



TA Vision 2020

Overview Statement

The Year 7s who joined Torquay Academy in September 2013 are our class of 2020; TA 2020 will set out our ambitions and aspirations thereby providing us with the vision for the future of the school. TA 2020 describes the school we aspire to have as a beacon in the heart of our community in 2020 where everyone succeeds.

The document will outline where we want to be and school leaders at every level will detail how we are going to get there in our School Improvement Plan, Department Improvement Plans and Appraisal targets. Areas needing improvement will be identified, openly discussed and there will be a shared responsibility to address the issues.

This document was written after inviting the thoughts of Staff, Students, Parents, Governors & Trustees, the Community, Employers, the Multi Academy Trust, Primary Schools and Higher & Further Education to ensure this document is fully representative of everyone who has an interest in the success of the school.

TA 2020 is split into twelve sections that detail all areas of the school:

1. Teaching and Learning
2. Celebrating success, behaviour and attendance
3. Pastoral Support and Personal development (SMSC)
4. Community and parents
5. Pedagogy and curriculum
6. Beyond the curriculum
7. Narrowing the gap
8. Data and reporting (especially relating to students' performance)
9. Culture
10. Leadership (senior; governance; middle; classroom; student)
11. Finance and IT platform
12. Strategy

1. Teaching and Learning

All teaching at Torquay Academy is consistently outstanding or good. The rapport between students and teachers is very positive. Pace in lessons is brisk and activities varied; there is an understanding that every second counts.

There is a strong focus on collaborative learning as students are seen as learning partners.

Torquay Academy engages with Initial Teacher Training. This will not only introduce new staff and their ideas into the school, but it will also provide us with a potential supply of teachers who we know and are familiar with the Torquay Academy culture.

Teachers will lift the lid off the barriers to learning and will encourage students to have limitless aspirations.

★ Staff Attributes

The behaviours of a Torquay Academy member of staff are: confident, enterprising, assertive, a role model, calm, a good listener, resilient, punctual, reflective, patient, a sense of humour, approachable, inspirational, a team player, passionate, enthusiastic, well mannered and professionally dressed.

The skills of a Torquay Academy member of staff are: ambitious, determined, pro-active, motivated, excellent qualifications, a thinker, intellectual, reflective, continual learner, leader, communicator, rigorous, organised and creative.

The values of a Torquay Academy member of staff are: dedicated, inclusive, empathetic, supportive, integrity, honest, fair, consistent, make a difference and positive work ethic.

The teachers at Torquay Academy have a passion for their subject and desire to improve the life chances of young people.

★ The Torquay Academy Learner's Attributes

Our vision is for Torquay Academy's students to develop a number of attributes that will be encouraged and nurtured. Statements have been written that outline how these attributes can be achieved:

- Love of learning
 - I am inquiring, determined and motivated
 - I can make positive contributions
 - I will take ownership of my learning
- Enterprising
 - I am open to new challenges and experiences whilst being creative and innovative
 - I can solve problems and seek solutions
 - I will not give up when faced with challenges
- Independence
 - I am able to learn independently
 - I can evaluate the reliability of sources and select the best information
 - I will ask questions to deepen my understanding

- Confidence with humility
 - I am confident in my ability to succeed
 - I can admit when I am wrong and learn from my mistakes
 - I will take responsibility for my actions

- Leadership
 - I am a role model in all that I do
 - I can have an impact on my local community and wider world through my positive actions
 - I will lead with positive values and act with integrity and honesty

- Team player
 - I am able to discuss, debate and learn with others.
 - I can be an active contributor who is able to work effectively with a team
 - I will respect the views and opinions of others

★ Assessment

Students know precisely what they have to do to improve. They enjoy regular feedback on how they are progressing and are given clear, simple and measurable steps for improvement. Achievable targets that are realistic and within reach provide students with a sense of personal progress; this is informative to both students and parents.

Assessment for Learning principles are embedded in classroom practice. Students are given the opportunity to reflect and act upon the feedback they have been provided.

★ Professional Capital and Continued Professional Development

“Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better.”
Prof. Dylan Wiliam

All staff are engaged in research using evidence-based practice that empowers them to make independent, informed decisions about what works for our students. Staff collaborate in learning groups where they have time to reflect on their practice in a structured way and to learn from mistakes. Staff work in partnership and learn from each other. Opportunities are sought to link with other schools using the model of professionals working with other professionals.

“Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.” Samuel Beckett, *Worstward Ho*.

The school has a climate where it is understood that mistakes can be made, so long as you learn from them. This work based learning based upon on-going reflective processes, is more effective than short term training that removes teachers from their own classes.

Formal and informal lesson observations are supportive and formative feedback will be offered. Coaching relationships are strong between staff and there is clear progression of training for teachers through their early years.

2. Celebrating Success, Behaviour and Attendance

The school is filled with prominent displays of students' work and there is an overt celebration of their achievements. Assemblies play a key part in promoting achievement and celebrating success. The displays around the school also highlight the most recent achievements and they are recorded on the Principal's Blog.

Students of the week are photographed and their picture is placed on the school website along with our online Hall of Fame. Groups of students are selected for lunch with the Principal each week in recognition of a wide range of achievements. Alumni are identified to offer inspiration to current students.

A celebration event recognises the efforts, progress and achievements of the students; academic and extra-curricular achievements are highlighted for praise. This is supported throughout the year by a clear rewards system.

There are clear and non-negotiable expectations about appropriate behaviour, which are calmly and firmly insisted upon; this results in a positive climate for learning. Students understand what good behaviour is and the difference between right and wrong. They know that they have a choice - if they choose to misbehave then they can have no complaints when consequences, which they know about and have had explained to them, are applied. A culture of mutual respect exists in the school where all students are treated fairly.

Fairfields is highly successful and offers students who are struggling with mainstream education the opportunity to learn in a different environment where their needs can be better met; this maybe a temporary or permanent placement dependent upon their requirement.

There is a calm atmosphere around the school at break times and lunch time.

Attendance is in line with national averages and there are no unauthorised absences. High levels of attendance are rewarded and celebrated. Students and staff are punctual as they understand the importance of making every minute count.

3. Pastoral Support and Personal Development

The House system provides students with an increased feeling of belonging to a smaller school within a school, which will develop the sense of community. There is an element of competition between the Houses that covers academic performance, behaviour and sporting events. The House system provides clear lines for student-to-student support to take place within, for example, pastoral/academic/personal mentors. Students are keen to take on leadership roles within their House and there is a strong student voice. Form tutors play a vital role in the pastoral care of the students in their charge.

The transition from primary school to Torquay Academy will be smooth as local schools work closely to ensure that all students are supported and their needs are met. This collaboration will give students an experience akin to being at an all-through school as transition will be an on-going process where staff and students of schools support each other

Enrichment Week provides opportunities to make local visits, for example to the museum, Cockington or other locations that are linked to the curriculum, to broaden students' experiences. It will also give opportunities to work on extended projects that lie beyond the scope of the normal curriculum.

Students are given opportunities to interact with young and talented role models and they are also supported by mentors from the local business community.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) is embedded throughout the school to:

- Enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence
- Enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the law
- Encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute to community life
- Provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England
- Assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions.

4. Community and Parents

The school is figuratively and literally in the heart of Torquay. It is the co-educational school of choice for our local community. It is a welcoming environment and parents feel at ease visiting the school.

Parents attend key events, such as revision conferences, pathway evenings and mentoring days, to enable them to support their children more effectively. Strong and supportive relationships exist between students, parents and school; this tripartite relationship underpins the success of the school and its students. Discussions result in everyone making commitments to maximise progress and results: the student will..., the parent will... and the teacher will ... Technology facilitates excellent communication between home and school.

There is a strong Parent Council that acts as a focus group and feeds back to staff on a range of issues. The Principal's open door policy ensures concerns are dealt with in a timely manner.

Students play an important role in supporting local, national and international communities through the work they do in their Houses. This is carried out through charity work, fundraising and volunteering opportunities.

5. Pedagogy and Curriculum

What do we want our desired outcomes of a Torquay Academy education to be? Will they be couched in terms of academic success or will we find room for other qualities? The Torquay Academy pedagogy and curriculum, alongside continued shifts in classroom practice, contribute to both raising attainment and developing the attributes of our Torquay Academy learner.

The curriculum is shaped to suit the needs of all the students at Torquay Academy and they are set real world problems to solve. There is a coherence across the curriculum that means joined up teaching of the same topics in different subjects enables students to see the connections.

New technologies are embedded in the pedagogy of the school. One to One devices enable students to learn beyond the physical boundaries of the classroom and the school; flipped learning is one way of achieving this.

Students have the opportunity to co-create their own learning in addition to having a say in how they learn; the aim is they become more proactive and less dependent.

When students are yet to understand something, their teachers will say that student x has not yet mastered it, rather than reporting student x is not able to do it. Teachers have a deep understanding of their specialist field and they use the language of that subject to explain concepts in different ways. It is important is that the teaching is visible to the student and that learning is visible to the teacher.

★ Gifted and Talented

“Real personal fulfilment comes from finding what one’s personal passions are - in other words being in one’s element” Ken Robinson, Element.

Education at Torquay Academy should provide opportunities to stretch, challenge and inspire to ensure the most able students continue to achieve results that exceed expected progress. The partnership with Torquay Boys’ Grammar School enables students to access a wide range of activities targeted at gifted and talented students in a wide range of fields; these take place on both sites. Gifted and talented students are nurtured in a wide range of academic and non-academic fields.

★ Alternative Pathways

“Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid” Albert Einstein.

Fairfields offers a range of alternative pathways to ensure the requirements of every child are met.

★ Literacy and Numeracy

There is a constant drive to remove literacy and numeracy as a barrier to student achievement and academic progress; this work is done both at Torquay Academy and with our partner primaries. Improvements in literacy and numeracy will have a positive effects upon students’ self confidence and self-esteem. Literacy and numeracy focuses are promoted throughout the school. Students enjoy reading for fun and they make regular use of books, magazines, newspapers and journals in the library and throughout the school.

★ 6th Form

Torquay Academy 6th Form offers students a range of pathways provisions that enable them to proceed to their next steps in life.

Students are prepared for university, apprenticeships, training and work through the rich variety of experiences.

Every child leaves Torquay Academy into further education, training, apprenticeship or work; personalised, alternative and enriching pathways are offered to students to ensure this.

6. Beyond the Curriculum

Students use before school, lunchtimes and after school to partake in a wide range of activities both in and out side of the classroom that are supported by all staff. Activities week provides opportunities for students to take part in a wide range of experiences and challenges on and off-site. Holiday clubs ensure these activities are not just limited to the term time. All extra-curricular opportunities are well planned and available to all students as part of the drive to raise aspirations.

There are opportunities for pupils to experience formal situations, such as interviews and preparation for work experience.

7. Narrowing the Gaps

The school is committed to narrowing and eliminating any gaps in progress and achievement that exist. Beyond the focus upon improving standards in the classroom there is a wide range of imaginative initiatives that are focused upon narrowing the gaps.

The Learning Café provides students with an environment where they can work with support before and after school. The breakfast club encourages students to be at school ready to learn and there are a wide variety of extra-curricular activities to build motivation.

The annual revision conference held for each year group focuses upon the importance of achievement and how to revise; it looks at a range of study skill techniques. Breakfast revision sessions for Year 11 students take place during the external exams; the Curriculum Team Leader delivers a 45 minutes revision session with a free breakfast.

Middle leaders and teachers target different groups for a wide range of bespoke interventions. This is supported with mentoring that is delivered by staff and other students.

★ Pupil Premium

Staff have a strong moral commitment to improving opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and a strong belief in what they can achieve. There is a dedicated Senior Leadership Team Champion and Governor and Trustee Champions for Pupil Premium students.

Senior staff work closely with Pupil Premium students and their families to identify the barriers to progress and search for solutions. Examples of how Pupil Premium funding has been used is subsidising school trips and other learning resources, providing ICT facilities, careers support and the employment of additional staff to meet needs.

★ Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Students with Special Educational Needs have them met by the highly trained staff; this enables all to progress and achieve.

8. Data and Reporting (especially relating to students' performance)

Proactive liaison with our feeder schools will enable staff to have a clear idea of a student's prior achievement and future potential.

The progress of students is tracked throughout the year and interventions will take place immediately if anyone falls off trajectory. Students are set ambitious targets and prior attainment from Key Stage 2 is valued and used as a springboard to excellent progress at Key Stage 3. Successful intervention will take place before this – proactive not reactive.

The primary use of data is to inform teaching and learning and to meet students' needs. There are continued efforts to develop quality assurance procedures to ensure the accuracy of student data through moderation and standardisation; there should never be any surprises about a student's progress or achievement.

Data is used to identify any gaps that exist in student performance between different groups.

Students have ownership of their targets and they work willingly knowing what they are aiming for and what they have to do in order to get there.

Reporting to parents takes place via regular reports, face to face meetings and live online data; the purpose of the feedback is to highlight progress and identify what has to be done in for order for target grades to be achieved.

9. Vision and Culture

The school's motto is: To Aspire and to Achieve.

There is a shared moral imperative and vision that everyone succeeds. This is the central purpose of the Academy and we are effective at rejecting initiatives that may distract us from this focus.

For the students to have limitless aspirations, staff must create the aspiration, then give the students the skills to enable them to reach their goals and then allow them to take control of their learning.

The school's culture is based upon mutual trust, where everyone's opinions and values are heard and respected; staff and students feel trusted, but they understand they have responsibilities as well as rights.

All members of the Academy understand how continual improvement can be made based upon the aggregation of marginal gains and making every second count. We never say "it's better than it used to be" as we strive to "making it as good as it can be". Everything is done to the highest possible standard, consistently, relentlessly and simply.

The culture encourages innovation and experimentation, but never allocates blame. All members of the school community receive a continual message that nothing is as important, or as engaging, as learning.

No-one gets away with not working, not behaving, not co-operating, not trying or not attending. Avoidance and disengagement are seen in the same light as disruptive behaviour: something to be resolved. The school never loses faith in the ability to overcome a problem or issue.

Resilience, is one of the key characteristics Torquay Academy seeks to inculcate in students who sometimes lack other support to fall back on. The 'no excuses' culture maintains high expectations. Ultimately, the school insists on success.

You will get a feel of the school's culture by the way kindness, generosity and forgiveness are manifest, for example, looking after the garden and animals, charity work, how kindness and generosity are celebrated, mentoring schemes, student councils, parental engagement, work with local businesses, summer schools, how teachers and

support staff speak to students in a kind but firm way as opposed to shouting etc. Displays are used to reinforce the school's key values, messages and priorities.

10. Leadership

Leadership is very strong in the school at every level; all have high expectations and they model the professional standards expected of all. Self-evaluation is robust and leaders know their strengths, weaknesses and how to improve.

Leaders share a number of traits, they have clear and unshakeable principles and sense of purpose; vigilance and visibility; courage and conviction; predisposition to immediate action, letting nothing slip; insistence on consistency of approach, individually and across the school; drive and determination; belief in all people; an ability to communicate; leadership by example; emotional intelligence; tireless energy; and commitment, drive and determination which motivates all staff and students.

The Trustees and Governors have a clear understanding of the needs of the school and they hold senior leaders to account for all aspects of the school's performance.

Senior Leadership Team and Middle Leader meetings are held with open and shared agendas, the Chair is rotated and outcomes (not minutes) are recorded. Regular one-to-one meetings are held with line managers and dated outcomes are recorded. Senior Leadership Team Extra (SLTx) is a forum where all members of staff are invited to discuss strategic issues.

The school council is seen by the students to represent their views and it has secured outcomes that have made a positive impact upon their lives. Students take significant leadership roles within their House.

11. Finance and ICT Platform

The ICT platform enables learning to take place, it has to adapt as the needs of the curriculum change. ICT is able to promote independent learning through the use of the Virtual Learning Environment. Resources for home study, revision and flipped learning are available on the Virtual Learning Environment; they are presented with sound and vision to appeal to the students.

ICT is used to facilitate leadership and communication in the school.

The role of finance is to provide students with a first-rate education. Best value is achieved in all expenditure as staff treat every penny with great care, as they understand the opportunity cost of every expenditure.

12. Strategy

Torquay Academy adopts a forward thinking strategy that places it at the forefront of education locally, and increasingly so on the national and international stage. Torquay Academy is an innovative, non-risk adverse, outward facing learning establishment that welcomes the opportunity to share and learn from best practice.

The school's membership of the Multi Academy Trust enables it to work closely with Torquay Boys' Grammar School and its feeder primary partners in a wide range of areas.