



12 CASE STUDIES

2014/15

everyone succeeds

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Foreword

I am delighted to 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
Dean of the Leadership Faculty – Teaching Leaders

Introduction

This has not been written as a how-to guide or with any belief this is the right or only way to lead a school; it is a number of reflective case studies that outline the approach we took. It worked for our students and staff during 2014-15 at Torquay Academy; there are things we would do differently if we had a time again. The circumstances faced by every other school will be different to ours.

The case studies outline the efforts by a staff that have had a great impact upon student outcomes. Our 5 ACEM percentage rose by 22% and 3 levels of progress in English and Maths stands at 95% and 80% respectively.

The ideas are certainly not all new and we owe a great debt to all of the leaders who have been so generous with their time in supporting and welcoming us into their schools.

Steve Margetts
Principal
August 2015

Establishing a vision and culture

Steve Margetts, Principal

Objectives and rationale

In Simon Sinek's book, *Start With Why*, he states that all organisations should start with answering why they exist before they decide what they do and how they do it. Torquay Academy (TA) is a school that is passionate about its raison d'être; we have two answers for Sinek:

- **Everyone succeeds**
- **We believe that every student who joins TA has the ability to go on to university**

These are mantras that I repeated throughout my interview and you will see these words throughout the school.



Background and context

Torquay Academy needed to improve rapidly. When I joined TA in January 2014 I wanted to create a vision that was owned by the school and its community. We used part of our first day back to ask our staff to outline the school we aspire to have as a beacon in the heart of our community. Everyone contributed under twelve headings that I felt reflected the key areas of the school (these are shown on the image below). To ensure the document was fully representative of everyone who has an interest in the success of the school we invited other stakeholders' views as well. These thoughts were then assembled and drafted as version one of our vision. Staff groups re-assembled to finalise our vision over a number of meetings. The completed version was sixteen pages of quite detailed text.

We shared it with students, parents, staff and the local community, but I wanted a rather more digestible Vision 2020.

I contacted the brilliant Joel Cooper, an artist who I had met at a SSAT conference, in the hope he could bring our vision to life. He produced this graphic of the key points:



Joel then made some adjustments so it would fit on to an 8 x 2m wall in the heart of the school. We are delighted with the results; I will often talk to students during the day in front of the wall and discuss various aspects of our vision. It is also a talking point for all of our visitors, including our Regional Schools Commissioner, Sir David Carter.



David Carter @Carter6D · May 5

Lovely idea @TorquayAcademy to get the school improvement plan on a wall next to reception for everyone to see



18 15

Impact and outcomes

The vision is the platform for the changes that we have implemented over the past year. Tasks were aligned to the twelve areas of the vision; we all knew what we were trying to achieve. The other case studies you will read are a result of a school aligning itself behind a vision; I will not repeat those messages here.

There was a culture that I wanted to establish in the school community; this would impact upon both staff and students.

I equated our approach to that of Dave Brailsford and how he transformed British Cycling into world beaters. We would use the principles of marginal gains to make small improvements to every area of the school; the result of this would be a transformational change.

A sense of urgency needed to be introduced to all aspects of the school, from students' arrival in the morning and transitions to teaching lessons. We also needed to ensure that more lessons were taught by the timetabled teacher; the mantra "teachers in front of classes" was born. Trips were cancelled and CPD was assessed against the impact it would have in the classroom. This not only had a very positive impact upon the % of lessons taught by the class teacher, but on behaviour as well.

To ensure our curriculum retained its breadth of opportunities a Curriculum Enrichment Week and Activities Week were introduced in November and July respectively.

When I arrived, teachers didn't have their own teaching room and staff workrooms were based upon Year groups rather than academic departments (there is no central staffroom). This was the number one complaint of teaching staff. Staff would move up to six times a day as the timetable was constructed to reduce student movement and keep them in their Year group zones.

We agreed to move to department spaces. Curriculum Team Leaders became HOLAs (Heads of Learning Areas) with responsibility for everything within their learning areas: the classrooms, corridors, work room and the behaviour. This sense of ownership for the HOLAs and the teaching staff was very empowering. It also allowed department teams to be established; colleagues were together to not only share best practice and resources, but to build relationships.



It was also important for me to build my team. Our Senior Leadership Team has grown as specialists have been brought into the team to meet the needs of the school. We have been able to do this as Assistant Principals have increased their teaching load – we benefit from outstanding leaders and classroom practitioners. The Chair of our weekly SLT meeting is rotated and I have bi-weekly 121s with the entire team; outcomes and dates, not minutes, are recorded.

We talk a lot about controllables and uncontrollables; a great deal of time is spent ensuring everything that can be controlled is done so. Meticulous planning helps to ensure this. Whilst we acknowledge not everything can be controlled, we aim to reduce the uncertainty of these uncontrollables.

I view our Senior and Middle Leadership Team (SMLT) as the key drivers to change. There is a definite blurring of the two teams; we are all individuals with different responsibilities working towards the same goal. There has been a lot of investment in our SMLT, both in terms of meeting time and CPD. It was vital to "get the right people on the bus" in every position in the school, not just leadership positions. Since I joined we have recruited over 30 new teachers to the Academy. This has obviously taken a considerable amount of time, but it could not have been more important.

Building a sense of community was also important for me. We meet as a whole-school in the Sports Hall for an assembly that I lead. I write a weekly blog that is published on our website. Both of these are opportunities to celebrate success – we want the school to be a place where students are proud of their achievements.

Honours boards have been placed at the entrance to the school where we celebrate students who have gone to university, 100% attendance, outstanding effort, sports and performing arts colours and Head Boy and Head Girl.



We celebrate stars in each subject every half term and certificates are awarded for accumulating commendations. Students are proud to wear badges that are awarded for many of these achievements.

We are an outward looking school and we seek out the best practice in the world. Strong relationships have been forged that benefit the students and staff of TA with outstanding schools across the UK and USA. We have joined Challenge Partners and the South West Teaching School Alliance. Our Regional Schools Commissioner, Sir David Carter, brokered outstanding support from the Priory Community School and its Head, Neville Coles. Andy Buck has supported leaders through bespoke CPD for our Senior and Middle leaders as well as coaching me.

Reflections and next steps

There has been a great deal of change and it has happened quickly. I am aware of the extent this can be unsettling, but I make no apologies as the school needed to make rapid improvement. The perceptions of our local community have shifted dramatically. In a time of falling roles our applications have more than doubled and the school is heavily oversubscribed; we had over 536 applications for our 240 places.

We will continue to align with many outstanding schools both in the UK and abroad. The goal is simple: to become the best school in the world.

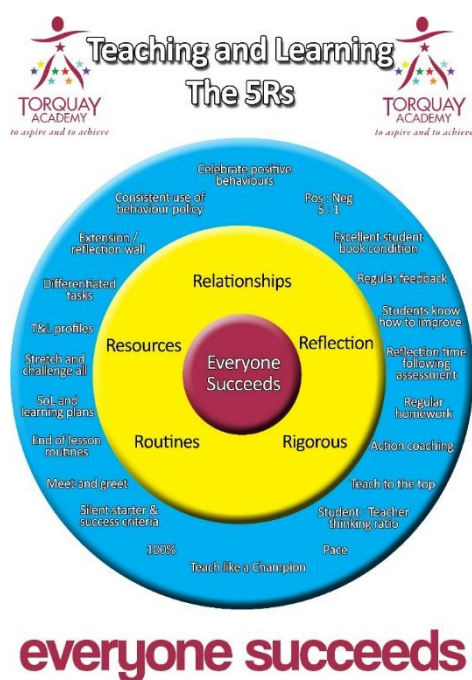
Teaching & Learning

A consistent approach to teaching

Mark Bindon, Vice Principal

Objectives and rationale

This case study focuses on an initiative introduced in September 2014, with the aim of improving standards in teaching and learning across the Academy. A list of 4 fundamentals which encompassed great teaching and learning, known as the 4Rs, was developed and shared with staff. It is the expectation that these 4 basics of great learning should be evident in every lesson, every day. Since 2014, the 4Rs have evolved to 5Rs and have been the basis of an effective CPD tool to drive teaching and learning to outstanding and create greater consistency in teaching across the Academy.



everyone succeeds

Background and context

When the Academy opened in 2013, replacing a predecessor school (on the same site), there was a high level of inconsistency in classroom practice. Although there were pockets of outstanding practice, in June 2014, just 50% of lessons were judged to be good or better.

The 4Rs were intended to secure greater consistency, and to ensure that the key features of best teaching and learning practice were present in every lesson. Lesson observations were used to create an inventory of these features. The 4Rs prompt a dialogue around best practice in teaching and learning for all staff. This focus on learning as

our core purpose energised and informed better planning for good and outstanding progress.

The 4Rs were launched at a teaching & learning conference in September 2014 to all staff with the 5th R, Rigour, being added during the academic year ready for 2015's conference.

Research shows that teachers are the most important factor within schools that directly improve student achievement. Having an effective teacher (as opposed to an average teacher) can add an extra year's worth of learning (Dylan William, 2009). The 4Rs are therefore a tool that aims to:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning across the Academy as every teacher has a greater understanding of what underpins great teaching and great learning;
- increase the level of consistency across classrooms, leading to more outstanding learning experiences for students;
- contribute to a learning community of teachers who are keen to share best practice around the 4Rs which informs and develops CPD across the school.

Impact and outcomes

An additional Assistant Principal was employed to lead on improving the quality of teaching. She has responsibility for the co-ordination of the professional development of all staff (more about that can be read in her case study about coaching). This signified the importance the new Principal and our SLT placed upon improving the quality of teaching within the school.

It was explained to teachers that the 4Rs are non-negotiables for every lesson as they underpin great teaching and learning. Lessons had been filmed to demonstrate what the 4Rs look like in practice in our classrooms. The following is a summary of our non-negotiables:

Resources

- A good SOL and/or LPs – the LP can be the 5 minute plan if SOL is good

- T&L profiles to include: LP, Seating plan, PP rationale, Homework record, Data & Marking timetable

Relationships

- Praise points : behaviour points ratio of 5:1
- Consistent use of the BfL policy
- Establish and maintain routines
- Always celebrate success – no matter how small
- Positive rather than negative statements

Routines

- Meet and greet at door - the door wedge will help you do this
- Start of lesson – success criteria must be displayed and shared. Students to write in their book title and date before proceeding to the “do now” activity
- Planner completed in every lesson. Either set homework on due night or "Reflect and recap...."
- Homework must be appropriate and challenging
- End of lesson – students standing behind a tucked in chair with their blazer on quietly waiting to be dismissed by teacher

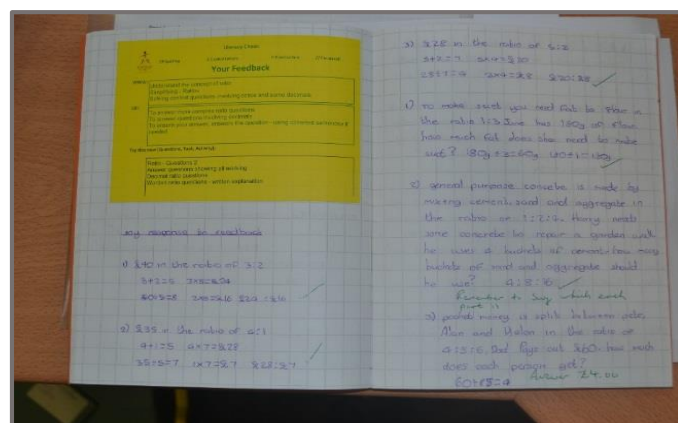
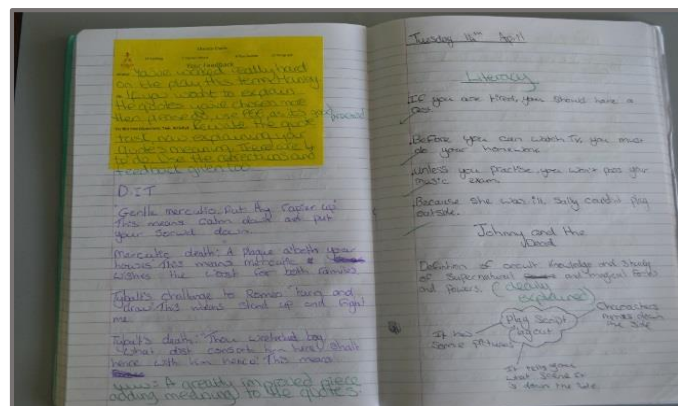
Reflection

- Feedback/Marking – appropriate, challenging, facilitates student improvement and frequency – staff to use green pens
- Student time to reflect on teacher feedback (build into lessons) – students to use purple pens.

The balance between high expectations, accountability and support, led to high staff buy-in and by December 2014 observations indicated that 76% of lessons were judged to be good or better. This rose to 80% at the end of the summer term. Clearly progress was being made in improving the quality of teaching and learning across the Academy. It is explicit in how we teach so that anyone who is new to our community is quickly inducted into the use of the system, which can be clearly explained, supported and monitored. Much of the success of the Academy can be attributed to the tireless focus on teaching and learning in a positive, mutually respectful environment where the key aim is to secure the very best outcomes for our learners.

A continued focus has been on how we, as an Academy, feedback to students. Through negotiation with all staff and students we developed a system of using yellow stickers to feedback to our

students. The frequency of this is predetermined and known by all staff. Staff use meaningful and formative comments to indicate what the students have done well and what they need to do to improve (in green). Students are then given time to respond to this marking and reflect and improve by completing tasks/questions which are written in purple.

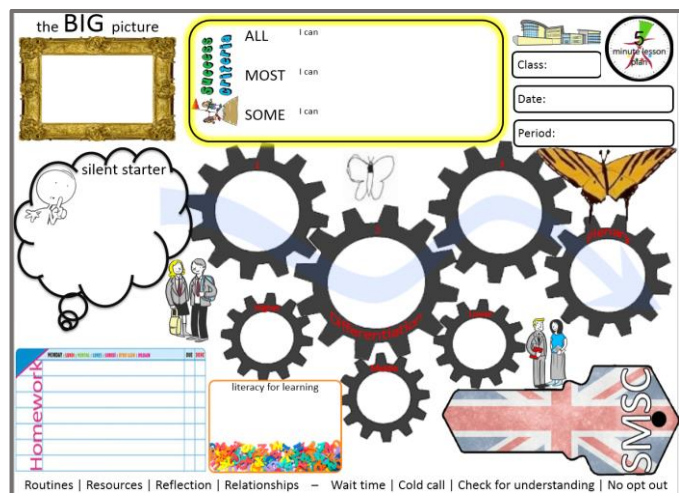


SLT review a department's books with the HOLA (Head of Learning Area) every week. Formal book scrutinies take place five times a year where school leaders take an in-depth view of the books in the school. During these scrutinies, the following is checked:

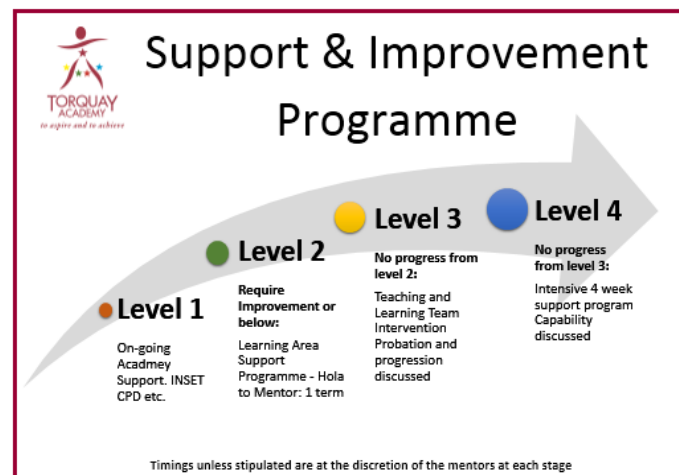
- Student work/books indicate grades and targets
- Student books are marked as per designated department/year frequency
- The teacher has used meaningful formative statements to facilitate student improvement (green)
- Evidence of student reflection (purple)
- Students' work/books are neat and tidy
- Evidence of marking for literacy

There is an open door policy in the school and all teachers are available to visitors at any time.

All teachers use our 5 minute lesson plan. This is based upon the widely available resource, but tweaked by our own staff to reflect the needs of the Academy and our students.



There has been an increase in the level of accountability in the school supported by robust HR policies support. There are very high expectations of teaching staff and leaders at all levels hold them to account; students only have one chance at their education.



Reflections and next steps

We are committed to improving the teaching at Torquay Academy to improve our students' knowledge/understanding and their overall learning experience. We have employed a team of five Lead Practitioners who will support the Assistant Principal in driving up further the standards of teaching. This team will work closely identifying and sharing excellent practice as well as playing a key role in coaching.

The focus for 2015-16 will be excellence in classrooms and skilling up all teaching staff to consistently deliver high quality lessons and

therefore high quality outcomes for our students. The 5Rs will continue to drive the whole school, departmental and individual CPD. Action Coaching will ensure that designated members of staff are supported weekly to improve elements of their classroom practice. We tirelessly reflect, review and update our practices and systems, listening to students and staff.

We look forward to the continual development of the 5Rs adding value to the progress of our students with the following priorities:

- Continuing to ensure student work is of the highest standard
- Student work is marked with appropriate challenging formative comments to ensure student improvement and progress. Work with Dylan William and the EEF to improve the quality of formative assessment
- Embed Teach Like a Champion strategies
- To ensure T&L profiles are completed in the 'TA house style' and are fit for purpose
- To ensure the 5Rs are truly embedded into every lesson
- Embed the 'showmyhomework' system
- To be reflective to the needs of CPD/Action Coaching

No bridge too far

Year 11 intervention strategies

Evan Pugh, Vice Principal

Objectives and rationale

We have a simple mission as a school: everyone succeeds. Our ambitious 3 year plan sets out clear targets for attainment and progress; this is our journey through 2014-15 as we strived to achieve academic success for our students.

Background and context

In the past two years the Academy has not met its performance targets. Despite achieving floor targets in 2013 there was significant under-performance in non-core subjects and an over reliance upon non-GCSE subjects.

In 2014 our results were bitterly disappointing, although Maths (58%) and English (56%) performed relatively well, the matchup between students achieving a C in both English and Maths was poor and our EM % was only 39%. This under-performance was compounded by Science (42%) and non-core subjects leading to our 5 A*-C including English and Maths only reaching 28%.

There were many plans being implemented to rapidly improve results, as acknowledged by the June 2014 Ofsted inspection, but leaders at every level knew there had to be some significant changes if we were to achieve the aspirational results we desire for our students. Having an Internal Raise document completed on the results day supported the work of the Senior Leaders over the summer break to ensure the SEF and Academy Improvement Plan were robust and reflected the challenge of the coming year.

Impact and outcomes

This section will give an overview of the variety of actions we undertook in order to improve the outcomes of the Year 11 cohort.

Head of Learning Area (HOLA) meetings

In the first two weeks of term the Vice Principal for Teaching and Learning and I met with the HOLAs in foundation subjects to ensure they had a clear focus on examination success for the year ahead, (due to their poor performance in the summer exams).

The issues discussed concentrated around the knowledge and understanding of the examination specifications. The discussions included the following questions:

- Do you and your team feel confident that you know how to get an A* in the subject?
- Do you and your team know the marking criteria for the examination?
- Are you confident that you and your team know and understand the different questions and skills the students have to demonstrate in order to achieve the marks?
- Do you and your team have a good knowledge of past papers and 'banker' questions?
- Have you accessed exam board webinars to update your knowledge for the exams you are preparing for? Have you read all of the past examiner's reports?

We also discussed a range of other key issues including:

- coursework must be completed above target grade;
- behaviour issues in any lessons;
- homework must be set regularly based on GCSE questions; and
- the quality of teaching and learning in the Year group.

Identification of achievement groups

Based on a student's expected grades the cohort was divided into:

- 9+ - students expected to achieve 9 or more higher grades including English and Maths at C or above
- 7+ - students expected to achieve 7 or more higher grades but who are not expected to get a C in either English or Maths or both
- 5+ - students who must achieve 5 higher grades in any subjects

The decision was made to describe these grades as expected rather than targets as it felt it had a greater sense of urgency.

These were produced with student names to provide a visual representation of the data after each data harvest. They enable departments to clearly identify students under-performing against their expected grades.

Period 6

In September we extended the school day to include a period 6 for Year 11 students. Each department was allocated an evening once per fortnight. There were teething problems as we hadn't set up a system to deal with non-attenders. We re-launched period 6 after half term and made it compulsory for all, if students did not attend it was deemed to be truancy and they received an hour detention the following evening. This was a new 4pm detention and was introduced to ensure students could attend the following evening's period 6 and their detention. This improved attendance. By the end of the year period 6 was a normal part of the school day for Year 11s.

Pre-public examinations

We conducted pre-public exams (mocks) in November and March.



Feedback to students was done in the form of question level analysis (QLA). This enabled students to focus their revision and departments to plan their next teaching episodes.

Each PPE was run in the same manner as the external exams in the summer – breakfasts were provided and revision sessions held for the 20 minutes prior to the exam.

Revision guides

In the autumn term we purchased revision guides in every subject area. These were distributed to students and were a focus of the silent tutorial

sessions each week as well as supporting the learning in class.

Revision guidance

Following the November series of exams, we presented three methods of revision to Year 11 in an assembly: mind mapping, revision cards and revision notes. Students were asked to choose their preferred revision method. We then ran revision tutorials based on their preferred methods and provided them with either files and paper or cards and card index boxes. Also included in the pack was the calendar of revision sessions and exams for the remainder of the year and revision timetable templates.

Parental engagement

The SLT had 30 minute meetings with the majority of students with their parents/carers during the first half term of the year. This allowed us to discuss individual family situations and the potential barriers to success. Work schedules were drawn up and signed by the student and their parents/carers.

In March we held a revision evening for parents. This was organised into two sessions, the first aimed at a targeted group of students and the second was an open invitation. The evening covered areas such as how to support your child to revise, study areas at home, and how to manage stress.

The Learning Cafe

Furthermore we introduced the Learning Café, a suite of 32 computers that is open before and after school.



It was reserved for Year 11 each lunchtime to complete coursework, homework or revision. It was fully utilised throughout the year. We also allowed

Year 11 to stay after 4.00pm in the Learning Cafe, which was popular with many students.

Return to learning interviews

In the spring term we identified that some students were taking the occasional day off school. We introduced return to learning interviews for anyone who had been absent the previous day. Students were called for an interview with the Progress Leader where they were asked the reason for their absence and how this might be avoided in future.

The interviews were quite forthright when the reasons were minimal. Students had to commit to collecting the work they had missed.

The Progress Leader and Assistant reported the noticeable improvement in attendance and a reduction in excuses of minor ailments. Year 11 attendance improved when compared to their Year 10 figure by 1.1%.

SLT science mentoring

Due to a combination of factors it was becoming clear science was a key subject where students needed extra support. SLT led a revision session based on examination questions twice a week during tutor time. Each member of the SLT was allocated 4-6 key students. The Head of Science provided materials focussed on 6 mark questions. Students were set homework to prepare for the following session. This finished in April when we re-organised tutor time and three new scientists joined our teaching staff.

Year 11 tutor time

In April we decided to re-organise tutor groups so they would get subject specific teaching during their 20 minute tutor time. Students were allocated to groups based on need relating to specific subject areas.

The Challenge

We identified a group of students who we felt needed some form of extrinsic reward to motivate them. The 24 students, who had the ability to achieve five or more higher grades but were unable to motivate themselves, were divided into four teams.

They had a weekly log sheet that had to be completed every lesson; teachers marked their effort in five learning behaviours that would enable

them to be better focussed. The team that gained the highest score received a prize. This ran for the second half of the spring term



MFL collaboration with Torquay Boys' Grammar School

We had a group of native Chinese and German speakers. As we do not offer either of these subjects at GCSE we collaborated with TBGS who prepared the students for their speaking tests and controlled assessments. As a result we entered four students for Cantonese, one for Mandarin and two for German.

Calendar of revision sessions and examinations

This was produced for the rest of the academic year in February to enable students to plan their revision and time.

Year 11 Calendar						
~ February 2015 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Week B		NCFE Music Day			Spanish Writing Controlled Assessment	History Revision 8.30 - 11.30
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	Health and Social Care catch-up 9.00-2.00	Maths revision 8.45 - 11.45 Business Studies 1.30 - 3.30	French Revision 8.45 - 11.45 Maths revision 8.45 - 11.45	VR English group Coursework catch-up 9.00-11.00	Half Term	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Week A		NCFE Music Day		Spanish Speaking tests	Maths Non Calculator 9.00am - 1.45pm Business studies paper 1 11.10-45 min Science paper 1 1.45pm - 3.15pm	Maths Revision 8.30 - 11.00
The purpose of the calendar is to enable you to plan your revision and to help you organise your time in the run up to the exams. This is subject to change and additions - please look at the Year 11 noticeboard for updates						

It became a very useful document for all staff to be able to plan for any interruptions to learning and avoid clashes over holiday periods.

Holiday and weekend revision sessions

Holiday revision sessions were held during February half term, Easter and May half term holidays. Subjects included History, Health and Social Care, Business Studies, French, English and Maths.



In June, on the weekend between the two maths papers, over 100 students attended to complete a mock paper set by PIXL.

Night school

In the first half of the summer term we identified students who needed extra support to achieve their C grade or their A grade in Science, English Literature, Statistics and History. Students attended one or two sessions on Monday to Wednesday evenings.



The sessions began at 4.00pm with a break for pizza at 6pm and went on until 8pm. Over 40 students attended Science and English Literature and over 25 for History and Statistics.

We had students self-referring themselves for these sessions in addition to those required to attend.

Core PE

After the Easter holidays we collapsed PE lessons so that students could attend extra Maths and Science lessons.

Access arrangements

Year 11 students needing access arrangements for exams were fully tested and given the appropriate level of access. We had three rooms operating for this, one for readers and scribes, one for use of laptops and one for medical conditions. Students in these rooms sat at the same desk for each exam. Readers and scribes were supported by the same support staff. We trialled reading pens for the first time. In the main exam hall students had the same desk throughout the exam series.

Student attendance post May half term

All students are required to attend school up until their final exam. After summer half term we produced individual timetables based on the exams students still had to sit. Timetables were changed to allow teachers to teach their groups during this period of time. The students' attendance was excellent.

Final throw of the dice: ECDL

We offered ECDL to 20 key marginal students; ten students were able to take up the offer and passed. Unfortunately the lag time between registering and having all the software elements operational meant we couldn't start it until after the exam season and hence the low take up. Students felt well prepared from their general ICT lessons over the past 5 years.

We need to plan how we will develop these opportunities next year.

Impact

Much of the impact will be measured in August. Over the past year predictions have risen by 2%. Attendance improved by 1%.

Review and reflection

Whilst many of the interventions were successful and will remain as a strategy for future Year 11 groups, there were some strategies that we believed could be improved upon:

- Revision techniques and guidance to be delivered in the autumn term

- Revision workbooks to be purchased in addition to the revision guides
- Parents' revision session to be brought forward to the autumn term
- Mentoring scheme needs to be reviewed to become manageable and effective
- The calendar needs to be in draft form available in September
- Trying to answer: do extrinsic rewards work in engaging less motivated students?
- Review the subject make-up of the post summer half-term timetable
- Use of Curriculum Enrichment Week for controlled assessment write ups/ ECDL
- Saturday and Holiday Academies to be planned further in advance
- Period 6s to be extended to 2 hours in the Summer term
- ECDL evening school on Mondays and Thursdays throughout the year
- Have specialist teaching tutors groups from September
- Start extra lessons in Core PE after January

Getting behaviour right, every time

Ben Chadwick, Assistant Principal

Objectives and rationale

In September 2014 Ofsted identified, in their report, entitled *Below the Radar*, low level disruption in the country's classrooms has a detrimental impact on the life chances of too many pupils and can drive away hard-working teachers from the profession. This view was echoed by a YouGov survey showing that students are potentially losing up to one hour of learning each day because of disruption in the classroom and parents consistently say that good discipline is the foundation of a good school (Prospects, April 2009).

This case study outlines Torquay Academy's relentless determination to ensure all behaviour in the school is impeccable.

Background and context

When the new Principal was appointed in January 2014 he very quickly realised that poor behaviour was having a negative impact upon the learning of all students in the Academy. Within three weeks he advertised for an Assistant Principal to lead on improving behaviour and to work with students who were disaffected and at risk of exclusion. This was a big commitment and investment that sent out a clear message that improving behaviour was of upmost importance in ensuring all students make academic progress and reach their true potential.

A DfE report in 2012 found that schools with a high proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals generally have poorer standards of behaviour. Ofsted also state that 'characteristics of pupils displaying challenging behaviour include those with SEN needs, those joining the school at times other than the usual admission points, looked after pupils and those from disadvantaged backgrounds' (Ofsted 2005).

46% of students at Torquay Academy are eligible for Pupil Premium, this is above the national average. The number of students on the SEN register at TA is four times greater than the national average and TA sits in the highest quartile for the level of transient students.

I was appointed and started at Easter 2014. We made some immediate changes, but during our

Ofsted inspection of June 2014 the team agreed with our SEF judgment that behaviour requires improvement. The challenge was to change the ethos of the Academy and raise expectations of both students and staff. In 2013–2014 89% of all data recorded on SIMS was negative in terms of behaviour: this had to change.

Impact and outcomes

A shift in culture had to be established. This would start from the moment students arrive in school. Too many students drifted in around the start time of 8.30am through two separate entrances. From September 2014 we closed the back gate at 8.15am to ensure all students could be managed more easily as we approached the start of the day. The school gate is locked at 8.27am precisely and any student arriving after this time is met by our Attendance Officers. The late students spend registration with the Attendance Officers so as not to disturb the learning of their peers by arriving late, and they receive a break time detention.

The Academy saw the number of students arriving late fall from over 100 to around 7 or 8 per day within a short period of time. The tutor period was moved from after lunch to the morning in order to establish a consistent uniform approach and ensure all students have a calm and structured start to the day. Years 7 to 9 are expected to read in silence whilst Years 10 upwards complete prep. Students start the day lined up in silence in alphabetical order in their tutor group. They then walk into their tutor rooms in single file, again in silence. This is all done following a very strict set of timings:

8.20am	All staff out near to the position of their tutor group. Progress Leaders and SLT oversee in area. Students move to their lines.
8.25am	Students are silent and staff undertake uniform check.
8.27am	Gate closes Lines to move into school following announcements
8.30am	Ready to start in the tutor room in silence

The change was immediate; a calm start led to a calmer day.

We introduced a new Behaviour for Learning Policy at the same time. There was a greater focus upon rewards and encouraging positivity. During 2014-15 95% of the loggings on SIMS have been positive compared to the previous year's 11%. Every week the top 30 students are recognised with a text message home, this is in addition to the certificates we issue.

There is a weekly form competition which tracks behaviour, achievement and attendance. Every half term the winning form have a mufti day.

Detentions were centralised and always relentlessly followed up. As in the classroom, it is designed to encourage the students to make the correct choices. Failure to attend leads to an increase in consequences. Students choose to behave appropriately and arrive on time as they do not want a detention. Students attend detentions as they do want additional sanctions.

Working with the most challenging students benefits the whole Academy community. Fairfields was set up to provide specialist teaching and support to the most challenging students, which includes a focus on social skills and relationships. This in turn allows mainstream lessons to be less disrupted and students to make better progress.

For our vulnerable students who previously would be out of lessons and on the corridors, Fairfields 2 was established. Based on the Thrive model, it is a nurturing environment which helps with social skills, building confidence and self-esteem. The result has been outstanding and continues to make great strides.

'A Readiness to learn' scheme was established as far too much time was wasted finding and providing students with equipment because they came to school with no pencil, pen, ruler etc. The expectation is that all students have a pencil case. Not having the correct equipment prevents students from accessing the full curriculum and results in a catch up session at break time. Again the raising of expectations has resulted in lessons being more productive and learning opportunities increased.

The huge strides made in the last 12 months are a result of having a policy and procedures that are clear both to students and staff, consistently applied and continually followed up. Expectations have been raised because we believe all students deserve the best possible education and all we will not settle for second best.

Reflections and next steps

In March 2015 Torquay Academy was subject to a no notice inspection with the focus on behaviour. It was an opportunity to have an inspector from Her Majesty's Inspectorate judge the progress made over the last 12 months.

The report stated:

- Leaders and managers have taken effective action to improve behaviour and secure consistently positive attitudes to learning.
- The appetite to do well is strongly supported through an achievement, behaviour and attendance rewards programme.
- The atmosphere around the Academy is calm and orderly.
- Leaders successfully implement 'zero tolerance' in managing students' behaviour.
- Leaders have a high profile.

Torquay Academy has made huge progress in the last 12 months but the journey is far from over. We continue to strive to become an outstanding provision that is a beacon of excellence and a sector leader in all aspects of education.

There are a number of areas that will be developed over the next academic year which include:

- Number of exclusions to be reduced
- SEN and Fairfields to relocate within the building to be together. The majority of students with challenging behaviour have an additional SEN need and can be better supported with a joined up approach in our 'support to achieve' hub
- Progress Leaders to be located in a pastoral hub. This will result in collaborative working and sharing of best practice
- Fairfields model to be developed to work with the learning cycles

Data-driven teaching and learning cycles

Mark Gale, Assistant Principal

Objectives and rationale

Our most important job in education is to prepare students for the next stage of their lives, so that they leave us after seven years happy, confident and ready to go on to university, apprenticeship or employment. The cornerstone of this preparation is making sure that students gain excellent qualifications and this is why we have implemented data-driven teaching and learning cycles.

Our aims were:

- to introduce a structured approach to teaching and learning across all years and all subjects;
- to focus on what we need to teach students in order for them to succeed in the exams;
- to analyse regularly what each student does or does not understand and to respond to this actively;
- to improve the validity, accuracy and reliability of data on student progress;
- to use the best national and international approaches to teaching and learning.



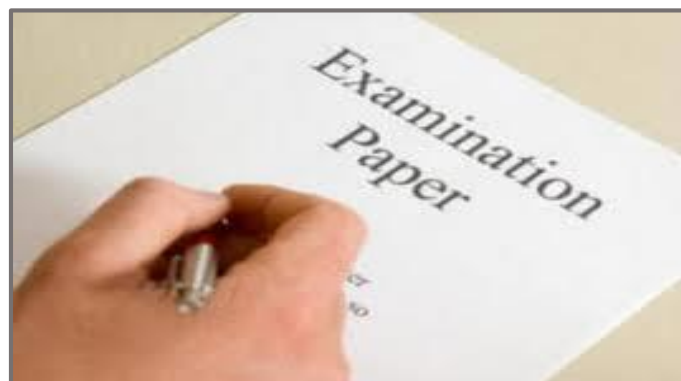
Background and context

We have divided the academic year into four data-driven teaching and learning cycles of nine weeks each. Every subject and every Year group uses the same schedule for their modules, which involves seven weeks of teaching, followed by an assessment week and a super-teaching week. Because all students in all lessons are following the same timings, everyone is focused on the forthcoming assessments and their follow-up.

The data-driven cycles offer a new way of teaching and learning. At every level teachers have asked

themselves two questions: “what do I need to teach for my students to be able to master the questions on the exam?” and “how will I know if they have mastered the skills and knowledge required?”

This means that teachers had to look at the objectives for their course and, before considering how they will be taught, look at the assessments that students will face. Unless students and teachers understand how the material taught will be examined, they will always underperform.



Teaching teams spent a long time considering schemes of work in the order *objectives*, *assessments* then *activities*.

Experience shows that too frequently lessons fail because they have been designed backwards, with resources and activities considered first, and learning intentions considered almost as an afterthought. Our data-driven teaching is dependent on a clear analysis of the questions posed on the terminal exams, breaking them down into the subject knowledge and skills required to succeed.

During the seven teaching weeks in each cycle, teachers use a wide range of formative assessment approaches to identify gaps in knowledge and understanding. In the eighth week of the cycle students complete the interim assessment for that cycle. At GCSE and A-level these are aligned to the final exam using past paper questions. KS3 papers use appropriate GCSE questions wherever possible, as these public exam questions have been carefully written, moderated and standardised.

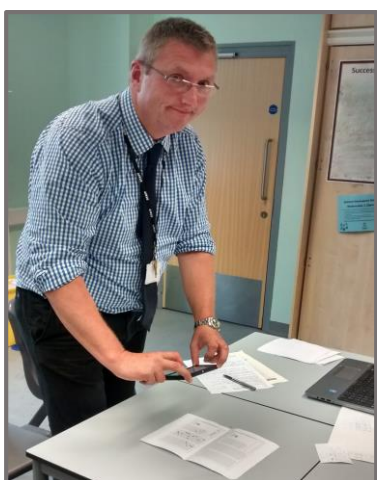
Many subject areas have started to use two types of assessment. Alongside the terminal exam style of

questions, which test depth of knowledge, they are using multiple choice questions that test knowledge across the breadth of the teaching cycle. Multiple choice questions, when well devised, can be very effective at identifying a student's misconceptions.

In the second, third and fourth cycle of the year synoptic assessment, of 20%, 35% and 50% respectively, is incorporated to re-test material from earlier cycles.

Question level analysis follows interim assessments to pin-point the areas that individuals or groups have struggled with. The completion and analysis of these tests must not overwhelm the students or staff. Speed of turnaround and the quality of the analysis are key to the success of the assessments and leaders support this turnaround - 48 hours is the target - by clearing the calendar of other commitments and using cover supervisors to release staff to complete the assessments where possible. In addition, technology such as smartphone apps are being used to automatically mark multiple choice assessments.

Once teachers have carried out a question level analysis, they are able to identify areas for the super-teaching week in the ninth week of the cycle. This involves clearly structured delivery of the knowledge that students haven't grasped and may involve re-grouping students so that those with similar needs are taught together.



Impact and outcomes

Data-driven teaching and learning enables teachers to take a step back, reflect on what they need to teach students to equip them for success in the exams, and act on the diagnosis they receive from the assessments. As such, it gives students a clear understanding of the route they will take in their

learning in each subject and makes it clear to parents how their child is succeeding, as well as giving precise details of areas of difficulty. It opens up parent-teacher conversations to discuss in real depth how to help the students improve.

Our reports to parents are issued four times a year, after each cycle. We report on the following aspects at Key Stage 4:

- attendance effort
- effort (split into three sections - behaviour, mindset and homework) for each subject
- percentage mark in the most recent assessment for each subject
- fine-grained prediction of end of Year 11 performance for each subject

At Key Stage 3 we report:

- attendance effort
- effort (split into three sections as above) for each subject
- percentage mark in the most recent assessment for each subject
- skills score 1 - 25 for each subject

Reports to parents are colour-coded to show how much progress the student is making towards their target. This helps parents understand their child's strengths and weaknesses as revealed by the data-driven teaching.

Basil's performance in his subjects is shown below. Each subject is colour-coded according to the following criteria.

OUTSTANDING PROGRESS						
Basil is exceeding his end-of-year target in these subjects. Please praise Basil's achievements and talk to him about how he feels he has achieved so much in these subject areas.						
GOOD PROGRESS						
Basil has achieved his end-of-year target in these subjects. Please praise Basil's achievements and encourage him to aim even higher in these subject areas.						
ON TRACK						
Basil is some sub-level away from his end-of-year target in these subjects, and is on track to achieve it by the end of this term. Please praise Basil's achievements and encourage him to aim even higher in these subject areas.						
INSUFFICIENT PROGRESS						
Basil is not making the progress expected of him in these subjects, and is more than one sub-level away from his end-of-year target. The reasons are shown together with additional actions to help Basil reach his full potential. We aim to work with parents to provide appropriate support and in the case of three or more subjects in this category, the head of year will contact you to discuss this further.						
Subject	Current Effort A-E	Current level L = low M = medium H = high	End-of-year target L = low M = medium H = high	Sub-level difference negative indicates performance is below target	Reason for underachievement if Current Level is two or more sub-levels below End-of-year target.	Actions to address underachievement.
English	B	4H	4H	1		
Geography	A	5L	4H	1		
Music	A	5L	4H	1		
Art	A	4H	4H	0		
Design & Technology	B	4H	4H	0		

Where a student is making insufficient progress, we give a comment on the reason for underachievement and actions that are being taken (by the teacher or the student) to address the underachievement.

Subject	Current Effort A-E	Current level L = low M = medium H = high	End-of-year target L = low M = medium H = high	Sub-level difference Negative numbers indicate performance is below target	Reason for underachievement If Current Level is two or more sub-levels below End-of-year target.	Actions to address underachievement.
Mathematics	B	5H	6L	-1		
Culture and Beliefs	B	4H	4H	-1		
History	A	4H	4H	-1		
PE	C	4H	4H	-1		
ICT	B	4L	4H	-2	Basil does not come into class ready to learn and he does not listen to instructions at the beginning of the lesson.	It is important that all classwork is finished each lesson and that all outstanding homework is completed.
Drama	C	3H	4H	-3	Basil demonstrates a lack of confidence in himself and a negative attitude to working with others. This has resulted in a tendency to avoid participating fully in group work and performances.	I will provide him with different work and support him with this if he is unable to do so. He needs to really try and work on his confidence skills within performance and give things a try in lessons.
Science	C	4M	5H	-4	Recently Basil has been making better progress but this is not always reflected in test scores.	It will be important to ask for help when stuck, remain focused and to put in sufficient effort in all lessons.
Modern Foreign Languages	B	3L	4H	-5	Basil is working well in lessons although he should still work on avoiding distractions in class. He now needs to work on adding detail to his written work and using the resources on his table to find the information to do this.	Basil needs to work on extending his written work and aim to produce a paragraph in each writing task. He must stop haranguing Manuel.

At Key Stage 3 we separate knowledge and skills assessments. Knowledge is reported as a percentage in the most recent assessment for each subject at the end of the teaching cycle. This score may go up and down across cycles: students' knowledge in different topics will not necessarily be equal.

Alongside this we report students' skills in each subject, in our approach to Life Without Levels. All subjects have identified a range of skills that students develop during Key Stage 3, for example Use of Scientific Models, Analysis of Historical Sources or Evaluating a Process or Product in Technology. These skills are split into five increasingly demanding bands.

Within each skill, students are given a score from 1 - 25 depending on which band they best meet and whether they achieve this skill *rarely, occasionally, often, generally* or *consistently*. These skill marks are averaged to give an overall subject skill from 1 – 25.

We would expect a student to gradually improve their skills in each subject so their score from 1 - 25 will increase during the key stage. This enables us to demonstrate the progress that the student is making.

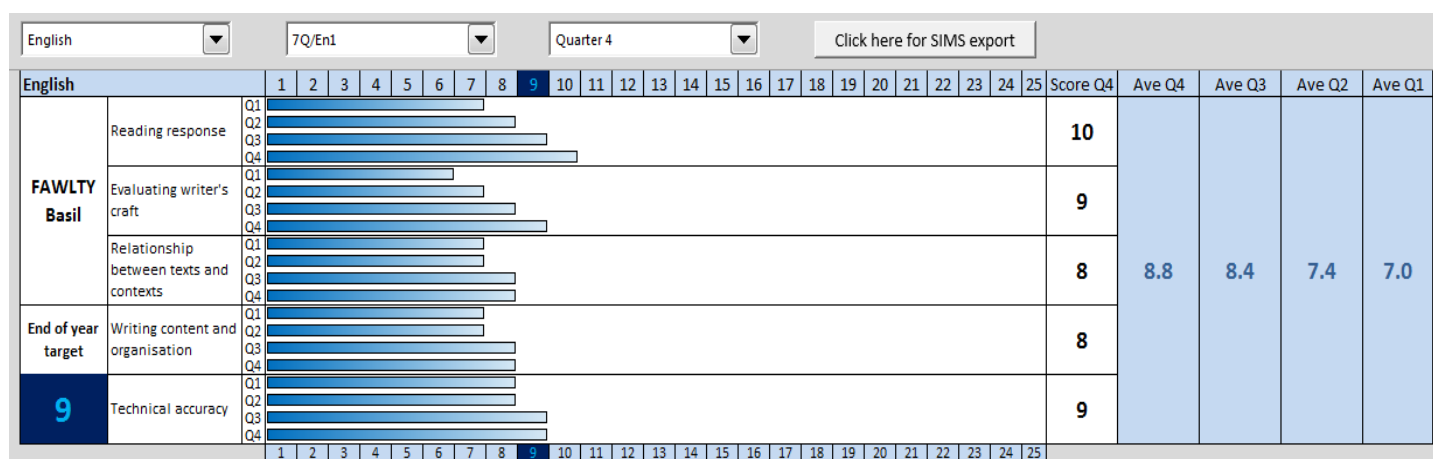
Reflections and next steps

There is a metaphor that explains the importance of data analysis as opposed to simply looking at assessment results. A football coach who doesn't watch their team's matches and only gets the results from a newspaper would know how they got on but would only be able to offer limited platitudes such as "score more goals" or "defend better". Teachers and leaders who only look at test results commit the same error.

In devising our approaches to data-driven teaching and learning and Life Without Levels we have drawn on a wide research base and practice from around the world. For example, many of the ideas for the data cycles are taken from schools in the US; the use of GCSE questions or multiple choice in all years is derived from a range of ideas from nationally-recognised assessment experts; and our 1 - 25 skills scale is a synthesis of different approaches from schools around the UK.

All these ideas have been shaped and moulded to suit the needs of our students at Torquay Academy. At every stage we have asked ourselves what we need to do to provide accurate, valid data to hone our teaching and learning to ensure that they are well-prepared to take the next steps after seven years of education with us.

We will closely monitor the implementation and impact of these approaches. Where necessary we are ready to make changes to ensure our plans work effectively. Our initial ideas are "version 1.0" and we are determined to be flexible and adaptable to ensure that our aims and principles are realised as effectively as possible.



Literacy as the foundation stone

Leigh Withers, Assistant Principal

Objectives & Rationale: Literacy

1. To eliminate the literacy gap
2. To remove low levels of literacy as a barrier for progress
3. To have the most 'well read' pupils in the country
4. To make sure all pupils achieve at least four levels of progress across the curriculum

We have a higher than national average representation of what we determine to be low levels of literacy on entry. **Over 30% of all pupils in KS3 entered the school on level 3 or below in English.** The numbers of pupils on these low levels appears to be reducing but the gap between low ability and high ability pupils remains significant.

For instance, currently **in Year 7 we have a gap of 12+ years (in terms of reading age) between our least and most able readers.** This range is in line with our historical data but our average standardised reading age score has been getting closer to the national average year on year. Our current Year 7 average SAS is 96.8 against a national average of 100.

We also need to make sure that our highest ability pupils receive the appropriate level of stretch and challenge across the curriculum. When combined with the 30+% of level 3 and below pupils this means that approximately 55% of all pupils require some form of discrete literacy intervention.

Actions

To enable rapid and sustained progress we have implemented a comprehensive intervention and testing strategy with a focus on all pupils falling below the national average SAS of 100.

This strategy is tiered in a way that the further a pupil is away from the average score the more comprehensive the intervention they receive becomes. We call this the 'pyramid system'.

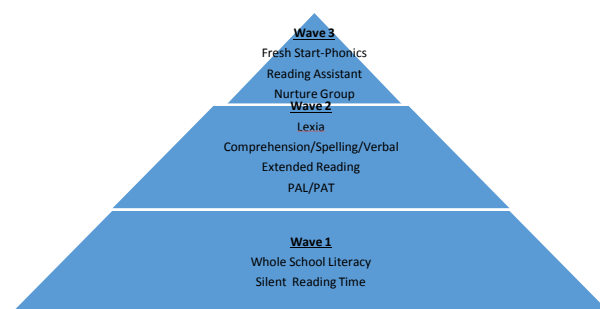
We use sophisticated programmes such as Lexia and Reading Assistant as well as non-computer based strategies such as TRUGS and Read Write Inc Fresh Start for our lowest ability pupils. Lexia is our most used form of intervention as it can be adapted to both lower and mid ability pupils.

Testing Schedule:

NGRT-Sept 2015 & June 2016
SWST- Sept 2015 & Jan 2016, July 2016
SWRT (those below SAS of 89) - Nov 2015 & Jan, March July 2016

Additional Provision:

Nurture Group (Yr 7)
Pets As Therapy
Handwriting Improvement
Trustee Intervention
TRUGS
Book Club
Reading Records
Rise & Read



We systematically test and track the progress of all pupils but with additional testing for those pupils in receipt of intervention. All pupils are tested twice yearly for reading and spelling but pupils in receipt of intervention are also tested after the end of the first term. This allows us to monitor the impact of our provision and adjust where necessary. Currently we have over 120 pupils on the Lexia programme with an additional 30+ in receipt of other interventions (but not Lexia). Each pupil has a folder with their record of intervention which include an intervention diary, spelling tests, reading tests and examples of handwriting and other written work.

In Year 7 we have created a nurture group for a small number of pupils whose levels of literacy are well below what we would expect at this period of their education. These pupils tend to be low level 3s and below (with some sub level 2) with reading ages between five and eight and follow a specialised curriculum for the year to enable them to make the

rapid progress they need to catch up with their peers.



We have introduced 'Rise & Read' three mornings a week (7.45-8.15) whereby pupils are placed into a reading group where they read a set novel for 30 minutes each session. The groups are based on ability and pupils read a range of literature across different genres and periods of time. In addition to this all pupils in Years 7-9 spend three form periods a week reading a chosen book in silence.

Every piece of written work across the Academy is marked for literacy, with an emphasis on consistency and simplicity; we believe it is hugely powerful for work to have the same types of corrections across the Academy. With that in mind we have focussed on four areas which have the greatest impact on the quality of pupil writing: spelling, punctuation, capital letters and paragraphing. To help develop vocabulary further each department have their own subject specific key terms which students must demonstrate understanding of for each topic covered. This compliments the 'vocabulary builder' section of our reading records which provide a foundation for excellence in KS3. Ensuring pupils answer questions in full sentences is another expectation of all teachers but this has yet to become consistent practice. Literacy mats are available for all subjects and each subject area has its own literacy resources and displays. It is our expectation that every teacher is a teacher of literacy and that every lesson has some feature of literacy within it. In addition to this a TA literacy mat has been produced and is available for all departments to use and adapt accordingly.

Sp	Spelling
C	Capital letter
P	Punctuation
//	New paragraph

Over the academic year we have had over 1,500 children from local primary schools visit us on Friday afternoons for literacy and science sessions. As well as developing strong links with our primary partners it also allows us to use our excellent facilities for the benefit of children across Torquay. These sessions have been focused on library skills, skimming & scanning and information gathering.

We believe that reading should be celebrated. As well as our weekly book club our annual events include Readathon, Carnegie and World Book Day. Engagement in these events is exceptional; in short our pupils enjoy reading and enjoy taking part in the celebration of reading. In addition to this we dedicate one English lesson a fortnight to silent reading in our well-equipped library.

Impact & outcomes

The average reading age increase across our KS3 year groups this academic year has been substantial.

Year 7:	2yrs 5 Months
Year 8:	1 year 10 months
Year 9:	1 year 7 months

This focus upon literacy and English is already translating into results in English. All of our pupils are leaving KS3 with at least a 5M in English. 90% achieved A*-C in their English examinations this summer, with over half of all students making better than expected levels of progress.

Next steps

From September 2015 each pupil in KS3 will have their own tailored 'Reading Record'. This record will contain a series of texts each child must read over the course of the year. The texts are matched to the ability of the pupil (with an emphasis on challenge) and are designed to make sure that different genres and time periods are part of every pupil's reading diet. Classic text such as Jane Eyre, Rebecca, Treasure Island and form part of this provision as well as a wide range contemporary literature. Pupils are also allocated free choice texts but they must come from a selection of books which will challenge the pupil further and signed off by their teacher. Pupils complete reviews on every book they read and have a fortnightly silent reading English lesson in our well-equipped library.

Departments will all be issued a class of 'writing checklist' cards for pupil use as well as the full

implementation of key term lists for each subject that will cover all topics studied over the course of the year. High ability pupils will be used as reading mentors in Year 10 from September and Year 7 from November.

The 10s will each lead a reading session in the library for low ability Year 7 pupils and from November our high ability Year 7 pupils will become reading ambassadors for Year 5 & 6 pupils.

We will be strengthening our links with local primary schools in regards to the teaching of literacy and colleagues from KS2 will be observing Year 7 English lessons and likewise some of our teachers will be able to observe KS2 teaching.

Intervention continues, but with a little more precision. Numbers receiving intervention will be lower as there will be less of a 'catch-up' in Year 8 (with virtually none in Year 9/10).

Establishing a Sixth Form

Gareth Harries, Assistant Principal

Objectives and rationale

We wanted to ensure that all students reaching the end of Year 11 at Torquay Academy had a pathway within the school to progress further. The Sixth Form was given the green light to be set up as part of the process of becoming an Academy. The Sixth Form became reality in September 2013 when 41 students chose us to provide their Post 16 Education. Planning for this had taken place throughout the academic year 2012-13. We set out with a number of objectives in mind when establishing our Sixth Form and our partnership with Torquay Boys' Grammar School (TBGS) enabled us to offer an extensive range of both courses and levels of study.

Our main objectives for the Sixth Form were:

- To provide an individual programme of study for all of the students entering the Sixth Form, no matter what level they had achieved at Key Stage 4
- Reduce the number of 16 - 19 NEETs from the school
- Ensure that every student who leaves TA Sixth Form leaves with the right experiences and gains the right qualifications to move onto the next stage of their life, fully prepared
- To offer a curriculum suitable for everybody
- Develop 16 year olds into fine young adults
- Develop the aspirations of our students
- Prepare students for university

Background and context

We were given a one year period to establish our Sixth Form when the school became an Academy in 2012. We used that time to do some research and gather our teachers' expertise to develop a curriculum that we could offer to our students. From the start we included courses on offer at TBGS as part of our curriculum. It was felt that by doing so we were going to be able to maximise our position as part of a multi academy trust by offering a lot more subjects. Our prospectus included all of the courses on offer at TBGS as well as our own. It was also envisaged that this would be a two way arrangement whereby TBGS would send some of their students to us to complete more vocational type (BTEC) courses.

In the first year we offered the following level 3 courses at TA with another 19 A levels on offer at TBGS:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- History
- Art
- Photography
- ICT
- Music
- Psychology
- Health and Social Care
- Sport

It was also felt that it was essential that we cater for all of our students by offering them a programme of study that included vocational courses in Health and Social Care, Travel and Tourism, Public Services, Hairdressing and, where necessary, GCSE Mathematics and English re-takes.

It was very obvious in the first year that we had a group of students that were still at a stage where they were not able to access level 2 courses so we developed a curriculum called 'Pathway to Employment' which was a very personalised programme for a small group of 9 individuals. During their course they completed the Level 1 and 2 ASDAN course, Mathematics and English Courses, Employability Skills level 2 course and Jamie Oliver's Cookery Course. Some students in this group also completed a level 2 Public Services course or a level 1 Hairdressing course. The most important aspect of the course was the work experience and volunteering the students carried out.

The 41 students who joined us in the first year had their own common room and study centre and were split into 3 tutor groups. Initially registration took place in the sixth form area and students attended their lessons throughout the school; we wanted to establish from the start that the sixth formers were positive role models to the other students. We also insisted that the students wore a uniform. In the first year the uniform was the same as the rest of the school with the exception that they wore a different tie, however after listening to the student voice a new black blazer was introduced for the second

year. This gave the students the recognition they wanted around the school but also served as a way of easily recognising them and helping staff use them as role models.

As a result of lessons learnt from year one and armed with the information we had gathered from the new Year 11 students we set about developing the curriculum offer for the September 2014 intake.

In consultation with students and the HOLA for English we decided to swap English Language with Creative Writing. Apart from that, all of the level 3 subjects listed above were offered again and we added the following to our offer:

- Media Studies
- Travel and Tourism
- Biology
- Product Design
- Business Studies

Each of the Year groups is different in terms of attainment, levels of progress, needs and interests and it was felt that it was important that the curriculum offer is flexible enough to meet the students' needs. To this end, each year, the Sixth Form team conduct an audit of needs through questionnaires, a meeting with every student to establish their interests, ambitions and thoughts on where they may like to study next year. After the application closing date the Assistant Principal responsible for Sixth Form and the Head of Sixth Form interview every student that has applied for a place to ensure that we can meet their needs and that the choices they have made are reasonable and fit for purpose. Parents are encouraged to attend these interviews.

Each year we produce a prospectus and a courses information booklet. These are available online and at our school reception. At the beginning of December each year we hold our Year 11 Next Steps Evening where we launch the new prospectus and course information booklet. This year we took the extra measure of sending home a copy of this information.

In addition to the above steps that are taken the Sixth Form team also deliver information sessions during Year 11 assembly time.

In July each year we run a Sixth Form familiarisation day where students get a feel for life in the Sixth

Form and have taster sessions for the subjects they have chosen.

Prior to GCSE results day, the results are scrutinised to identify any potential problems regarding choices made. The Sixth Form team is in school on results day and for the next 3 days to clear up any issues that may occur about choices.

At each stage of the process students have given us feedback saying that they have found the process, advice and information given to be beneficial to them when making their Post 16 choices, whether that be with us or at another establishment. Having a full time careers advisor supports and underpins this process.

Impact and outcomes

Even though the Sixth Form is still in its infancy you can already see that the greatest impact that our choice of curriculum offer is making is in the destinations of the first cohort of Year 13 to go through.

These are (out of the 41 that started):

- 3 students left the Sixth Form during Year 12 to be educated elsewhere
- 2 students left during the year to take up employment
- 11 (mostly level 2) students moved to the local FE College at the end of Year 12 to take up further vocational qualifications
- 3 returned to their home countries at the end of Year 12
- 2 students are taking a Gap year
- 1 student is taking up an internship with the NHS
- 3 are continuing with their Hairdressing qualification with us
- 3 are going into employment
- 1 is going into an Apprenticeship as a direct result of the course studied here
- 12 are progressing onto their first choice university

Based on predictions students have been successful across the curriculum and attained good grades. In particular the BTEC level 3 students have done exceptionally well. In all BTEC groups there is a 100% pass rate. In Health and Social Care one student has achieved Distinction*. In BTEC Sport, 5 students have gained the highest grade of Distinction* Distinction* and all have a Merit or

above. This is testament to our flexible approach, ensuring students are on the right courses and our monitoring procedures.

The dropout rate from courses is falling and attendance is at 89%. Based on evidence from other schools this is high for a Sixth Form but still not high enough to satisfy our standards. As student attainment at Key Stage 5 improves we hope to see more students applying for Russell Group universities.

Reflections and next steps

In an all-encompassing community academy you are never going to be able to produce one curriculum offer that can be used year after year. The increases in numbers year on year are encouraging but there is still much work to do here. It is our target to have 200 students in the Sixth Form by September 2017; the only way we can achieve this is by ensuring our curriculum offer is fit for the 21st Century student. We need to develop monitoring systems that will allow us to see whether or not the curriculum has any bearing on if a student stays with us or more importantly leaves us at the end of Year 11.

The curriculum offer at Key Stage 5 cannot be seen in isolation, the better the teaching and learning, results and curriculum offer in Key Stages 3 and 4, the better the results will be in the Sixth Form. We need to ensure that students receive excellent information, guidance and support so that they can make the right choices.

In some cases we have not insisted that individuals have met the entry requirements for that subject and, as a result, this has led to issues further down the line. We must ensure that we are more robust with this. We must develop high aspirations for our students and the entry qualifications that are adhered to.

The idea of educating students at both TA and TBGS was based on staff specialisation. As we have developed we have been able to offer more of the Academic A levels within TA and, consequently, there are no students from TA studying at TBGS during 2015-16.

Listening to the students, and indeed their parents, has been beneficial to us and we will continue to do

this. We would like to involve more of the leaders in the school in the process of offering information and advice at interview during Year 11.

Students currently studying in the Sixth Form giving advice and guidance to potential students has been invaluable.

The familiarisation day always appears to be successful and this year we had written feedback from the students for the first time. We will continue with this practice in the future. For the first time this year we offered taster sessions much earlier in the year as part of their normal school day. This proved very successful, judging by the influx of applications the following day.

Early identification of students capable of gaining places at top universities is now a priority, as is ensuring that a sound coherent careers plan, which should include a careers fair, is put in place.

There have been major changes in the way that further education is going to be delivered in the future. Changes to funding, how A levels are delivered and tested and new accountability measures are all things that can have a major impact on what curriculum is offered and how it is delivered. At the heart of all of these changes must be the students' needs, which will be considered when we make any amendments we deem necessary.

There are decisions still to be made about how we deliver the new style decoupled A levels and at some point in the near future there will be changes to how BTEC level 3 subjects are assessed, it seems fairly certain that there will be some form of external exam for each subject. If that is the case we will need to consider the implications for our students and our curriculum.

Making choices at 16 is an important step in an on-going process of decisions our students will make. These choices will have an impact on their future chances and opportunities. In view of this we must ensure that every Year 11 student has access to as much guidance and information as possible to make the right choices, thus raising their aspirations and their future successes.

Year 12 2015-16			
Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
Sport (with Year 13) (Subsidiary Diploma)	Sport (with Year 13) (Diploma) (only select if you have selected Sport in Column A)	Sport (with Year13) (Extended Diploma) (only select if you have selected Sport in Column A & B)	Football Academy (with Year 13)
			Rugby Academy (with Year 13)
Business Studies	ICT	Biology (AS/A Level)	Child Care (Subsidiary Diploma)
Health & Social Care (with Year 13) (Subsidiary Diploma)	Health & Social Care (Diploma) (only select if you have selected H&SC in Column A)	Travel and Tourism (with Year 13) (Subsidiary Diploma)	Music Performance (Subsidiary Diploma)
Mathematics (AS/A Level)	Chemistry (AS/A Level)	Music Technology (Subsidiary Diploma)	Physics (AS/A Level)
Creative Writing (AS/A Level)	Art & Design (Subsidiary Diploma)	Creative Media Production (Subsidiary Diploma)	Photography (Subsidiary Diploma)
	English Literature (AS/A Level)		History (AS/A Level)

Year 13 2015-16			
Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
Sport (with Year 12) (Subsidiary Diploma)	Sport (with Year 12) (Diploma) (only select if you have selected Sport in Column A) Please change this from Option Column D	Sport (with Year 12) (Extended Diploma) (only select if you have selected Sport in Column A & B)	Football Academy (with Year 12)
			Rugby Academy (with Year 12)
ICT	Biology (AS/A Level)	Mathematics (AS/A Level)	Creative Writing (AS/A Level)
Health & Social Care (with Year 12)(Subsidiary Diploma)	Business Studies	Travel and Tourism (with Year 12) (Subsidiary Diploma)	Psychology
English Literature (AS/A Level)	History (AS/A Level)	Art & Design (Subsidiary Diploma)	
	Media Studies (Subsidiary Diploma)	Music Performance (Subsidiary Diploma)	

A curriculum that works for our students

Paul Hocking, Assistant Principal

Objectives and rationale

Torquay Academy has a growing and changing intake driven by a number of local factors which is affecting not only the number but the attainment profile of the students. The clear objective is that the curriculum continues to match the needs and interests of the students during the period of change. We want to ensure that students of all abilities have the opportunity to follow courses in KS4 and 5 that will lead to Russell Group universities and aspirational career choices beyond the Academy. In addition we wanted to evaluate the new progress 8 and attainment 8 performance measures and the place of a compulsory EBacc within the curriculum. Finally we wanted to develop our onsite vocational courses to supplement the curriculum.

Background and context

The previous curriculum model set the students on entry into the school by ability allowing differentiation and a personalised pathway. In Year 7 the students followed Opening Minds which was used as a transition curriculum based on skills. The pathways continued into Year 9 when students were divided into 3 cohorts based on ability and given specific option choices.

SLT evaluation of the current curriculum

During a full and frank discussion the following points were made about the curriculum:

- Aspirations needed to be raised for all students
- The vocational courses that took place at South Devon College drove the timetabling as they required a discrete day and they were only offered to the lowest ability group
- Opening Minds did not stretch and challenge the highest ability students
- Banding of students allowed easier differentiation of courses and lessons
- Opening Minds took KS3 time away from Humanities and did not prepare students sufficiently for the rigorous GCSE course
- Educational visits were spread throughout the year causing continued disruption
- The reformed KS4 qualifications offered the perfect opportunity to evaluate alternatives from the list published by the government

- Subjects, particularly practical based, were struggling to get high quality work in 50 minute lessons completed and embedded with most departments feeling that 60 minutes would be better
- The importance of KS4 and the greater challenge from the level of difficulty of the new GCSE required more time for KS4
- The weekly PSHE lesson was not effective in delivering the material to the students and was a source of disruption in the academy
- The literacy and numeracy levels needed to be addressed in the curriculum

Impact and outcomes

The TA day

Following the SLT evaluation, the discussion was expanded to the middle leadership team and as a result we changed to 60 minute lessons with the aim that those extra minutes will allow for subjects to complete more practical work and have the time to deeper embed the learning. As a consequence further changes were required including a change to five period days in a 2, 2, 1 pattern giving the benefit of one less changeover during the day and only having one lesson after lunch. We have also switched to a two week timetable to allow a synchronisation with our partner school Torquay Boys' Grammar that has allowed stronger links in the 6th Form.

Curriculum time in Key Stages 3 and 4

With the increased demands of the KS4 courses, particularly the new English and Maths GCSE qualifications, the amount of curriculum time was investigated. It was strongly felt that the new GCSEs would demand a large investment of curriculum time and to provide this we had a choice of a narrower curriculum or a three year KS4, we opted for the latter. This has enabled the academy to maintain the broad curriculum while at the same time providing the curriculum time these subjects required at KS4.

The Opening Minds curriculum has been abolished and students will study History, Geography and Culture & Beliefs to allow more time to prepare for GCSEs and EBacc selection.

Torquay Academy (2 Year KS3)																																																			
Periods	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	
	50 one hour-lessons on two-week cycle																																																		
7U4	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Sc	Sc	Sc	Sc	Sc	Sc	Sc	Sc	Lit	Lit	Lit	Lit	PE	PE	PE	PE	Hu	Hu	Hu	Hu	Hu	Hu	Hu	Hu	DT	DT	DT	Ar	Dr	Mu	
7	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Sc	Sc	Sc	Sc	Sc	Sc	Sc	Sc	MFL	MFL	MFL	MFL	PE	PE	PE	PE	Hi	Hi	Hi	Gg	Gg	Gg	RE	RE	ICT	DT	DT	DT	Ar	Dr	Mu
8	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Sc	Sc	Sc	Sc	Sc	Sc	Sc	MFL	MFL	MFL	PE	PE	PE	PE	Hi	Hi	Hi	Gg	Gg	Gg	RE	RE	DT	ICT	Ar	Ar	Dr	Dr	Mu	Mu	
9	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Bi	Bi	Bi	Ch	Ch	Ch	Ph	Ph	Ph	PE	PE	PE	PE	RE	RE	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	C	C	C	C		
10	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Bi	Bi	Bi	Ch	Ch	Ch	Ph	Ph	Ph	PE	PE	PE	PE	RE	RE	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	C	C	C	C		
11T/11Q1-3	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	En	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Bi	Bi	Bi	Ch	Ch	Ch	Ph	Ph	Ph	PE	PE	PE	PE	ICT	ICT	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	C	C	C	C		

To boost the literacy and numeracy levels and to support the intervention work that already takes place, the curriculum hours in English and Maths has been increased to provide every student an hour of each subject every day.

The pathways process

A three year KS4 requires an earlier pathways evening. The challenge here is to give the students the experience and knowledge needed to make an informed decision in the spring term of Year 8. To support this we included the usual assemblies and information evenings but also added a careers section in the spring PSHE day. Booklets were prepared by Heads of Learning Areas (HOLAs) to inform parents about the content, level of demand and aspirational careers that each option choice can lead to. Following this, students and parents were invited into school for the pathways evening. I gave a presentation on the process and there was an opportunity to meet with HOLAs and subject teachers. This evening also allowed the subjects not studied at KS3 to be introduced to the students including the expanded vocational provision.

Part of the curriculum change has been to modify the arrangement with South Devon College so that construction and motor vehicle courses are delivered onsite allowing for a closer working relationship with the tutors. In addition we have added Health & Social Care, Child Care and Land Based Science as vocational qualifications.

These courses are now open to all students and offer an alternative second and third choice after the compulsory EBacc selection.

Trips and visits

These are an essential part of any successful curriculum and offer the students an opportunity to

see the subject in action and raise aspirations. However, when uncoordinated they can put a high demand on cover and lead to an imbalance of the subjects covered in such visits.

In November the Academy runs a curriculum enrichment week where all of these visits are concentrated to allow for a more focused and balanced approach. It was used to carry out a variety of activities including Humanities field trips, a Science study of ecology at the zoo, working in a real recording studio and the writing, casting, set prop making and performing of a 'performance in a day'.

Delivery of PSHE and SMSC

The move away from a weekly PSHE lesson to termly PSHE days was immediately welcomed by staff and students alike. Having held three successful days it has been a very positive experience. The students have been able to study subject areas in greater depth and experts who come into the school for that day have delivered them; engagement has been dramatically increased.

SMSC is incorporated into every lesson plan but certain issues are too important and need to be highlighted. We have introduced a fortnightly SLT assembly which deals with specific SMSC issues. The aims of the assembly are to deal with a hard-hitting SMSC topic and then provide stimulus materials that can be discussed during registration the next morning with tutors.

Reflections and next steps

There are a number of lag measures that will need to be assessed in the coming months and years which include the progress of the KS4 groups through the modified pathways process and then also the progress of students following the three

year KS4 as well as those who will study Humanities from Year 7.

Will the loss of Opening Minds be felt? Will a three year KS4 enable deeper learning? Time will tell.

However we already have a number of lead measures that point to a positive outcome. Longer lessons have been positively received by teaching staff and most report that the time has been useful especially in those practical subject areas. The removal of the afternoon lesson transition and having only one lesson after lunch has again produced similar good feedback from teaching staff and can be seen in general behaviour improvements around the school. Whilst daunting for some parents, they were very positive about the earlier selection of options and the increased study time that it allowed. However students felt they needed more information about the subjects not studied at KS3 and next year the possibility of taster sessions will be investigated. These will be incorporated into tutor time or more likely into a PSHE day. Health and Social Care organised an activity for the students in curriculum enrichment week and it is felt that this would provide an excellent chance for Year 8 students to learn more about the subject.

SEND for progress

Glyn Penrice, Assistant Principal

Objectives and rationale

This case study will focus upon the changes in the delivery of support for SEND students in order to ensure that they receive quality teaching in lessons, together with targeted evidence-based contextualised support. Ofsted have the expectation that the identification of special educational needs leads to additional or different arrangements being made and a consequent improvement in progress. This is the story about the start of our journey towards a data led intervention strategy.

Background and context

Torquay Academy is a non-selective school with nearly 50% of students on the SEND register. The catchment area has high levels of deprivation and, historically, low aspirations. Students with SEN have not performed as well as non-SEN students although there has been a small narrowing of the gap over the last year. The 2014 Validated RAISE showed a gap of 12% in attainment at GCSE 5 A*-C (E&M). The progress measures from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 value added points score showed a 19 point difference between non-SEND and SEND students. Attainment and progress for SA+ students has been below the national average.

There has been a recent change of staff within the SEND area with a new SENDCo and Deputy SENDCo being appointed. One is an experienced member of the Senior Leadership Team with a background in multiagency work appointed within and the other recruited because of their specialist skills within literacy and SEN. The school had been able to access alternative curriculum for some students via the Local Authority but this is no longer available.

Impact and outcomes

Historically, interventions have been delivered within the classroom with TAs supporting both teachers and students. Individual interventions were limited and classroom support lacked structure in many lessons. Allocation was done using a perceived need model, usually at the request of the class teacher, and as a result SEND students did not make the same progress as other students.

The school had drifted into a situation in which TAs were too often used as an informal instructional

resource for students in most need. Although this happened with the best of intentions, both research evidence and the poor progress of the SEND students compared to other students clearly indicates that this status quo is no longer an option. School leaders should systematically review the roles of both teachers and TAs and take a wider view of how TAs can support learning and improve attainment throughout the school.

Reflection and next steps

Following Ofsted and other monitoring days, together with researching effective practice as recommended by the EEF, we have systematically reviewed the roles of both teachers and TAs and take a wider view of how TAs can support learning and improve attainment throughout the school. There is now a change from a nurture led provision to a data driven provision.

Data is now used to identify the SEND students who are not making expected progress following the cycle of data collecting within the school. We are now able to drill down into the data to identify the individual SEND students who are not making expected progress. This enables a number of interventions then to take place. Heads of Learning Areas are informed and asked for a response because accurate assessment is essential to securing and measuring pupil progress. This leads to discussions with class teachers to identify any issues and a collective responsibility within Learning Areas. Only once these conversations have happened can the data be validated and meaningful. Further interventions will then be delivered either as 1-2-1 or within small groups by trained Teaching Assistants.

There has also been a change in the way support staff are used. As stated earlier, their support had primarily been in the classroom however several factors have enabled this to change to be in line with the recommendations of the EEF.

Firstly the quality of the overall teaching and learning has improved within the school due to a number of initiatives you will have read about elsewhere. Secondly, key positions have been filled

by staff with outstanding track records in teaching, SEND and multiagency working.

The school is moving to a model of 9 week learning cycles for all Years which allows clarity to all staff about what is being learned in the class and at what times. Finally there has been recognition by the Senior Leaders and Governors of the importance of meeting the needs of the SEND students by providing a bespoke new support centre within the building of the school. The data will lead to the identification of those SEND students needing support and either individual or group interventions will then occur in the centre and can be contextualised for the students by the staff who now have the information about the Learning Cycles.

A wave response has been designed to support staff in classrooms by identifying the levels of support for students and all support staff have been allocated to an area of need. We will adopt evidence-based interventions to support TAs in their small group and one-to-one instruction. We are researching the use of structured interventions with reliable evidence of effectiveness. Unfortunately there are presently only a handful of programmes in the UK for which there is a secure evidence base, so we are using programmes that may be regarded ‘unproven’, but we aim to replicate some common elements of effective interventions:

- Sessions will be brief (20– 30mins), occur regularly (2-4 times per week) and are maintained over a sustained period (9 weeks). Careful timetabling is in place to enable this consistent delivery.

- TAs will receive extensive training from experienced trainers and/ or teachers (5–30 hours per intervention).
- The interventions will have structured supporting resources and lesson plans, with clear objectives
- TAs will closely follow the plan and structure of the intervention
- Assessments will be used to identify appropriate pupils, guide areas for focus and track pupil progress. Effective interventions will ensure that the right support is being provided to the right students
- Connections will be made between the out-of-class learning in the intervention and classroom teaching

The key is to ensure that learning in interventions is consistent with, and extends, work inside the classroom and that students understand the links between them. It should not be assumed that students can consistently identify and make sense of these links on their own. This model will also be underpinned by the introduction of the learning cycles.

As can be seen from the table below, there will also be support available for Emotional and Social interventions to occur within the SEN centre. Cross-referencing progress and behaviour data has enabled us to identify the links between low level disruption and an inability to access the curriculum due to either literacy or numeracy issues.

Communication and Interaction SLCN	Cognition and Learning MLD (Mild Learning Difficulty) SLD (Severe Learning Difficulties) PMLD (Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties)	Social, emotional and mental health difficulties SEMH	Sensory and/or physical needs PD
Examples			
Autism Spectrum Disorder, Asperger's Syndrome	Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia	Anxiety, Depression, Self-harming, Substance misuse, Eating disorders, Physical symptoms that are medically unexplained	Vision Impairment (VI) Hearing Impairment (HI) Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI) Deaf/blind
Difficulties			
Communicating with others Understanding social rules	Learn at a slower pace	Withdrawn Isolated Displaying challenging behaviours	Hindered from making use of educational facilities generally provided
Class Room Support/Linking Learning/Technician			

These are addressed within the centre by the use of academic and emotional interventions such as THRIVE and Social Groups.

Information is easily available to staff and SEND information is a key part of teacher class packs especially with the development of a Wave Response to need.

The school is also pioneering the One Page Profile approach adapting models used in special schools to support students and staff. These seemingly simple plans have already been piloted within the school and initial feedback has been encouraging. They will form part of the teaching packs from September and be reviewed each term.

In summary there is a clear pathway to support SEND students during transition, in KS3 and KS4. The final stages of our journey to an outstanding provision will be to review in the same robust way our support for the SEND students in our growing Sixth Form.

Wave 1	Wave 1 Quality First Teaching			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One page profile detailing individual needs -Positive social interaction opportunities -Clear instructions for tasks -Clear outcomes and expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One page profile detailing individual needs -Cream paper -No black and white contrasts on Power Points -Spell checkers -Coloured overlays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One page profile detailing individual needs -Behaviour for learning policy -Behaviour should not impact on other students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One page profile detailing individual needs -Equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers -Position on seating plan -Furniture
Wave 2	Wave 2 Academy Intervention			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social skills group -Assistant SENDCo Intervention - Educational Psychologist -Speech and Language Therapist -Paediatrician/GP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lexia -Literacy Intervention -Numeracy Intervention -Assistant SENDCo Intervention - Educational Psychologist -Paediatrician/GP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Thrive -Fairfields 2 -Social skills group -School counsellor - Educational Psychologist -Paediatrician/GP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Educational Psychologist -Paediatrician/GP -Paediatric Physiotherapist/Occupational Therapist -Behavioural Optometrist -Audiologist
Wave 3	Wave 3 EHCP			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -1:1 specialist teaching -Fairfields -Long term intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -1:1 specialist teaching -Long term intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -1:1 specialist teaching -Fairfields -CAMHs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -1:1 support provided where needed

Coaching a world class staff

Nichole Sanders, Assistant Principal



"Coaching is the universal language of change and learning." CNN

"I absolutely believe that people, unless coached never reach their maximum capabilities." Bob Nardelli CEO, Home Depot.

"I believe that wherever there is Mastery, coaching is occurring, and whenever coaching is done mastery will be the outcome." Andrea J Lee, Head Coach, 'Creating what matters'

Objectives and rationale

Vision:

To focus, target and practice what needs to be done to improve, coaching teachers to do excellent work.

In order to achieve continuous improvement at Torquay Academy, we needed to develop a programme where the staff were supported and enabled to be the best that they could be. We have produced a programme to support all staff in developing their practice not just once or twice a year but continually; this is based on our work with the brilliant Uncommon Schools (US Charter School group).

Key objectives:

- Create a culture where coaching is the main tool used to develop teaching in the classroom
- Provide an opportunity for staff to reflect and improve practice
- Coach the real practice in the classroom making an impact on students learning

Background and context

Leaders were aware that teaching needed to improve quickly. Their SEF judgment of "3" was supported by the June 2014 Ofsted inspection where it was commented, *"Over time, teaching has not been good enough to ensure that all students*

achieve as well as they could. On occasion the tasks which students are asked to tackle do not stretch them and are too easy to allow them to fulfil their true potential."

Getting "the right people on the bus" was a great focus of the past 18 months and getting basic systems in place for T&L and its monitoring. With a new set of staff arriving throughout 2014 and 2015, including a team of lead practitioners, we were able to set up an action-coaching framework to support the whole school improvement.

The programme is about working alongside colleagues on a weekly basis providing recognition and guidance on their craft within the classroom, then providing a forum to discuss, develop and practice in order to make perfect. Teachers at TA have the passion and drive to be successful, they've been reflective practitioners within a challenging and changing school over the last few years. They are now in a position to develop their teaching and the learning within the classroom with low-level disruption now to a minimum (*see behaviour case study*).

The method used to support colleagues will be through in-class coaching action steps. This approach is not to judge the quality of Teaching and Learning but to focus on effective ways to improve student learning and to develop teachers within their role. This will be conducted through weekly 25 minute in-class coaching observation (coaching not evaluating!) followed by another 25 minutes feedback session where next steps are agreed.

The focus is on improving practice. An additional benefit is that it will take out the stress of infrequent observations and provide a platform for continuous improvement and development.

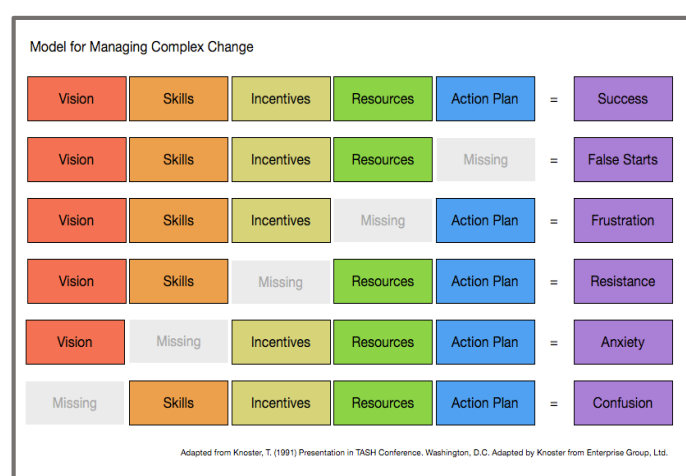
Actions required

Kotter's 8 Steps of Change and the dimensions of change conclude that success is gained through the setting of a clear vision and ensuring that skills are used correctly. This has been done by ensuring that the right people are in place to coach teaching staff; this has taken a financial investment.

It is also important that incentives are provided so colleagues can see what's in it for them and this is a two way process enabling the coaches and the coached to see the benefits. The coaching has been trialled with three members of staff over the past term to see what the possible gains are and all three teachers have flourished under action coaching.

To support colleagues the right resources need to be gathered and distributed; this also includes time and places to conduct the coaching.

The following chart highlights the essential ingredients for a whole school project and the shift in culture that is needed to make the coaching a success.



Impact and outcomes

It's quite difficult to immediately measure the impact of action coaching due to the nature of practising and developing the skills that have been developed through a timely period.

Over time the impact on the teaching taking place has had a significant impact on the learners.

The coaching has been trialled with three teachers who were at different stages in their practice in the classroom. Feedback has been very positive, staff felt apprehensive to begin with but now feel the value of the support they've received; examples of their feedback are:

'It's been a really useful experience. It's been helpful to talk things through with someone who isn't necessarily linked to my department and it's been useful to share my experiences about my classes.'

'My Coach has given me some good advice and ideas to try and listened to me when I wanted to bounce ideas off of them and ask opinions.'

'It's been nice to have the designated time with my coach and also for them to pop into my classes. It's really useful to have those extra pairs of eyes to see if there are things I am missing from a lesson.'

'I feel from the in class coaching that I have an open door approach to anyone coming into my room now and watching me as I feel more confident in that there are many things I am doing correctly and also open to ideas from people in ways that I can improve!'

Reflections and next steps

A clear message from the T&L team leading coaching was that this process needs to have the time dedicated to it and that it becomes a priority in the school for both the coach and the coached. To support action coaching and to enable it to be embedded in the culture of the school, staff have been given the time to make it effective. Coaches and the coached are provided with supportive documents to enable a consistent approach across all the whole staff and to set the expectations of the process.

Next steps

The extension of the pilot to the whole school. From September 2015 every member of the teaching staff will have both an in-class coaching session and a follow up coaching discussion. We hope this will initiate a whole school culture shift and taking teaching and learning from requires improvement to world class!

Financing an expanding school in need of improvement

Claire Beckett, Finance Director

Objectives and rationale

To ensure that the budget allows the flexibility to:

- support the employment of experienced and inspirational staff to help improve the aspirations and achievements of our students
- support the restructuring of overstaffed areas to ensure that funding is focussed on improvement rather than supporting pastoral operations that do not lead to the improvements in learning outcomes
- provide a learning environment conducive to achievement
- provide resources appropriate to the needs of the students to ensure their learning is fully supported
- provide appropriate leadership and CPD to ensure that T&L is consistent across the school and all staff feel supported in their actions

Background and context

When Torquay Academy became a sponsored academy in September 2012 it received a significant amount of start-up grants in order to support the employment of key staff to drive up the achievement of students at a school that was generally considered a sink school for those that could not get into their first choice school.

The level of SEN and Pupil Premium students was, and still is, well above the national average and behaviour management was the key driver, rather than achievement and aspirational outcomes.

As a result the percentage of support staff was very high compared with teaching staff; teaching assistants were used to support teachers in managing behaviour rather than in T&L.

The quality of teaching and learning was varied with too few staff being judged good or outstanding by Ofsted. A number of staff had disciplinary or capability proceedings initiated against them but these had not been followed through to a satisfactory outcome.

The finances of the Academy whilst apparently robust with a large surplus was not being effectively managed as the high staffing levels were not

sustainable from the in-year funding; had medium to long term budget projections been carried out this would have been identified. It was therefore necessary to address all the above factors to ensure that the in-year deficit budgets were managed to ensure an in-year balanced budget was achieved before the surplus reserve was exhausted.

A change in senior leadership with a new Principal and Finance Director in post from January 2014 and a remodelled SLT provided the vision, inspiration and expertise in order to lead the required changes.

Actions required

A number of key actions were identified which would need budgetary support in order to achieve the desired goals. It was recognised that short, medium and long term plans were required. An initial assessment of the budget was that whilst there appeared to be a large surplus, the staffing structure in place was not sustainable and without change the academy would hit a deficit budget within a couple of years.

Due to the lagged nature of funding, improving numbers would not generate sufficient funds to meet the staffing bill before the surplus ran out.

Additionally, it was identified fairly quickly that resources in all areas were not being used efficiently and effectively and a review of staffing identified immediate areas for saving.

The HR policies were not fit for purpose and a review of these and meetings with advisers indicated that this was a key area to focus on.

Impact and outcomes

Three year budget planning is now a key focus of all budget setting; the impact of any additional expenditure can immediately be identified.

All budget forecasts are projected based on actual and projected numbers in school. The impact of changing student numbers can be predicted and an assessment made on further actions that may be necessary as a result of future changes in funding.

HR policies have all been reviewed and are now transparent and user friendly. This has allowed robust management of staffing issues, including capability, disciplinary, redundancy and absence.

All revised HR policies have been utilised allowing improvements to be made in all aspects of staff and performance management.

The ratio of teaching to support staff has changed from 1:1.1 to 1:078.

Contingency sums have been provided from the reserves in order to ensure that resources can be provided for students to support their achievement. These resources include revision guides, web based revision applications as well as evening and holiday teaching and revision sessions.

Use of Pupil Premium money has supported the appointment of additional teaching staff to focus on intervention work.

Specific budget lines have been created to support strategic leadership and school improvement strategies.

This is in addition to the general CPD budget. This ensures that expenditure in these key areas can be managed.

Projections indicate that the budget will remain in surplus and that within 3 years an in-year surplus will be achieved.

Reflections and next steps

The budget is dynamic and needs to be flexible to meet the changing needs of the Academy. Whilst staffing represents over 75% of the expenditure of the school the need to ensure the maximum potential of all students is achieved may require additional staffing resources to be drafted in, in order to achieve this goal.

The budget for 2016/17 academic year is likely to be very tight. However, the lagged effect of funding will benefit the Academy during the 2017/18 financial academic year. Providing Year 7 intake remains at capacity and the overall number of students in the school increases, the financial future looks very positive. Continued capacity intake however relies on successful outcomes for students.

Whilst the number of 11-16 students is fairly certain for 2015/6 there is considerable uncertainty about the Sixth Form numbers. The budget has been prepared assuming 120 students in Years 12 and 13 in October 2015. Significant variance to these numbers will impact on the 2016/17 budget and the level of staffing that will be possible. There will be a need to increase teacher numbers to reflect additional students. This will not be possible if Sixth Form numbers fall below these projections.

The need to develop ICT provision across the Academy is a key feature. Replacement of netbooks will be necessary within the next couple of years and a way to finance this needs to be identified. A sustainable plan needs to be in place to ensure students are provided with the best tools for learning.

Safeguarding as a number one priority

Elaine Watling, Assistant Principal

Objectives and rationale

To create a culture of vigilance at Torquay Academy and for all groups of students to feel safe in the Academy, students must understand what constitutes unsafe situations and how to keep themselves safe in different situations.

All staff play a part in identifying concerns early and taking action so that children receive the help they need. All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. All staff should maintain an attitude of “it could happen here” and be aware of the signs and indications of abuse.

Impact and outcomes

We have a large team who work to ensure the safety of our students. This includes a full time child protection officer, who sits on SLT, an assistant and a full time PCSO who is employed by the Academy. This gives us access to the Police system which allows checks to be made on adults and young people. Information can then be shared with other agencies and vulnerable students and families protected. We have the ability to deal with any situation immediately.

We pride ourselves on our excellent multi agency work. Constant effort is made to communicate with all agencies and have a positive working relationship. Feedback from agencies is very positive about the work carried out by the Academy team.

Members of our team have been working within the Academy for many years which has given them an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of previous child protection concerns, current circumstances, wider family and neighbourhood issues.

Students, staff, parents and other visitors to the school know how to report concerns about themselves and others.

To facilitate this modern technology used as well as an “old-fashioned” worry box.

As a result of PSHEE and assemblies that have highlighted safeguarding topics students have

approached staff to tell them about concerns over other students.

All information given is followed up and investigated. Frequently it is submitted to the Police as intelligence.

Ensuring staff have up to date knowledge is vital to having effective safeguarding. In September 2015 all staff will undertake external safeguarding training. Devon and Cornwall Police’s Special Branch will deliver anti-radicalisation training to all staff; our PCSO has already undertaken in-depth training. Support staff completed a day’s training course on self-harming to enable them to provide support and strategies for students and their families. All of our governors have had safeguarding training. Other courses undertaken by the safeguarding team during 2014-15 include CSE, mindfulness, EPEPs, FGM, emotional intelligence, self-harming, radicalisation, voice of the child, diversity, CEOP, online safety, stand against violence, sexual behaviour in adolescents, public protection and anti-terrorism.

We have regular contact with primary schools to ensure continuity for the families involved with agencies and children to monitor. Positive relationships with foster carers are important to ensure our many looked after children get the best possible care, both in school and at home. PCSO Rushworth received a Superintendent’s award in recognition of his work at Torquay Academy and in the community.

Next Steps

We want to be continually challenged to ensure we are excellent in all aspects of safeguarding. We have invited an external audit that will be carried out by Jane Inett, the well-respected Head of Torbay’s Virtual School. We will continue to work closely with our Vice Chair of Governors, who has responsibility for safeguarding, to ensure all aspects of our work is of the highest standards, from PEP audits to checking the SCR.

We continue to adapt our PHSEE and assembly programme based upon the needs of our students

and national trends. We will ensure this continues to be the case.

We want all staff to:

- Think about their attitude to young people – to see past clothes, behaviour and makeup and remember they are still children and susceptible to CSE
- To be culturally sensitive not morally blind.
- To hear the voice of the child







IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
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