

Need to Know – a summary of our approach to ensuring that students know, understand and can do more

A core responsibility for all educators is to build up a store of knowledge in long term memory and 'make it stick'. In order to do this we need to be clear about what students need to know and clear about how to help them build that knowledge. The curriculum needs to ensure that the right components are embedded through careful sequencing:

Research shows that to build knowledge in long term memory we need to focus on doing a few quite simple, inter-linked things. These all inform our curriculum delivery and future planning

- We are clear that real learning will be quite hard – if it isn't 'hurting a bit' we are not likely to be learning. So, we ensure that our curriculum is challenging, and matches to students' needs.
- We need to revisit things on a regular basis – this is called **spaced learning / spaced practice**. In lessons we often revisit earlier topics to refresh, re-new and consolidate prior learning. This may include a 15 minute session at the start of a Year 11 lesson on a topic previously studied in Year 10, for example.
- We need to practice our ability to recall things from our memory and apply them – this is called **retrieval practice**. This is often done by answering a series of quick quiz questions that require factual recall from earlier lessons or past exam questions that require deeper application.
- We need to mix learning up, working on 2 or 3 linked topics at a time. This is called **'interleaved practice'**. A simple example of how this is done can be seen in Maths homework assignments which mix up questions from a wide variety of topics. We are adapting delivery to interleave content more extensively

By doing these things research suggests that learners build a better store of knowledge in long term memory and gain fluency. Students are then able to make better use of knowledge, applying it flexibly and with greater ease to new situations.

Ensuring access to our curriculum

We have high academic ambitions for all of our students, including those who have Special Educational Needs and those who may be deemed disadvantaged due to economic circumstances. Our approach to successful inclusion of all students through the curriculum includes:

- A relentless focus on the power of high quality classroom teaching. One size does not fit all. Teachers make use of information about students' learning needs to consider where they seat students, how and when they question students, how they prioritise personal support and attention throughout lessons and how additional resources might be used to challenge and support students to meet core learning objectives.
- Inclusion of students in all aspects of the curriculum. We do not remove students from subjects on a long term basis or narrow choices.
- We provide a 3 year Key Stage 3 curriculum. This ensures that all students have access to the full breadth of subjects until the end of Year 9. This maximizes their exposure to the diversity of our curriculum and ensures that sufficient knowledge has been built to enable success in exam courses followed from Year 10.

- We provide some additional support programmes such as extra literacy intervention to help all students to access a challenging secondary curriculum. In years 10 and 11 a small number of carefully selected students follow a programme of additional maths, English and science as one of their 4 options. This provides an appropriate number of exam qualifications whilst strengthening knowledge, understanding and skills in a core of subjects
- Additional funding is available to support students in accessing the enrichment provided by trips and visits.