enable the SEND team to monitor behaviours and to collect and disseminate information through a round-robin facility. Classcharts enables us to share the Pupil Passports and to share strategies that staff can use to support each individual SEND student. Recently we have used CPOMs to record information on our SEND students and the SEND team are now notified of concerns at a much earlier stage. CPOMs also allows us to centralise where we store information such as TAF meetings or health information and reduces duplicity.

Final Thoughts

The beautiful thing about [education] is nobody can take it away from you." - B.B. King

The aim of all educators is to provide the best for their students regardless of ability or need.

Torquay Academy believes that in an inclusive classroom the student with any need, regardless of the degree or nature of that need, is a welcomed and valued member. All students are taught in a mainstream classroom by a high-quality teacher. All students follow the mainstream curriculum, they make friends and contribute to the learning of the entire school participating in all aspects of school life.

The Rationale for Usage of Data

Owen Gratton, Assistant Principal

Background and Context

Upon taking on a new responsibility I believe you should understand the working and rationale behind the systems in place to allow the system to be reviewed, understood and improved if required.

At Torquay Academy there are 4 main strands to dealing with student based data

1. Collection - How and what we collect
2. Processing - How the data is processed
3. Reporting - The reports that are generated to be used
4. Actions - The key reason for gathering data, because if the data does not generate actions there is no point in collecting

Within this case study I look at the reasoning and outputs behind each part, what we do well, what we're reviewing, what was changed initially and the plans for change.

Collection - Primary Data

The primary data we gather is effectively from 2 sources: the teachers and the parents.

The data which we collect for all Year groups is collected at the end of each cycle, which means they are 4 times a year for Years 7 to 10 and 12, and 3 times for Years 11 and 13. This data is in 2 main strands: effort and results/predictions

Data entry takes less than 10 minutes per class to enter, this has been checked to make sure we can minimise workload for teachers. We believe we are meeting one of the principles recommended in the Report of the Teacher Workload Advisory Group (November 2018) that the amount of data collected and the frequency with which it is collected is proportionate.

Effort is recorded is 3 categories for all Year groups, these grades and classifications are in the table below.

Behaviour and readiness to learn	1	Outstanding behaviour. Always brings all the correct equipment.
	2	Good behaviour. Brings the correct equipment and is ready to learn.
	3	Behaviour requires improvement or does not always bring the correct equipment.
	4	Unsatisfactory behaviour or rarely brings the correct equipment.

Mindset for learning	1	Outstanding effort. Asks specific questions to push their thinking and asks for help when needed. Keeps trying even when tasks are challenging, perseveres until work is completed, frequently seeks feedback and applies it thoughtfully. Challenges themselves by extending far beyond the minimum requirements of tasks.
	2	Good effort. Asks questions to clarify their thinking and for help when needed. Keeps trying even when tasks are challenging. Acknowledges feedback and applies most of it to make corrections. Always completes tasks fully, often going beyond the minimum requirements.
	3	Effort requires an improvement. Only sometimes asks questions, or for help. Often gives up when tasks are challenging, accepts feedback but is unable to apply it thoroughly. Completes the minimum requirements of tasks.
	4	Unsatisfactory effort. Rarely asks questions, or for help. Does not persevere with challenging tasks. Unable to accept or respond well to feedback. Completes less than the minimum requirements of tasks.

Homework	1	Always completes homework on time and challenges themselves to complete high quality work or extension tasks.
	2	Always completes homework on time to a good standard.
	3	Sometimes completes homework on time but quality of homework requires improvement.
	4	Unsatisfactory - rarely or never completes homework.

The rationale for collecting this is that it allows parents and students to know the effort that the teacher sees, thus allowing the student to be rewarded for good effect and do something about poor effort. As progress is linked clearly to effort, it allows the Head of Academic Progress to intervene with students not making effort across the school.

Results/Predictions have slightly different values for each key stage:

- Key stage 3 Knowledge score and Skills Score
- Key stage 4 Knowledge score and Predicted Grade
- Key stage 5 Predicted Grade

In Key stage 3 we report on a Knowledge Score and a Skills Score. The knowledge Score is a straight percentage take from a test applied. The departments can choose to do the same or different assessment. This show how much of the expected knowledge the student has learnt in the cycle.

To allow us to monitor progress there is a student skill score. The skill score is modelled back from the GCSE target grade. For example, a student gaining a skill score

of 12 in Year 7 would expect to gain a grade 4 in their GCSE. Each department has the responsibility to model this according to their curriculum. Allowing them to be realistic with their predictions and report honestly to the student. It also allows for academic intervention to be target for students who are in danger of underachievement.

In Key Stage 4, predicted grades are entered by the teacher, normally with a form of collaboration/moderation to ensure consistency and accuracy. For example, in science a spreadsheet is built of key assessments, homework effort, classwork effort and the teachers met to discuss the correct grade for the student. Through doing this, building a historic picture, the science department has improved the accuracy of predictions.

The grades entered are fine graded.

This process is repeated in key stage 5, but on a smaller scale as there are less classes, however each head of department takes part in the moderation process.

The second source of data is from the parents, and it is about and their view on the schools this is gathered on parents evening and through a data collection sheet for family data, as well as ad hoc changes.

Grade	Pupil/Parent Speak
X+	With your current effort and learning you should gain grade X. If you wish to gain a higher grade you will need to speak to your teacher to find out specifically what you can do to improve.
X	You will only achieve a this grade if you engage with all the interventions inside and outside the classroom. If you do engage you should have a very good chance of gaining this grade. If you do not engage with the interventions you should gain the grade below.
X-	You are very likely to gain the grade below unless you engage with all interventions in place inside and outside the classroom. If you do engage you could have a fair chance of gaining this grade. If you do not engage with the interventions you should gain the grade below.

Secondary Data

As with all schools the external data we collect from students are exam results supplied to us (Key Stage 2, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5). All of this data is put into SIMS and from SIMS exported to other reporting systems. This is regularly checked for alterations for new students or any students missing data.

Processing - How the data is processed

All of the data is collected in SIMS through marksheets and then exported to SISRA, ALPS and other reporting tools. For each export the data needs adjusting so the values match the expected format. For this to be fast and efficient, teachers completing their data entry on time is key. To help teachers meet this, deadline dates are published in the calendar, there are reminders and department time is given up for data entry. Deadlines are still missed by some teachers; a future action is to minimise the effects of the sinners. Currently this process is very time consuming and takes a lot of the data administrators time, as different systems require grades to be in different formats.

Reporting - What is report why and actions

The data that is generated is used to produce different reports for different stakeholders.
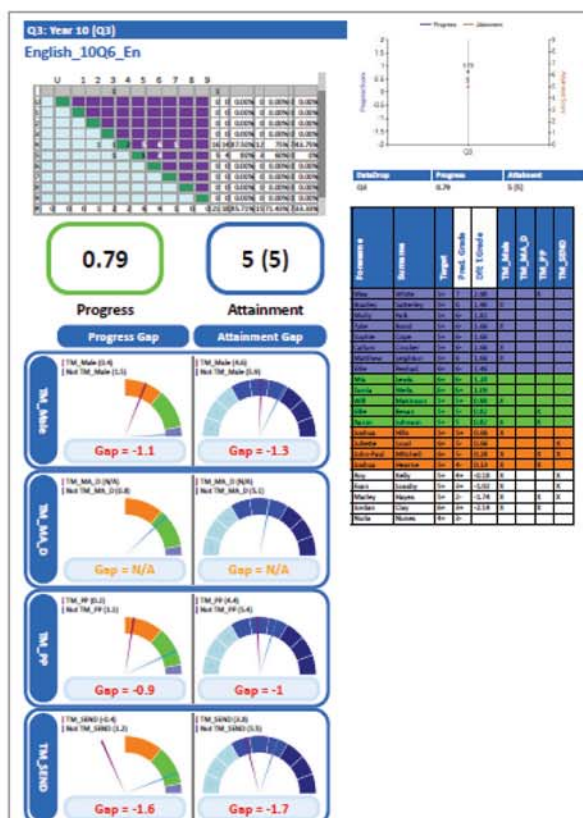
The students see two reports: the one that is sent home for their parents and the one that they find the most interesting, the effort boards. Students take great pride in their position on the effort board and on the days following a new publication there is a genuine buzz of interest from the students.

Parents review a report each cycle currently by pupil post. This shows the effort grades and the appropriate attainment score for the key stage. For any student underachieving, a comment is written by the teacher. The comment forms two parts: the first part is the reason for underachievement – effectively what the student has not learnt, and the second part is what the student has to do to catch up. This should allow students to work and catch up.

For the class teacher we generate a sheet about the class which they receive as soon as possible after the cycle begins.

For key stage 3, the class sheet reports on how far the skill score is from target. For key stage 4 an Atkinson report is produced and for key stage 5 a class report from ALPS is produced.

The class teacher uses this report to identify 3 underachieving students who they will make an impact with. To pick more than 3 would dilute the impact and lesson the effect of the interventions.

To allow subject leaders to analyse the performance of key groups and classes we use the c report from Atkinsons, using this and SISRA or ALPS it allows them to identify classes where there are potential under and over achievements. The over achievements allow for good practice to be identified and shared. While the underachievement for interventions and support to be put in place for cohorts, and have difficult conversations with class teachers if required.

For Senior leaders and governors an IDASH report is created for all key stage 4 and key stage 5. These reports mirror the published reports, so they allow the identification of potential issues so we can proactively do something before the students sit the exams.

The IDASH reports are the basis of reporting to governors, where the governors offer a high degree of challenge about the data, frequently questioning and looking for actions in underperforming subjects, and groups of students.

Actions
All of the reports of the data are used to generate actions to improve the outcomes for students. The focus is on identifying areas of strength and what can be learnt from it, and finding areas of weakness to develop and improve.

Moving Forward improvement
Looking at the systems and procedures in place there are areas for improvement next year:

1. **Greater engagement by HOLA and teachers with the reports.** There are a few teachers who require CPD on what the data means and the strategies they could be doing in class to deal with under achievement.
2. **Holding people to account** and the rationale behind the data. Next year, as part of line management of departments, there needs to be greater scrutiny of why the predictions are what they are, as they should be starting to stabilise after the changes of the last four years. So key questions need to be answered:
   - what is the rational for a large collection increase of progress what is it?
   - Why is this grouping achieving better
3. **Clarity on Actions.** We need to clarify the actions and expected turnaround time for initiatives and interventions, for individual students, groups and the interventions depending upon the task, so we know when we expect to see the change.
4. **Reports for Parents.** We need to look at the format of these, and discover if they make sense to the parents. We need to improve the quality of the comments given by the teachers, and make the actions achievable for the students. These actions also need to be monitored.
5. **Faster turnaround on data.** Currently it takes about 2 weeks to get the data to all the stakeholders, with the week to analyse. This means there are only 4 teaching weeks for the actions to take place. The rate determining step for this is the completion of marksheets by the teacher, again this comes down to holding people to account.

Rationale for and Impact of 'Top Top' Sets
Tom Thatcher, Assistant Principal

Vision
- To ensure targeted support for those students at the top end
- To deepen and enrich students' understanding of the subject
- To prepare students for further study, and increase uptake and retention at A level
- To ensure our HA students' progress aligns with or exceeds the national average

Objective and Rationale
Over the last few years, results at Torquay Academy have been steadily improving. However, improvements in results have not been as prevalent amongst our High Attaining Students. The number of High Attaining Students achieving the very top grades was not as high as we had wanted. So last academic year the decision was made to adapt our curriculum structure to create 'Top Top' sets across two parallel populations. The aim of doing this was to:

- To bring the most able students across each Year into one set for core subject lessons to enable teachers to push and challenge them to get the very best grades
- To ensure that the students are ready to study the subject at a higher level
- To create critical thinkers within these subjects

Background and Context
As a school we have reviewed the relative underperformance of our HA students and the challenges for departments in converting 'good' results' to 'great' results. During our annual Teaching and Learning conference, at the start of the academic year 2018/19, we explored how we might put these students 'Front and Centre' in our planning. The implementation of 'Top Top' sets was an action which resulted from this process.

The suggestion to implement 'Top Top' sets was also informed by a meeting I had with Simon Singh during the previous academic year (17/18) about the development of 'Top Top' sets in Maths. The intention of the 'Top Top' set for Maths was to stretch and deepen students' understanding, to prepare students for A-Level study, and ensure the development of critical, mathematical thinkers. Exeter University contributed to the meeting with Simon Singh and noted issues with beginning students' depth of students' thinking, strengthening the rationale for the suggested approach.

Therefore, following discussions with core subject leaders, the decision was made to change the curriculum structure from two parallel populations to one population with a 'Top Top' set. Below this there would be a relative parallel between students' ability and attainment across the two populations. Mid-way through the academic year 17/18 'Top-Top' sets were introduced across the core subjects.

Another factor to be considered was curriculum design. The aim was not to rush through content for early entry purposes, but to enrich and deepen students' understanding and experiences of the subject. Maths and Science followed a structure of keeping the groups smaller than a normal top set with group size ranging from 20-25 students; English adapted the structure to suit them, with class sizes ranging between 25-30.

Impact and outcomes
Recent results and the percentage of students achieving top grades indicate the positive impact of implementing 'Top Top' grades.

The table below shows the average percentage of Students gaining at least 1 grade 7+ and 8+ in English, Maths, or Science over the last 3 years. The 7+ has increased by 143% with the 8+ increasing by 340%. This has been achieved at the same time as the year 11 cohorts almost doubling in size.

Average	16/17	17/18	18/19
7+	9.25	13	22.5
8+	1.25	3.5	5.5

The rise in the grade 7 and grade 8 has been steady but from the last academic year it is clear that there has been a significant leap in students achieving the Top grades.

% Students achieving grade 7+ or 8+
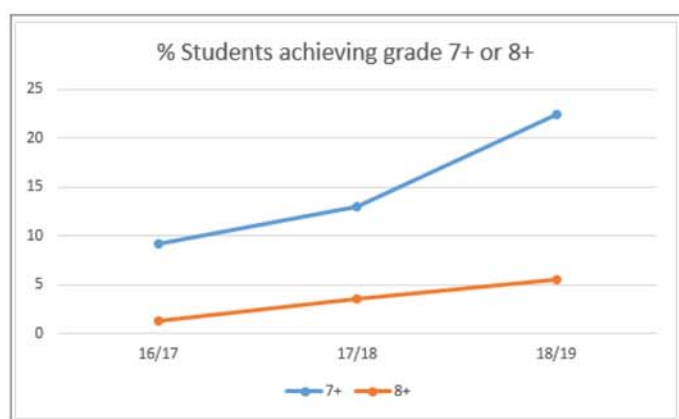
| Grade	16/17 results				17/18 results				18/19 results			
	Maths	Eng lan	Eng Lit	Science	Maths	Eng lan	Eng Lit	Science	Maths	Eng lan	Eng Lit	Science
9	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	1	2	4	10	4
8	2	1	2	0	1	2	7	4	4	4	9	5
7	11	7	7	5	11	6	10	7	11	9	18	10
Total 7+	14	9	9	5	12	8	20	12	17	17	37	19

Looking at the Core Departments individually, each department has seen an increase in the percentage of students achieving the top grades, as shown in the table below. It is important to note that English achieved outstanding results in English Literature, with a vast number of students achieving grade 9s. English Language, Maths and Science also increased the number of students achieving grades 7, 8 and 9.

Pleasingly, the increase in grade 8s and 9s coincided with the rise in results of students who were previously achieving grades below 7. The implementation of the 'Top Top' set has, therefore, not resulted in a gap between students in this group and other students. This may be in part because the implementation of 'Top Top' sets has enabled more students to identify as 'top' set students, perhaps raising aspirations.

% Students achieving top grades in Core subjects
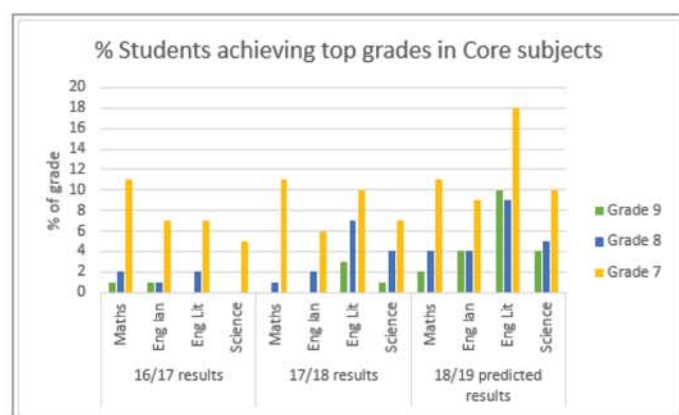
The success of the 'Top Top' sets has also had an impact on progress 8 measures. The High Attaining students were a group, as previously mentioned, who were not making the progress equivalent to other groups in the Academy. For this high attaining group, the P8 measure over the last two years has shown a significant improvement, from -0.13 last academic year to +0.43 this year. This includes a rise in the P8 measure for pupil premium high attaining students as well.

The 'Top Top' sets have also resulted in an increase in the uptake of these subjects at sixth form. Due to rising success and aspirations, there has been a significant increase in the number of students opting for English, Physics Maths and Further Maths at A Level.

'Top-Top' sets have also had an impact beyond year 11. Taking Maths as an example, the top KS3 students take part in the National UK Maths Challenge; the table below shows a rise in the number of students achieving certificates. This is a comparison with two very similar sized cohorts.

	Year 8 results	Benchmark 2017/18 results	2018/19 results
1	Gold **and qualified** for Kangaroo	0	1
2	Gold but **didn't qualify** for Kangaroo	0	1
3	Silver	0	11
4	Bronze	10	17

Reflections and next steps

Over the last year, performance of the High Attaining students has improved at GCSE level, but also throughout the year groups. Other factors beyond the implementation of 'Top Top' sets may well have contributed to this, but the development of the top-top set system is undoubtedly a major factor. Students within these sets aspire and expect to get the top grades, as do their teachers. And the dialogue within the classes is about going on to study these subjects at A-level. Going forward, it would be good to see if 'Top Top' sets have a positive impact on attainment in other subjects.

However, one priority is ensuring that the focus on high attaining students is not to the detriment of the Middle or Low attaining students. With one population becoming skewed we need to ensure that it does not feel like a grammar stream has been created or that the other population has any less chance of achieving. If finances allowed, one model could be to have a 'Top Top' set in each population, comprising 15-20 students aiming for the very top grades, then a top set below.

The 'Top-Top' sets have had a massive impact. Now we must ensure this success continues, but that the lessons learned ensure students of all abilities achieve their potential.

Supporting Children Looked After and the Effects of Trauma

Elaine Watling, Designated Safeguarding Lead

Background and Context

Torquay Academy has many looked after children (CLA). The Academy is proud of the support we provide for these students and their carers. We are frequently the preferred school by the social worker. It would make no difference if we had one or one hundred CLAs on roll; their wellbeing and progress would still be of paramount importance to the Academy.

Children who are in care have extra needs, which are often very complex and extra planning and support are needed. Their educational and emotional journey is rarely on a steady trajectory and academic progress sometimes can come second to their emotional wellbeing. There are many challenges but also many successes and things to celebrate.

On reflection, what works?

- A positive relationship with carers. There needs to be regular contact and carers feeling they can ring the pastoral team and me to discuss any concerns and needs. Sometimes a carer just needs to be able to off load and know they are understood.
- Carers know the key staff in school. There is always someone available to speak to them. The relationship between all of us involved in supporting a CLA is one of trust, regular communication, friendship and support.
- Regular contact with the social worker. We need to be updated over any key events and treated as an equal partner with agencies.
- A consistent social worker
- Termly detailed and effective PEPs that cover education needs, wellbeing, outside interests and talents. The child feels that the PEP really is about them.
- Reminders to staff about how to support the child.
- The Academy has a counsellor just for the CLA students. She sees them weekly. There is consistency, someone just for them.
- Endeavour to use their all of their Pupil Premium plus money to improve not only educational outcomes but their life experiences. We "think out of the box". The money can be used for cookery lessons to sailing expeditions.
- Call extra meetings if needed.
- The role of a CLA advocate has been created for the next academic year. The advocate will meet regularly with the child, monitor their targets and use of PP+ ensuring that their voice is heard and needs are met.

Good communication with all involved in the child's life (including hearing the voice of the child) is paramount. Together we make decisions and plan. It reinforces for the child that they are supported. The child needs to know that they have someone who cares about them and is actively trying to support and help them in school. If they know that no matter what happens we are there, this can then make a massive difference. They appreciate that someone gets them as an individual who will take into account their journey and help them move forward.

It is the triangle of social worker, school and carers with the child in the middle that is the key. Our young people cannot do it on their own, but with us all working together they will have the best life chances.

The Role of the Virtual school

The team play a part in supporting our children achieve the very best they can. They support placement stability and reduce the number of school moves. They help the Academy, foster carers and social workers promote the importance of school and education and ensure we know how to support the children to be the best they can be. They act as the children and young people's champion and support and challenge, as well as play their part. They always respond promptly to emails, will attend regular meetings, meet and support teaching staff and individually tutor.

At times the journey for a CLA is going smoothly but suddenly circumstances can change. Until the past academic year and unlike different areas of Children Services, CLAS, foster carers and the Academy have been able to rely on regular, long term social workers giving all of us the stability needed to work together and overcome any difficulties as they occur.

Unfortunately, the past twelve months has seen many of the children with no regular social worker. This has resulted in the child and carer feeling undervalued and not listened to. Carers have felt unsupported and at times angry that their foster child has not received the support they should. One carer has said she has felt she and the child "have been abandoned." Where the family have been without a regular social worker, it has been

the carer, Virtual school and the Academy working together to support the child. There have been several children where the lack of a social worker has caused difficulties in their placements. The Virtual school and I have learnt an important lesson: take the situation quickly to heads of service.

For many of our children even with a stable placement and lots of support there is difficult behaviour in school and out of school. This can be anti-social behaviour and behaviours that put the child at risk. There are often fixed term exclusions as a result. Fixed term exclusions can often threaten the placement. A change in placement can then cause further distress.

While the challenge is always how to help CLAs meet their academic targets this is often hampered by the trauma they have gone through. They will struggle emotionally and this will affect their academic progress at times. The effects of trauma are not just something that applies to CLAs. How often do we all feel helpless about how to support a child whose behaviour no matter what we do is challenging and doesn't improve? How do we help and reach these children? We need to understand how trauma affects not only CLAs but all children who have been affected by trauma.

Neuroscience has provided us with the evidence of how trauma affects the brain. All too often our response to a traumatised child can be the wrong approach. An understanding of Attachment Awareness and the effects of ACEs – Adverse Childhood Experiences, need to be understood by all staff. It is important to remember that the neurological effects of trauma continue throughout life, affecting their health and life expectancy, relationships and wellbeing. It is often in adolescence and in times of dysregulation the child returns to the trauma. It could be a sound, a smell, a word, a tone in a voice that takes the child back to the trauma. This will also influence how and when the child, and later the adult, responds to real or perceived threats.

A child growing up surrounded by trauma and unpredictability will only be able to develop neural systems and functional capabilities that reflect this disorganisation. Inescapable threat within the family is a form of toxic stress. In such instances the components of the fear response become sensitised, putting the child in a persisting fear state (a state that becomes a trait) that causes difficult behaviour. He or she may become hyperactive, over-sensitive and hypervigilant, and move quickly from anxiety to terror. This may cause persistent hyperarousal disorders such as ADHD, PTSD and conduct disorders. It also negates the capacity for rational thought and trust.

Trauma will compromise such functions as attachment, empathy, the capacity to play and emotional regulation. If we, the adults, who see these children on a daily basis, responded without understanding, we could make the situation worse.

ACEs are
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Neglect
- Loss of or Abandonment by a parent
- Domestic Abuse
- Drug/Alcohol abuse in household
- Mental illness in the household
- Incarceration of a loved one

For some children they may have suffered many of the ACEs. We need to think about not what is wrong with the child but what has happened to the child. The brain is a social organ designed to change in response to relationships. All children who have been threatened or deprived will react on the basis of extreme unconscious early survival responses. These were once necessary. Changing someone's mind takes time. This neurological/ developmental perspective should inform any understanding, response or treatment when faced with a troubled child.

As trauma happens in relationships it is through healthy relationships that a child can recover from trauma. It is people that bring about the change. The Virtual school in Torbay has led the way on Attachment Awareness. Four of the Academy's staff have been trained and are qualified Attachment Practitioners. It is a challenge for the Academy. As with general behaviour strategies there needs to be consistency. We need to see behaviour as communication and the Academy to be seen as the place where we build a relationship with the child.

Not everyone needs to be trained as an Attachment specialist. We all need to be able to recognise the signs of trauma and feel confident to engage and support individuals who have experienced it. We can all make simple changes in our approach. For example:
- seating the child near an exit point in the classroom
- noticing the child
- re-thinking 'attention seeking'
- having a calm box
- a safe space in the classroom

We need to be able to *relate* to the child, help the child to *regulate* and finally to *reason*.

Hopefully understanding and supporting children who have suffered trauma will become part of the teacher's toolkit in the same way we support children with SEN.

Building our new multi-purpose hall and dining extension

Claire Beckett, Finance Director

Background and Context

Torquay Academy is a rapidly expanding school. Although the buildings are only nine years old, built for 1200 students, the facilities were not sufficient to house the anticipated 1400 students in 2019. In particular, the existing building lacked a suitably sized assembly space, enough spaces for exams, dining space, classrooms and indoor PE areas.

In order to address these deficiencies, it was decided to apply for Condition Improvement funding (CIF) under the expansion projects. A consultant was employed to help submit the bid. Plans had previously been drawn up but these were updated to further address our requirements. Planning permission was obtained and tenderers were identified. The consultant and architects helped produce the Employers Requirements (ER's) and quotes were received should the bid be successful.

Successful Funding Bid and Planning

Receiving the funding on our first application was very exciting. The project we had dreamed of for a few years was coming to fruition, now we just needed to make sure the building matched all of our expectations.

The successful contractor had previously worked with the school, building a new classroom extension, and they were able to complete one project on site whilst planning the new one.

As the detailed design developed coupled, with the completion of the current building extension, we realised that we needed more flexibility in the new accommodation. The academy has both a successful Performing Arts (PAA) and a Football (FA) Academy. Although performance space had previously been adequate there was limited audience space and blind spots from some areas. The ER's therefore addressed this creating a theatre in the multi-purpose hall.

The multi-purpose hall was being built on part of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) with the intention to extend the area to compensate for the loss. However, due to unforeseen costs this option was looking less feasible but the flexible design of building lent itself to extending indoor PE space with specialist dance and other small group activities.

The new dining area was an extension to the existing building in close proximity to the existing catering facilities.

Pre-construction planning and organisation

The key issues in the planning and organisation were identified as:

- Logistics - how do we manage a building site in a key circulation area for the school?
- Health & Safety - how can we manage the building works ensuring the H & S of all the students and staff along with the construction workers ensuring neither building works or deliveries interrupted the teaching and learning at the school.
- Communications and meetings - Management of the project through good communication and regular meetings was key to the success of this build.

In order to address the above issues a project team was set up consisting of:

- Academy Principal
- Academy Finance Director (key liaison with staff and contractors)
- Independent Project Manager
- Architects
- Construction company
- Various other specialist consultants invited to relevant meetings

The team was also responsible for approving the final design, agreeing any necessary changes and ensuring the project was delivered to the agreed cost and schedule.

1. Logistics - One of the issues was the urgent need for the dining room extension. This was also an extension of the existing building whereas the multi-purpose hall was a stand alone building and could be cordoned off. Following the successful outcome in April 2018, it was agreed to try to complete the dining extension during the summer holidays. Unfortunately this did not happen as it was decided to increase the size to better fit the space available and this needed an amendment to the agreed planning consent.

   The logistics of the multi-purpose hall site compound also raised issues. How do we get deliveries to the building as it needs to cross the pedestrian access for

students to the sports centre which is used throughout the day?

2. Health & Safety - this was the key to a successful operation as the site compounds and students shared spaces. Clear access routes were defined and contractors were only allowed to cross shared areas when students were in lessons or outside of school hours. This too related to deliveries which needed to be received at specific times of day.

Safeguarding was identified as the key priority. The colours of high vis jackets identified those contractors with DBS clearance, ensuring that all staff were able to challenge contractors should they be in shared areas on their own, not wearing the right colour jacket. This arrangement worked really well.

3. Regular meetings ensured consultation and decisions could be made at every aspect of design and building. Regular reports from the appointed contractors ensured that the academy was kept up to date with progress, issues arising and were able to challenge the contractor's actions or make amendments where necessary.
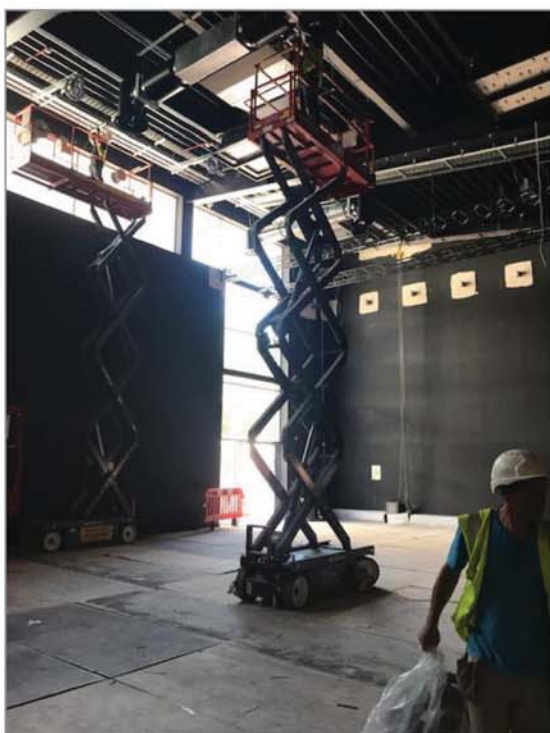
One of the key issues that arose that needed to be managed carefully was the issue of contractors' noise from equipment during exams periods. The new build was right next to the sports hall, our main exams area. It was agreed that a silence embargo would be put in place whenever official exams were being sat. A compromise was made not to have silence during PPE's as no-one wished for the project to run into unnecessary delays.

Design Specifications

Whilst the ER's are intended to detail the specification of the building in order to get realistic tender quotes, it soon became apparent that many of our requirements were open to different interpretation. Consequently, there were areas that required considerable discussion in order to meet the expectations of the school.

An example of this was the interpretation of theatre lighting and sound. The tender quote only included basic stage lights and sound. The expectation had been for state of the art theatrical equipment for use by the PAA for shows and concerts along with school presentation evening and other similar events. After considerable consultation with specialist companies, a resolution was found and we were able to install the equipment needed to meet our requirements. The knock on effect however, was the need to install additional cooling and air handling to ensure the building does not get to hot during performances. The additional cost of the design and installation had not been accounted for!

Another example was the extension and reinstatement of the MUGA to its original size. No consideration had been taken in the quote of extending water run off tankerage. This would have added a considerable cost to the build and as such made it unaffordable. The compromise was to provide additional PE activities such as a climbing wall and a studio suitable for boogie bounce, spinning and dance which are preferred activities for many of the student population.

A key benefit of the project manager was particularly negotiating what contractually the contractors were obliged to do under their contract and what was an additional item which could be considered a variation and hence required a change order.

Whilst school representatives were clear on requirements and expectations the professional advice from a qualified project manager ensured that the school focussed on the correct aspects of the project and did not lose sight of the daily routines.

Construction

Construction took about 6 months to start on the multi-purpose hall once the project had been awarded. A frustratingly long time from the school perspective but necessary in the long term to ensure that the building achieved its aims.

The rewards soon began to show as the building took shape. Exactly how the hall would be used changed throughout the build and the building started being referred to as the new theatre. Its primary use changed from sports area to an assembly, theatre and learning space where large groups of students could be taught in

a lecture style environment. Whilst the facility would still be used during busy exam periods the flexible use of the space meant that it would be used for a greater period of time.

The addition of the climbing wall to the rear of the hall started as an audacious dream of the Principal but soon became a reality. It involved considerable extra design to strengthen the wall to which it is attached but did not result in any delay as the builders were able to get on with other parts of the building.

Making the building watertight once the roof went on meant that more progress seemed to be made as the theatre and sundry classrooms took shape. Spare nooks found in the building were made into storage areas to ensure that no space was wasted.

The building finally took about 10 months to complete from starting to dig the foundations, 3 months past the original completion date. Various small items pushed the project out, but a key element was the redesign of the roof area to allow for the state of the art theatrical sound and lighting and the significant extra cooling necessary to ensure the temperature during performances could be kept ambient during both hot and cold weather conditions. The final delay resulted from the supplier of the lift going into administration meaning the lift needed to be sourced from an alternative supplier.

Fixtures and fittings

One of the essential parts of completing any building project is to choose all the fixtures and fittings. A surprisingly time consuming activity. The list of fittings is almost infinite but included:

- positions of sockets, wifi points and data network points
- floorings
- toilet fittings, taps basins, toilet roll holders and soap dispensers etc.

- security locks, key suiting etc
- kitchen fittings
- colour schemes for paint, rooms, toilet cubicles, seating, carpets etc.

Budgeting

CIF funding provided finances for the expected cost of the project. As variations and unknowns became apparent the built in contingency funding began to be eaten into. At all stages of the project it was necessary to manage the budget to ensure that the project did not overspend beyond the resources of the academy.

Many decisions were made based on affordability as the number of unbudgeted items became apparent. Luckily for Torquay Academy the government announced a one off 'little extras' funding. This came at a fortunate time. It enabled the school to ensure that the theatre was able to have the state of the art facilities that we wanted.

The difference in being able to provide these fittings to the finished project is immense. The building has a real wow factor and the theatre enhances the overall building. The architectural design has a beautiful full height atrium with roof lights allowing light to flood in. This is contrasted with the black performance space of the theatre. The overall design stunningly complements the original buildings.

Completion and legacy

As with all projects there are still a few loose ends to tidy up, procedures and protocols to manage and regular maintenance to ensure that the building remains in its pristine condition.

However, it will be the impact on teaching and learning that will be remembered. The initial reaction of all stakeholders when first entering the building is 'wow'. They feel privileged to use the building and excited at what it offers. Already assemblies have improved due to the technological capabilities of the IT systems. Year group tutorials and pastoral activities are better able to take place. Students and staff alike love the mirrored dance studio and extra-curricular clubs are proving really popular in this new space.

The official opening will be the highlight of the year when performances by the PAA as well as musical groups and solo performers get their chance to perform in this state of the art theatre space.

It is a truly inspirational building, a dream come true!

**If you would like to find out more about Torquay Academy
or to arrange a tour, please get in touch.**

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