



Curriculum Policy

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Curriculum Intent

At the Richmond upon Thames School (RTS), curriculum intent is underpinned by the Academy Trust's vision:

At RTS endeavour leads to excellence; a place of opportunity where every student is supported to harness their full potential, achieve excellence and acquire the skills needed for the next stages of their lives.

We are an inclusive school where all students are stretched and challenged to exceed their personal best.

Our approaches ensure that all teaching fosters students' critical thinking and engagement in sophisticated concepts. Our curriculum is in many ways very traditional, however, we aim to take an enterprising approach to its design, capitalising on innovative applications of digital technologies and partnership agreements. We use our extended day allows to ensure students benefit from a rich and varied learning experiences. All students study a broad range of subjects including Art, Computer Science, Design and Technology, Drama, English, Geography, History, Mathematics, a Modern Foreign Languages, Music, PE, Prep, PSHE, RE and Science¹. In Years 7, 8 and 9, students elect two enrichment options, which they change termly.

Our enrichment options are rich and varied, and students compete in a broad range of activities in and out of school.

At RTS, we develop cultural capital by extending learning far beyond the walls of the classroom. From explorations of Kew Gardens for Science Week to trips to theatres, galleries, masterclasses with commercial industry leaders, projects with universities and weekend camping trips. As a technologically aware school, all of our students use their school iPads to access cloud-based classrooms for each of their subjects where they make use of resources from lessons and work through independent activities.

Prep time is used for students to begin pre-learning activities on site, and provide support for students who require it, and a calm, well-resourced study space for more independent students.

Through our best endeavours, we strive to prepare our students for the next stages of their lives. We do this through a combination of methods, including PSHE, Academic Tutor-led Citizenship, through assemblies, employer visits, masterclasses, workshops, intensive learning days and 1:1 mentoring sessions.

As a school, we are committed to ensuring that the learning experience supports all of our students to develop to their full potential. We recognise that some students may have particular strengths, whether academic, musical, artistic or sporting and that others require support with special educational needs or disabilities. To support all students, our dedicated staff work together to ensure no student is left behind and we do this by providing stimulating, engaging learning experiences delivered by excellent teachers.

Our curriculum will build rapidly on students' achievements in primary education and scaffold knowledge ready for academic and vocational study.

At RTS, we use a spiral curriculum where topics, subjects and themes are revisited throughout the year with each successive encounter building on the previous one to allow for greater depth of understanding and knowledge retention. The RTS Way is our approach to teaching and learning and provides a clear framework to enable our teachers to implement our curriculum to an exceptional standard.

¹ We aim to reflect Government's EBacc ambition in curriculum offer and regard the EBacc subjects as the academic foundation of a broad, rich curriculum.

Linked Policies

SEN and More Able Policy
 Attendance Policy
 Acceptable Use Policy
 Staff Code of Conduct
 Behaviour for Learning Policy

Curriculum plan

Our curriculum plan will follow the National Curriculum in order to ensure students are prepared to achieve at the highest level in the qualification routes we will offer from Year 10.

The formal curriculum consists of two strands: Core and Specialist and Technical. Our Pastoral curriculum includes Academic Tutoring and Personal, Social, Health and Careers Education (PSHCE). The Wider Learning element focuses on enrichment and work skills development (Fig 1²).

Fig 1

Formal		Pastoral and Wider Learning	
Core		Specialist and technical	
Basic:	English, Maths, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Combined Science, Computer Science² , Numeracy support	Arts:	Art and Design, Drama, Music
Languages:	French, Spanish,² Literacy support	Technical:	Design and Technology Business Studies ³
Humanities:	Philosophy, Religion and Ethics (PRE), Sociology, Geography, History²	Sport:	Games, Physical Education (PE), DoE, SLC1/2 ⁴
		Vocational:	ASDAN CoPE levels 1&2 ⁵
		Additional:	Duke of Edinburgh

Number of lessons scheduled for each subject

Our two-week timetable is made up of 50 lessons of 1 hour duration; a total of 50 hours per cycle or 25 hours per week.

Years 7 – 9

All students in Year 7 and 9 have three timetabled enrichment sessions each week; made up of one Prep session and two elected sessions they chose to follow each term. Students also have opportunities to participate in competitive activities across the range of subjects.

Years 10 and 11

² Fig 1 – Curriculum elements. Subject in 'bold' are EBACC subjects

³ Business Studies is available as option from Year 10

⁴ Sports Leadership Level 1 and / or 2

⁵ Our Specialist and Technical courses offer will be developed in consultation with stakeholders.

We offer two pathways which will offer both academic and vocational options. From Year 10 most students will study 9 GCSE subjects including English, Maths and Science, one or more languages, one or more Humanities (EBACC) and up to two specialist and technical subjects. In Years 10 and 11, all students continue to participate in Sport with most completing Duke of Edinburgh Award and sports leadership qualifications to levels 1 and 2.

Religious Education

There is one Philosophy, Ethics and Faith lesson every two weeks in Years 7-10 and three intensive learning days in Year 11. . We teach Religious Education (RE) in such a way that is in keeping with the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames SACRE members.⁶ We believe that RE helps children and young people:

- celebrate differences in belief systems
- be educated to be world citizens and embrace diversity
- to acknowledge the difference between being religiously educated and being educated about religion
- to express their own views and to reflect sensitively and respectfully

Parents' Right to withdrawal

Parents are made aware of what is covered in the RE curriculum through the school's website. Parents who want to exercise their right to withdraw their child from RE should make this request to the Head Teacher. Any student who is withdrawn from RE is supervised during that time by a member of the school staff.

Pre-Learning

Subject	Per Week	Time (Approximate total)
English	Once	45 mins per week
Maths	Once	45 mins per week
Science	Once	45 mins per week
French	Once	45 mins per week
Humanities: History	Once	45 mins per week
Humanities: Geography	Once	45 mins per week
Humanities: Philosophy, Religion and Ethics	Periodically	Google Quiz or Half Termly Project
Art	Periodically	Google Quiz or Half Termly Project
Computing	Periodically	Google Quiz or Half Termly Project
Design Technology	Periodically	Google Quiz or Half Termly Project
Drama	Periodically	Google Quiz or Half Termly Project
Music	Periodically	Google Quiz or Half Termly Project

- The tasks should, where possible and relevant be pre-learning and link directly to the following lesson. Or be over-learning to review previous content and thus aid knowledge retention
- The teacher can request via Google Classroom that the task should be completed in Wednesday prep
- The tasks set should help students develop skills required for GCSE such as knowledge, comprehension, memory skills etc.
- CLs can provide a list of resources/tasks relevant to each subject which can be added to Google Classroom as additional work to do in prep if they have completed all pre-learning tasks
- Homework must be purposeful, realistic, meaningful and appropriately challenging for all students
- Clear deadlines for completion must be provided by the teacher via Google Classroom at the time the homework is set
- Teachers, especially in Key Stage 3, must adhere to the published homework timetables. Homework will be marked, assessed and feedback will be provided to the students in line with the RTS policy

⁶ London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education - http://www.richmond.gov.uk/sacre_syllabus_2014.pdf

Technology

We use technology to support the Teaching and Learning Policy through:

- Access to anytime anywhere learning, all year-round school,
- Supporting the embedding of our school values and ethos,
- Enabling curriculum innovation that nurtures life-long learning,
- Using technology where appropriate to provide learner-centred experiences that are flexible, responsive, effective and meet the needs of all students and partners,
- Harnessing technologies to enhance learning which have a measurable impact on learning outcomes,
- Using technology to innovate learning to improve learner enjoyment,
- Using technologies to harness collaborative approaches to teachers' planning
- Our technology programme makes effective and efficient use of all resources, whilst maintaining the high standards that we are committed to.

Enrichment

The school provides a broad range of opportunities beyond the formal curriculum. We believe students' engagement in activity beyond the classroom should encourage them to become well rounded adults and has a direct link to academic achievement. The enrichment programme enables students to discover further talents and skills and draw on, but not be limited to the opportunities provided by the REEC campus.

Through our extended day, period 6, students have opportunities to:

- Join and compete in societies
- Collaborate on real-life environmental problem-solving scenarios, creating digital content for consumption both locally and globally
- Build their resilience, creativity and intellectual curiosity through the application of Maths and visual arts to respond to abstract ideas
- Work in close collaboration with Harlequins and Richmond upon Thames College to access the highest quality sports coaching and state of the art equipment and facilities
- Participate and gain qualifications in musical, dance and drama performance
- Fully utilise opportunities available locally and nationally including rowing, fencing and personal development programmes such as The Duke of Edinburgh and Sport Leadership Awards.

Students select two activities each term with at least one choice from the sport and healthy lifestyle theme. Students also take part in a mandatory prep session one day a week after school.

Academic Tutor Time

Academic Tutor time is used to build positive relationships and to model behaviour that reflects our school values, promoting respect, responsibility and resilience in our students. This is an important front-line pastoral role which supports to develop the 'RTS Way'.

Curriculum: Areas of excellence

Working closely with our business, community and education partners (including Richmond, Education and Enterprise Campus), we strive to provide students with additional opportunities in:

- Communication, New Technologies and the online world
- Enterprise
- Healthy Lifestyles

Roles and responsibilities

Trust Board

The Trust Board will ensure that:

- it considers the advice of the Head Teacher when approving this curriculum policy and when setting statutory and non statutory targets.
- progress towards annual statutory targets is monitored.
- it contributes to decision making about the curriculum.

Head Teacher

The Head Teacher will ensure that:

- all statutory elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual students will be met. This will include how the subject will be taught and assessed.
- the amount of time provided for teaching the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the trustees' annually.
- where appropriate, the individual needs of some students are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from the national curriculum.
- the procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements and students and their parents/carers receive information to show how much progress the students are making and what is required to help them improve.
- the Trust Board is fully involved in decision making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- the Trust Board is advised on statutory targets in order to make informed decisions.

Senior Leadership Team

Senior Leaders with responsibility for Year Groups / Key Stages will:

- have an oversight of curriculum structure and delivery within their key stage detailed and up-to-date schemes of work are in place for the delivery of courses within their Year Group/key stage.
- ensure that schemes of work are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.
- ensure that levels of attainment and rates of progression are discussed with Curriculum Leader and Subject coordinators on a regular basis and that actions are taken where necessary to improve these.

Middle Leaders

Curriculum Leaders/Year Leads and Senior Leaders with responsibility for Year Groups/Key Stages will ensure that:

- long term planning is in place for all courses. Such schemes of work will be designed using the school pro-forma and will contain curriculum detail on:
 - context
 - expectations
 - key knowledge and skills
 - learning questions and outcomes
 - learning activities
 - stepped challenge
 - pre-learning
 - assessment (formative low-stakes/DIRT and summative)
 - resources
- schemes of work encourage progression over time, between year groups/cohorts and reflect the school's spiral curriculum approach
- schemes of work are in place and be used by all staff delivering a particular course
- appropriate awarding bodies and courses are selected so that they best meet the learning needs of our students.
- where necessary an appropriate combination of qualifications or alternative qualifications can be offered which best suit the needs of students
- assessment is appropriate to the course and the students following particular courses. There is a consistency of approach towards assessment
- they keep the appropriate Senior Leader informed of proposed changes to curriculum delivery
- all relevant information/data is shared with the school management information system (Arbor) team. This includes meeting deadlines related to exam entries etc
- student performance data is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that any necessary changes in terms of curriculum delivery are planned and carried out in a timely fashion

- they share best practice with other colleagues in terms of curriculum design and delivery
- oversee professional learning and development needs with regard to curriculum planning and delivery within their area of responsibility

Teachers and Learning Support Staff

Teaching staff and learning support staff will:

- ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy
- keep up to date with developments in their subjects
- have access to, and be able to interpret, data on each student to inform the design of the curriculum in order that it best meets the needs of each cohort of students
- share and exchange information about best practice amongst their colleagues in different schools and through external networks, resulting in a dynamic and relevant curriculum
- participate in high quality professional development, working with other teachers to develop their skills in understanding the learning needs of their students and how best to address those needs and engage them
- work in partnership with other agencies to provide an appropriate range of curriculum opportunities

Academic Tutors

- Use academic and attitudes to learning information to monitor student progress across all areas
- Discuss and identify areas of successful progression and areas for future development with students
- Communicate concerns to students orally and via target setting
- Communicate identified areas of development with parents via planners, annual report, parents' evenings and individually arranged meetings
- Monitor student behaviour, attitude to school and attendance
- Gather additional information on students if concerns are identified via 'round robins' and discussion with teachers

Students

Students will:

- be treated as partners in their learning, contributing to the design of the curriculum.
- have their individual needs addressed, both within the school and extending beyond the classroom into the family and community through a curriculum which offers breadth, support and challenge.
- be given additional support if they start to fall behind in their learning, helping them get back on track quickly.
- receive co-ordinated support to enable them to make the appropriate curriculum choices at key stages 4 and post 16.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers will:

- be consulted about their children's learning and in planning their future education.
- be confident that their child is receiving a high quality education that is designed to meet their learning needs and which will equip them with the skills they need to thrive throughout their lives.
- be informed about the curriculum on offer and understand the rationale behind it.

Teaching groups

Groupings

In Year 7, 8 and 9 students are taught in a range of groups, including: academic tutor groups, mixed ability and prior attainment-based teaching groups and vertical enrichment groups. In Year 9 Maths and Science, students are taught in sets based on prior attainment in Maths and English⁷. At KS4, students will be taught in a range of teaching groups depending on their chosen pathway. Teaching groups are determined using a wide range of data available including, baseline data, on-going teacher assessment of classwork/homework, end of unit tests and internal assessments. Rationale for our mixed ability teaching approach can be found on the website and in the linked document in Appendix

⁷ Under review for 2020/21

Students who join RTS with below expected progress in English (GPS, Writing) and/or Maths are supported through early intervention programmes on entry. We use the literacy and numeracy catch-up premium to assiduously target individual needs through a bespoke offer on arrival.

Baseline knowledge

We use a combination of data to inform our baseline knowledge of the students, including:

- cognitive ability tests (CATs) administered in the summer prior to entering Year 7,
- KS2 RAW scores in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (GPS), Writing and Maths,
- the KS2 scaled score and
- a school reading test score.
- GL tests administered in September in English, Maths and Science

Curriculum Implementation

Teaching and Learning, the RTS Way

Through the RTS Way, every lesson focuses on enabling excellent learning and fostering a love of learning. Teachers ensure that the learning questions/outcomes for every lesson are clear for their students, presented in writing and verbally and both reviewed and summarised at appropriate episodes in lessons. Appropriate stepped challenge is expected to be present in every lesson. This means that the teaching should:

- enable students to know more and remember more of the curriculum
- fosters in students the application of intellectual, physical or creative effort, interest in their work, and the ability to think and learn for themselves,
- involve well-planned activities and management of class time,
- show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the students, and ensure that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons,
- demonstrate extensive knowledge and skills of the subject-matter being taught,
- effectively utilise classroom resources and ensure that all lessons slides are shared with students on the subject Google Classroom each lesson
- make effective use of school and subject frameworks to accurately assess students' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that students can progress and
- utilise effective strategies for developing positive behaviours for learning.

All teaching should promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students whenever appropriate. In particular, this means that the teaching should:

- enable students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence,
- enable students to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the law,
- encourage students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute to community life,
- provide students with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England,
- assist students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other culture in a way that
- promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions,
- lead students towards becoming confident and positive contributors to their community and effective users of its services and facilities according to their maturity,
- enable students to gain insights into the origins and practices of their own cultures, and into those of the wider community,
- take steps to ensure that students appreciate racial and cultural diversity, avoid and resist racism, appreciate and the diversity there is in sexuality, religious backgrounds and disabilities (physical or otherwise) and are aware of issues surrounding gender.

The School Day

Sample week

Monday	Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday	Friday
08.35-09.30 - Period One	08.35-09.30 - Period One	08.35-09.25 - Period 1
09.30-10.25 - Period Two	09.30-10.25 - Period Two	09.25-10.15 - Period 2
10.25-10.50 - Break 1	10.25-10.50 - Break 1	10.15-10.35 - Break
10.50-11.15 - Break 2	10.50-11.15 - Break 2	10.35-11.25 - Period 3
11.15-12.10 - Period Three	11.15-12.10 - Period Three	11.25-12.15 - Period 4
12.10-13.05 - Period Four	12.10-13.05 - Period Four	12.15-12.55 - Lunch
13.05-13.35 - Lunch 1	13.05-13.35 - Lunch 1	12.55-13.45 - Period 5
13.35-14.05 - Lunch 2	13.35-14.05 - Lunch 2	13:45-14:00 - Academic Tutor Time
14.05-15.00 - Period Five	14.05-15.00 - Period Five	
15.15-16.00 - Staff CPD	15.00-16.00 - Enrichment (x 2)	
	- Prep (x 1)	

Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning

At RTS we produce an annual plan for monitoring teaching, learning and student outcomes. Monitoring includes: classroom observations, work sampling, department appraisals, Teachers' Standards audits, learning walks, professional development review, stakeholder surveys and other relevant self-evaluation.

Quality assurance system

RTS uses simple and coherent systems for monitoring and self-evaluation which enable leaders to provide focused and appropriate staff development. Our self-evaluation and review approach assists our mission to:

- reinforce and drive up expectations by reviewing and evaluating the work of the school,
- provide information for action leading to school improvement,
- support individual teachers, subject areas, pastoral and support teams to raise standards,
- model, share and develop good practice,
- support continued professional development (CPD) and staff appraisal.

Provision for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

We believe that all students are entitled to an education which enables them to flourish and meet human potential to the full.

High quality teaching

'Special educational provision is underpinned by high quality teaching and is compromised by anything less' (SEN CoP, 2014)

Students with Education, Health and Care Plans

The school aims to meet the needs of students with a EHCP and makes reasonable adjustments to meet specific individual needs.

SEN Support

We maintain an SEN support register. This register captures the learning support needs of students with special educational needs with and without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Teachers make use of the teaching strategies in Support Plans to inform their planning and teaching. In the main, the support needs of students who require additional learning support are met within a whole class setting. We sometimes provide extra support for students in small groups. All lesson slides are placed on the subject Google Classroom to support SEN students and allow them to revisit content as required either at home or with their assigned LSA.

Provision for EAL

We aim to ensure all EAL students are able to:

- Use English confidently and competently,
- Use English as a means to learning across the curriculum,
- Where appropriate, make use of their knowledge of other languages.

Looked After Children (LAC)

DHT, Mr Jones, is the named member of staff with responsibility for 'Looked After Children' and 'Previously Looked After Children'. This member of staff is responsible for the production and monitoring of the Personal Education Plan (PEP) for these student as well as admission and induction arrangements. They are also the point of contact for all outside agencies and carers. LAC students' progress is monitored through our whole school assessment and tracking arrangements and the responsible named teacher is responsible for adjusting the provision in the case of underperformance and liaises with subject teachers as appropriate. 'Looked After Children' and 'Previously Looked After Children' are provided with additional resources to aid their performance and provided with ICT equipment to help them to maintain connection with their school and so assist them to achieve the expected rate of progress.

Free School Meals and Pupil Premium Grant

Assistant Head Teacher, Ms Carrick-Steele, is identified as responsible for the progress and well-being of all students in this group. They are allocated the resources associated with the pupil premium grant and, in conjunction with the lead member of staff for the curriculum, plan the provision for these students. The named person identifies barriers to the success of individuals and, using the finance available, provides resources to assist the student to make expected progress. This includes the capacity to provide IT equipment if necessary and enables the student to have full access to the curriculum and extended curriculum by funding items such as school visits, uniform, personal equipment and additional resources.

Recovery Premium

The literacy and numeracy Catch-up Premium was used to support our Year 7 students who were working below the age expected standard (100) in reading and/or mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2).

As of September 2020 the Catch Up Premium grant was discontinued. Covid Catch Up funding was introduced in response to the Coronavirus global pandemic. In 2021, this was replaced with a one-off Recovery Premium for schools.

See the school's Pupil Premium Strategy for more information.

Literacy and Numeracy Framework

Literacy provision

Introduction

“Young people who leave school without good literacy skills are held back at every stage of life. Their outcomes are poorer on almost every measure, from health and wellbeing, to employment and finance.

Reading, writing, speaking and listening, are at the heart of every subject in secondary school. Focusing time and resources on improving reading and writing skills will have positive knock-on effects elsewhere, whether that’s being able to break down scientific vocabulary or structure a history essay.

Writing tasks in secondary schools, such as essays, can be as intellectually demanding as playing chess. It should be no surprise that some students can struggle to get to grips with the complex skills expected of them. The practical tips in our report on how teachers can break down these tasks aim to help all students to become more confident writers. “

Education Endowment Fund, June 2019

All teachers are teachers of literacy. We see literacy at RTS in three separate but interlinking strands of reading, writing and oracy, believing that success in these three areas will allow students to unlock their potential. Excellent teaching and teaching of literacy go hand in hand and are tailored to students’ specific needs.

The literacy strategy at RTS draws upon the seven recommendations related to reading, writing, talk, vocabulary development and supporting struggling students in the [EEF Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools Guidance Report](#).

Aims of literacy development at RTS

- Prioritising ‘disciplinary literacy’ subject-specific skills across the curriculum
- Providing targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject to support students’ development of academic language
- Developing students’ ability to read complex academic texts
- Break down complex writing tasks, like essays and evaluations
- Combining writing instruction with reading in every subject
- Providing opportunities for structured talk, like preparing debates or presentations
- Providing high quality literacy interventions for struggling students

Whole School Initiatives

A series of whole school initiatives and events are calendared and run throughout the school year including but not limited to:

- Guided Reading - 110 minutes per cycle (2 x 25 minutes per week in Academic Tutor time plus 1 x 60 minutes per fortnight reading lesson)
- Literacy workshops and events (Poetry Slam competition, Reading for Good, PPG workshops, Inter-House Spelling Bee)
- Accelerated Reader programme
- STAR Reader tests (4 per academic year) to measure progress across each cohort at KS3
- Book tokens as rewards
- Enrichment clubs linked to literacy (Book Club and Debate Club)
- Literacy interventions (additional reading sessions for CUP students, spelling practice for targeted students)
- Feedback strategy

Reading for pleasure

We provide opportunities for students to read widely and for pleasure. The ILZ is stocked with a variety of books, clearly marked with the ZPD level linked to the Accelerated Reader programme and students have access to digital book subscriptions on their iPads as well as their own Richmond library card. The library is open and staffed at break and lunchtime to allow students a quiet space in which to read.

Teaching and Learning expectations

Teachers

All teachers will:

- make a specific contribution to developing students' literacy skills in all subjects
- contribute to students' development of language through oracy, listening, reading and writing
- develop students' vocabulary, expression and organisational control to help them cope with the cognitive demands of all subjects
- encourage reading to help students learn from sources beyond their immediate experience
- use writing to help students to sustain and order thought
- use language to help students to reflect, revise and evaluate the things they do, and the things others have said, written or done
- give students time to respond to higher order questions to encourage the development of thinking skills and enquiry
- give students the opportunity to learn about the art, craft and discipline of writing through extended writing tasks

Departments

All departments will:

- use the marking codes for writing and ensure sufficient DIRT time is allocated in order to address any issues with literacy
- display and use writing frameworks pertinent to their subject
- draw regular attention to key words and vocabulary

Academic Tutors

Pastoral teams will:

- use form time regularly for literacy activities
- use careers talks to address speaking, listening, reading and writing
- use PSHE to facilitate the development of reading and discussion skills

Senior Leaders

Senior Leaders will:

- strategically lead in the development of literacy
- determine the vision and direction for the provision of literacy to ensure students continue to receive high quality literacy teaching across the school
- work with CLs, school leaders and the trust board to monitor and review the implementation of the RTS literacy policy

Curriculum Overviews - English

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
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Literacy Strategy

Please see the school's [common approach to literacy](#) framework

Numeracy Provision

Introduction

'Education should prepare young people for jobs that do not exist, using technologies that have not been invented, to solve problems of which we are not yet aware.' Richard Riley

All teachers are teachers of numeracy. Numeracy at RTS is separated into three separate but interlinking strands:

- Knowledge and application of knowledge
- Reasoning and interpretation of mathematical knowledge
- Problem solving of pure mathematics, and within real life contexts

It is our firm belief that success in these three areas will allow students to unlock their potential. Excellent teaching and teaching of numeracy across the curriculum go hand in hand and are tailored to students' specific needs.

Aims of the Numeracy Statement

- To develop numeracy skills in students which enable them to understand and interpret numerical and graphical information which facilitates improvement in their abilities to make their own judgements and to draw sensible conclusions from information
- To allow students to develop competency in basic numeracy skills which they will draw on in almost all the subjects they study at RTS
- To support students in the development of their numeracy, in turn eradicating anxiety caused by difficulties faced when using mathematics.
- To create an environment which promotes growth mindset, ensuring students embrace their mistakes and see them as an opportunity to develop their numeracy skills
- To develop students' capacity to identify and understand the role that mathematics plays in the world, and to use and engage with mathematics in ways that meets their needs and helps them to become constructive, concerned and reflective citizens

Key Strands: Application of knowledge, reasoning and problem solving

Application of knowledge, reasoning and problem solving have a high profile within each department across the curriculum. The CL of Maths is responsible for raising and maintaining the profile of mathematical literacy around the school and ensuring that both students and staff are aware of any numeracy needs and how to accommodate them. The CL of Maths and senior leaders and where appropriate outside agencies contribute to the schools programmes for continued professional development on numeracy pedagogy and best practice. The CL of Maths works closely with the SENDCo to develop strategies of numeracy transition from KS2 to KS3, as well as close the gap with students who have not met the expected KS2 standard by the time they begin KS3.

Whole School Initiatives

A series of whole school initiatives and events are calendared and run throughout the school year including but not limited to:

- Numeracy workshops and events (Think! Maths Day, UKMT Maths Challenge, STEM, Pi Day)
- Maths matters (Year 9) and Facts quiz (Year 7 and 8)
- Hegarty Maths programme

- Enrichment curriculum linked to numeracy (Chess, Model-making, STEM)
- Numeracy interventions (additional numeracy sessions for CUP students, Core maths skills programmes, including times table practice for targeted students)

Teaching and Learning expectations

Subjects other than mathematics

Subjects other than mathematics can contribute to the development and enhancement of students' numeracy skills.

At RTS, we expect students to:

- have a sense of the size of number
- have a knowledge of basic number facts such as number bonds, times tables, doubles and halves, and recall them rapidly
- use knowledge for mental calculations
- calculate accurately, both mentally and with pencil and paper, and be able to draw on a range of strategies
- use a calculator intelligently
- make sense of number problems and recognise the operations needed to solve them
- know without guidance that their answers are reasonable and have strategies for checking them
- explain their methods and reasoning, using correct terminology
- suggest suitable units for measurement and make sensible estimates of measurement
- explain and make sensible predictions from numerical data in a graph, chart or table

Lessons

Where appropriate, in lessons all students will:

- make correct use of mathematical vocabulary
- present ideas and information they have collected in the form of displays of charts and table
- interpret, describe and explain their work with an understanding of how numeracy skills are involved
- set their work out systematically and with care. Where there are calculations these should always be set out so that the method used is clear. All work should be clearly labelled and have a title which is underlined in accordance with the RTS Way

Teachers

Teachers will:

- have regard for the whole school numeracy policy set out in this document in the planning of their lessons
- use and explain mathematical vocabulary whenever it will enhance students' knowledge, skills and understanding of the topic. The use of such vocabulary by pupils is expected
- give emphasis to mental calculations where it is sensible to do so, while emphasizing the need to write down any mental calculations as part of a written method
- encourage pupils to estimate where appropriate
- choose and use appropriate units of measurement correctly
- explain the steps in the solution to a problem
- discuss and clarify why a particular method of calculation works
- recognise situations and problems in which numeracy skills and understanding can be used across a range of contexts
- Promote numeracy as a life skill which will enable RTS students to become confident citizens of the world, with problem solving skills needed to embrace and engage in society.

Curriculum Leader for Mathematics

The Curriculum Leader of Mathematics will:

- Provide guidance to staff concerning approaches to the use of numeracy skills in their subject
- Conduct a numeracy audit across all subjects and key stages, and develop ways in which staff can increase their teaching of numeracy in different subjects including cross-curricular links and projects
- Run CPD sessions on different aspects of numeracy, specific to the staff bodies' needs
- Develop a set of non-negotiables for the teaching and learning of whole school numeracy
- Ensure that there is consistency across the whole school in its approach to teaching some elements of numeracy
- Develop a programme of weekly (but not limited by age/stage) numeracy activities for completion in form time, which responds to the needs of each individual year group

Senior Leaders

Senior Leaders will:

- strategically lead in the development of numeracy
- determine the vision and direction for the provision of numeracy to ensure students continue to receive high quality numeracy teaching across the school
- work with middle leaders and the trust board to monitor and review the implementation of the RTS numeracy policy

Curriculum Impact

Key Principles for RTS Assessment

Different tests for different purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Summative assessment results are recorded and shared with parents● Formative assessments are not reported but are used to inform next-steps in learning● Summative assessments report attainment as a percentage
Minimum Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Summative assessments measure attainment against our curriculum expectations● Summative assessment is used to assess curriculum knowledge and application● Students are expected to strive for maximum accuracy in summative assessments
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Student-targets are aspirational and drawn from a range of well-established statistical models● RTS 'Stepped Challenge'⁸ ensures all students are stretched from their starting points

Methodology for constructing of assessments

- Assessments spiral, are cumulative and get harder⁹
- Follow a low threat but high ceiling approach
- Students who need extra time (i.e. SEND) are given it

Summative Assessment reliability

Our summative assessments are based on a difficulty model¹⁰ (questions which get harder and harder) and use time as a differentiator. We use external assessments which benchmark our students against other students nationally.¹¹ All assessments are evaluated within and across departments, and are quality assured by SLT.

Curriculum leaders carefully choose externally developed resources which are developed from a pedagogy based on leading education research and provide a consistent teaching and learning experience from 11 to 16.

Target Grade

Target Grades are aspirational and are typically based on FFT 5 (Fischer Family Trust). No student in the school will have a target grade below a grade 4.

Setting Targets

Student-targets are aspirational and drawn from a range of well-established statistical models, including:

- KS2 scaled scores,
- FFT 20 (top 20% of schools) and FFT 5 (top 5% of schools) estimates,
- External baseline assessments in English, Maths and Science,
- Cognitive ability tests (CATs),
- Internal Teacher baseline assessment,
- External baseline reading tests and
- Individual targets are set for all students in all subjects.

⁸ RTS Stepped Challenge is informed by [NRICH's](#) (2011) Low Threshold High Ceiling (LCHT) theory. Low threat high ceiling tasks enable everyone to explore the same concepts at their own level, yet the task also offers lots of possibilities for students to explore the same concepts/questions at much greater depth.

⁹ Students who have studied throughout the term, year, key stage, will be able to complete the early questions quickly and will be able to move onto the more difficult questions later in the assessment/test. Challenge is derived from the time students take to answer sequences of questions. The core questions elicit students' understanding of concepts early in the assessment, while harder material and interleaved concepts are included in later questions. (Barton, C 2018)

¹⁰ In summative assessment, the quality model lends itself to reporting how well students do, while the difficulty model is more appropriate for reporting what they do. The technical concern in the quality model is the reliability of the judges, whereas in the difficulty model it is the internal consistency of the questions. (Ahmed, A and Pollitt A, 2002)

¹¹ GL Assessments - English, Maths and Science. No More Marking - Comparative Judgements - English

- Targets are set when students start
- Targets are regularly reviewed to ensure each student is sufficiently challenged.
- We adopt the expectation that almost all students can and will meet or exceed the TEG at the end of Year 11.
- Attainment marks are collected twice a year (Assessment Point (AP3 and AP6)
- Attitudes to learning ratings are collected 5 times a year (AP2, AP3, AP4, AP5 and AP6)
- Where a student is making progress well above their target grade, this is revised.

External benchmarking

We use scores from GL Assessment (Progress Tests) and Star Reader to inform summative assessments.

Monitoring student progress

- We track and monitor progress over time. Students' current attainment and targets inform the basis of learning conversations between staff, students and parents/carers.
- Summative assessment is reported to parents via the school MIS¹².

Internal progress tracking procedures

Internal student tracking procedures following assessment points 3, 5 and 6 (for academic attainment and progress) and assessment points 2, 3, 4 and 6 (for attitudes to learning)

Staff	Strategy and evidence	Additional Tools / evidence
Tutors	Form time dedicated to reflection of performance (against target for KS4 students)	Student Profile
Subject teachers	Participate in moderation with CL and dept staff Implement strategies through Quality First teaching as defined in the HoY and CL AP reports	Stepped challenge / LSA support for attached SEND students
HoY	Create HoY AP report Implement HoY AP Report next steps	
CLs	Oversee data entry by dept staff into Arbor Moderate (consistency, omissions, errors). the data entry for their subject Create subject AP report Monitor ML AP Report next steps Implement interventions Quality assure classes based on class level analysis Oversee report to parents and carers	Arbor Student Story 4 - Matrix SLT AP report Line management meeting Subject report / dept development time minutes Communication with home logged on Arbor
SENCO	Oversee Access Arrangements Create SEND AP report Review current provisions for underperforming students Update IEPs as necessary	SEND report

¹² Management Information System

SLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create assessment Calendar ● On Arbor set up the data entry ● Monitor data entry on Arbor ● Data in Student Story and 4Matrix <p>SLT AP Report: SLT analyse the data to determine the headlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attendance ● Academic ● AtL <p>Curriculum Leader conference - informed by SLT Headlines Monitor Middle Leader AP Report next steps Collate and monitor bottom 10% Quality assure classes based on class level analysis Oversee report to parents and carers</p>	Student Story 4-Matrix AP reports Line management meeting minutes
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Health Checks

In Year 7 - 11 all students have three (AP2, AP4 and AP5) *Health Check* reviews.

In the Autumn term there is an Academic Tutor and Parent Consultation evening where the following attributes are discussed and reviewed:

Attendance	96% attendance is our expectation
Merits	Attitudes to learning
Demerits	
Conduct	Total merits minus demerits

Summative Assessment Review

1. AP3, AP5 (Yr 10 only) and AP6 follow the style of assessment at GCSE in the given subject.
2. Assessment papers and mark schemes are moderated jointly by SLT and Curriculum Leaders (CLs). Adjustments are made where required.
3. After assessments are taken, they are marked and moderated within and across subject departments and schools.¹³
4. Raw marks from summative assessments are recorded in our MIS as a percentage.
5. SLT monitor question-level records and mark schemes for AP3, AP5 (Yr 10 only) and AP6.
6. At AP5, SLT hold formal meetings with CLs and identified HoYs to discuss the progress made by students since AP3 and to identify students who require further intervention.
7. CLs monitor and maintain question-level assessment records.
8. Disadvantaged students whose progress is a cause for concern are monitored by SLT members with responsibility for PPG, SEND and LAC.
9. SEND students whose progress is a cause for concern are monitored by the SENDCO

Measuring Attainment at KS3

- At AP3 and AP6 we assess students' knowledge and application of what has been taught.
- Our motto - Excellence Through Endeavour - captures our belief that all students can learn and get better at any subject through deliberate practice, spaced repetition and acting on timely feedback.

¹³ We collaborate with local schools and wider to review curriculum content (scheme of learning), summative assessments and extended writing.

- Marks in the 50–70% range are normal.
- Marks will improve as students get used to working at secondary level, and in the style required by different subjects.

Measuring Attainment at KS4

- At AP3, AP5 and AP6 we assess students’ knowledge and application of what has been taught
- Assessments at KS4 are high stakes and therefore a high percentage score equates to a large amount of retained knowledge
- All assessments must be cumulative and test content that has been previously taught in order to prepare students for the rigours of GCSE
- Marks in the 50–70% range are normal and indicate that the student is on track to achieve their TEG (target expected grade)
- Assessments at AP3, AP5 and AP6 will follow the style of GCSE examinations and will be sat by students under exam conditions
- Provision will be made for students who require access arrangements
- Assessments must be designed so they are robust and rigorously measure how much of the curriculum has been retained by students
- Controlled assessments will follow the same percentage model when completed as a mock or part of our assessment cycle
- All formative (i.e. end of module or end of Scheme of Work tests) and summative assessment marks must be recorded on our MIS (Arbor)
- TEGs are set at FFT5

RTS Attainment Benchmarks

Mark (as a percentage)	Knowledge and Application
29 and below	Demonstrates basic and limited knowledge
30-49	Is beginning to understand and retain knowledge
50-59	Has demonstrated a deeper knowledge of the subject
60-70	Demonstrates depth in a range of contexts
71-89	Demonstrates sophisticated application of knowledge
90- 100	Exceptional depth and flair

Students causing a concern

- An average attainment mark of below 50 percent is below our minimum expectation and may be a cause for concern (depending on their target grade)
- When a student’s attainment is recorded as being a concern in any subject , the classroom teacher, supported by the Curriculum Leader, is responsible for identifying and addressing gaps in the student’s learning.
- Attitudes to learning are closely monitored by the Academic Tutor and Head of Year.

Formative Assessment

At RTS formative assessment is ongoing and involves the teacher and student working together to improve the learning that takes place. It will include:

- sharing the learning objective (and sometimes the intended learning outcome) with the student
- high quality feedback from teachers and other students (peers)
- ongoing review and reflection of progress being made

AT RTS day to day formative assessment informs teacher planning and identification of future targets for individual



students and groups. We adopt the approach - Assess, Plan, Teach, Review

Our internal baseline data provide teachers with a 'snapshot' of information about a student's raw performance in a subject, and supports planning individual or group interventions. We use prior achievement in Key Stage 2 to set the minimum expectations (MEG) for student progress. All students are set aspirational targets (target expected grade – TEG).

Quizzing

At RTS we take advantage of the benefits of quizzing. Established academic research reinforces the benefits of using quizzes as a means of empowering student learning. Some of the benefits include: instant feedback, assisting reinforcement of correct understanding and elimination of fundamental errors at an early stage in learning. All students at RTS benefit from electronic quizzes to assist in their development of key subject knowledge and skills.

Stepped Challenge

All students at RTS are challenged from their starting point and our intention is for all students to make progress no matter what their level on entry to RTS. Students are provided with different levels of challenges in lessons, and have a degree of autonomy in choosing which activity is best suited to ensure maximum progress.

Marking and feedback

Marking of students' work should:


- inform teacher planning and evaluation of teaching,
- inform students, their teachers and parents of their progress,
- highlight areas for development or improvement,
- monitor progress towards the achievement of targets,
- identify students who require additional support,
- reward achievement,
- teach students to reflect on their work, evaluate their own achievement and challenge them to work independently.

Marking codes for writing

It is not beneficial to students to mark/correct every punctuation, grammatical and spelling error in every piece of writing. Some subjects may correct spellings that are subject specific rather than all spelling errors, and in some situations, it may be necessary to write the correct version for the student. Where a student has misspelt a word, they must copy the word out correctly three times using a green pen.

Remember, when there are too many improvements on a piece of work, the feedback can become less productive.

Margin Mark	Meaning
//	New paragraph needed
S	No paragraph needed
^	Something missed out
Sp	Spelling mistake
C	Change to/from a capital letter
?	Doesn't make sense
X	Wrong
✓	Good point

✓ ✓	Very good point
Gr	Grammatical error
	Expression, Rephrase
0	Missing punctuation

Crib Sheet Feedback

Teachers in relevant subjects will mark an extended piece of writing at least every three weeks using the crib sheet method (refer to crib sheet marking guidance). This can be a piece of classwork or homework. Feedback is then given to the whole class and the students identify their errors using the crib sheet and then redraft their work using green pen. Teachers should plan sufficient DIRT time in order for the feedback and redrafting to be effective. Teachers should then sign and date the redrafted work to acknowledge the progress made. The crib sheet method can be used in combination with other methods.

Self Assessment: “Look Sir/Miss I have...”

Students will self and peer assess work using the “Look Sir/Miss I have...” method. They work to a set of criteria given to them by the teacher and identify where these items appear in the work using highlighter pens and a key. They then write what they have included by stating “Look Sir/Miss I have...” and set themselves a target to improve their work.

Monitoring, evaluation and review of Curriculum intent, implementation and impact

The Trust Board receives an annual report from the Head Teacher on:

- the standards reached in each subject compared with national (and local) benchmarks.
- the standards achieved at the end of each key stage taking into account any important variations between groups of students, subjects, courses and trends over time, compared with national and local benchmarks.
- the number of students for whom the curriculum was disapplied and the arrangements which were made.

The Trust Board will review this policy at least once a year and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Appendix 1 - Assessment Calendar

	YEAR 7	YEAR 8	YEAR 9	YEAR 10	YEAR 11
AP1 Term 1	Baseline Tests				Benchmarking Assessments Science Paper 1 Mock examination
AP2 Term 1	Health Check A2L Analysis SLT/YL Parent/Tutor Meeting	Health Check A2L Analysis SLT/YL Parent/Tutor Meeting	Health Check A2L Analysis SLT/YL Parent/Tutor Meeting	Health Check A2L Analysis SLT/YL Parent/Tutor Meeting Parents' Subject Evening	Health Check A2L Analysis SLT/YL Parent/Tutor Meeting Parents' Subject Evening 1
AP3 Term 2	Summative Assessment Teachers ----- Report to Parents AP3 -----	Summative Assessment Teachers ----- Report to Parents AP3 -----	Summative Assessment Teachers ----- Report to Parents AP3 -----	Summative Assessment Teachers ----- Report to Parents AP3 -----	
AP3 (Yr 11) AP4 Term 3	Health Check A2L Analysis SLT/YL	Health Check A2L Analysis SLT/YL	Health Check A2L Analysis SLT/YL	Health Check A2L Analysis SLT/YL	Summative Assessment GCSE mock examinations Teachers ----- Report to Parents AP3 Parents' Subject Evening 2
AP5 Term 4	Health Check A2L Analysis SLT/YL ----- CL Progress Teacher Concerns Reports to SLT -----	Health Check A2L Analysis SLT/YL ----- CL Progress Teacher Concerns Reports to SLT -----	Health Check A2L Analysis SLT/YL ----- CL Progress Teacher Concerns Reports to SLT ----- Parents' Subject Evening	Summative Assessment Teachers ----- Report to Parents AP5 -----	Health Check A2L Analysis SLT/YL -----
AP6 Term 5	----- Parents' Subject Evening	----- Parents' Subject Evening	Summative Assessment Teachers -----	Summative Assessment Teachers -----	GCSE Public examinations begin
AP6 Term 6	Summative Assessment Teachers ----- Report to Parents AP6	Summative Assessment Teachers ----- Report to Parents AP6	----- Report to Parents AP6	----- Report to Parents AP6	

Appendix 2 - Teaching Group Rationale

Ethos and Vision

At RTS we firmly believe in social justice for all our students. We believe every member of our community should have the same opportunities to excel, and be given the same rights and freedom to become the best version of themselves.

We want all members of our community to feel that they can say “I belong” in our school and we do not cap or limit potential or choice both within the formal curriculum and outside it through our enrichment programme and other student leadership opportunities.

Challenge for All

At RTS we do not see challenge as an additional, add-on activity which is only offered to those who finish quickly. With this in mind we encompass a “challenge for all” approach in all areas of the curriculum. Students are given a variety of challenge tasks to access and are directed to the most appropriate one. Over time, students develop skills to help them to choose the most appropriate task depending on the stage of their learning journey. They are usually very good at choosing wisely and avoid picking the easy option, but the teacher is always there to guide them to the most appropriate option.

This strategy allows all students to access different levels of challenge and does not limit student potential by categorising or labelling students according to their prior attainment.

Teaching groups

At RTS our approach is based on evidence conducted by the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) which led studies into the benefits of mixed ability teaching versus setting/streaming. The research found that mixed ability groups are more beneficial (+3 months progress) compared to setting which had a detrimental effect on progress (-1 month).

Mixed ability

Teaching in mixed ability groups means that there are a range of abilities within the class group. Groups are formed by taking student demographics into account in order to ensure that all students are represented within the class (gender, SEND, Pupil Premium, Free School Meals, ethnicity etc)

At RTS students are taught in mixed ability groups in Years 7 and 8. In Year 9 all students are taught in mixed ability groups apart from mathematics.

Setting

Setting usually involves grouping students in a given year group into classes for specific subjects, such as English and mathematics, but not across the whole curriculum. The groups are based on prior attainment (usually KS2 SATs).

At RTS we set students in mathematics from Year 9

Streaming

Streaming usually involved grouping students into classes for all or most of their lessons so that a student is in the same group regardless of the subject being taught. The groups are based on prior attainment (usually KS2 SATs)

We do not do this at RTS

Vertical Groups

Grouping children of various ages together, often for enrichment activities or project work

Teaching groups at KS3

Year 7	All students taught in mixed ability groups
Year 8	All students taught in mixed ability groups
Year 9	Students are set in mathematics; all other subjects are taught in mixed ability groups
Enrichment	Vertical groups (students participate in mixed year groups)

Our rationale for mixed ability classes in Years 7, 8 and 9 are as follows:

- All students study the same curriculum.
 - This means progress is not restricted for some by the offer of a less demanding curriculum.
 - Student potential is not capped by students not being taught some of the content necessary for high attainment
- Our flexible approach means that all students are exposed to different levels of challenge and can aspire to tackle more challenging tasks rather than being assigned a task which labels them as being in a particular attainment group
- There is evidence to suggest that setting students according to prior attainment can have a detrimental effect on some students who may see themselves as inferior to their peers
- Being in a mixed ability class can have a positive impact on students' confidence and self-worth

Teaching groups at KS4

English	Students are taught in mixed ability groups
Mathematics	Students are set in ability groups.
	Decisions around whether students are entered for Foundation or Higher tier are made in the spring term of Year 11
Science	Students follow either the trilogy (combined science) pathway or opt to study triple science
	Decisions around whether students are entered for Foundation or Higher tier are made in the spring term of Year 11
Modern Foreign Languages	Students are taught in mixed ability groups
	Decisions around whether students are entered for Foundation or Higher tier are made in

	the spring term of Year 11
Humanities (Geog/History)	Students are taught in mixed ability groups
Option Subjects	Students are taught in mixed ability groups

- Only 3 subjects have Foundation and Higher tiers (mathematics, science and modern foreign languages). Decisions around which tier to enter students for in Year 11 are based around attainment over the GCSE course and the students' target grades

Appendix 4 - Remote Education Policy

[Remote Education Policy](#)

Appendix 5 - Glossary of terms

Knowledge	Refers to learning concepts, principles and information through a variety of sources
Application	Refers to the ability to apply this knowledge in different contexts
GL TESTS	The largest independent provider of educational assessments
CATs	Cognitive Ability Tests
NGST	New Group Spelling Test
NGRT	New Group Reading Test
Benchmarking	Measurement of student ability against national standards

Appendix 5 - RTS Assessment FAQs

Why don't you use flight-paths?

Flight paths in secondary are unreliable and demotivating for pupils. When predictions are made about individual students' performance, these predictions can become self-fulfilling. If students (or teachers) believe that they can not do better than a Grade 4, many will stop trying. Why would we ever want to convince anyone that our students are less capable than they might be? (Didau, D, 2019)

Therefore, we do not believe flight-paths can reliably help teachers make predictions about how far/close students are from a GCSE estimate. Tests which assess narrow domains of knowledge (Christodoulou, 2017), for example, what has been taught in 12 weeks is not a reliable measure for judging whether a student is achieving the equivalent of a GCSE grade. Similarly, we have not 'made-up' our own grading/level system for use in KS3 to measure progress against Year 11 estimate grades as we do not have the evidence that this method is reliable.

Why aren't you measuring progress?

Our summative (internal) tests assess how much of our curriculum has been learnt (committed to long term memory). They seek to elicit what student 'can' do or know. This information then informs next steps in teaching (see responsive teaching, Fletcher-Wood, 2018) students what they do not know yet or cannot do.

AP3 is a summative assessment.

- The AP3 in Year 7 revisits previously learned concepts, e.g in Year 6 but focuses primarily on the first 10 weeks of teaching.
- The information gleaned is used formatively, by teachers to inform planning and teaching, and informs school leaders how students are performing in relation to students:
 - in the same class/year,
 - with similar prior attainment and
 - with the same demographic.

Evidence suggests that '1 in 10 students' make linear progress between key stages, and there are many pathways which contribute to positive progress¹⁴.

Why don't you give students and parents their estimated targets at KS3?

Based on the feedback we've received from our parents, most of them want to know: Is my child:

- 1) Happy and safe,
- 2) How are they getting on in relation to the other students in the same class, and
- 3) Are they working hard?

Students want to know their strengths, areas for develop and what they need to do to improve.

Why do all students sit the same assessment?

Each subject teaches one curriculum so we have one assessment.

At GCSE, at the time of writing, Mathematics, Modern Foreign Languages and Science have the same curriculum and higher and foundation tiers at examination. As our curriculum builds from KS2 and prepares for KS4 there is no place for tiered examinations until decision are made about which tier a student will sit.¹⁵

How can we be confident that the students at RTS are where they should be in relation to their starting points?

Our KS3 curriculum:

- is informed and shaped by the National Curriculum (NC),

¹⁴ Treadaway, M. Education Datalab, [2015](#)

¹⁵ Decisions about tiers will not be made in Years 7, 8 or 9

- it builds on KS2 NC to prepare students for KS4
- It does not work backwards from GCSE or A-Level.

We use both internally developed and external published resources which are developed from pedagogy based on education research and provide a consistent teaching and learning experience from 11 to 16.

Senior and Middle Leaders collaborate with local schools to share resources.

Baseline assessment and KS2 prior attainment are used judiciously to inform RTS Stepped Challenge starting points in the classroom.

At KS4:

- Our curriculum at KS4 follows the relevant exam syllabus
- It builds on KS3
- It builds towards A level or vocational study at KS5
- *See Monitoring Student Progress p21 onwards above for further details*

How can you ensure that our mixed ability groups provide sufficient challenge for high prior attainment (HPA) and sufficient support for low prior attainment (LAP)?

The Education Endowment Fund's 2018 research suggests the practice of setting or streaming— where students with similar levels of current attainment are grouped together for lessons – is not an effective way to raise attainment for most students.

RTS has developed an approach we call 'Stepped Challenge' which is informed by NRICH's (2011) Low Threshold High Ceiling (LCHT) theory. Low threat high ceiling tasks enable everyone to explore the same concepts at their own level, yet the task also offers lots of possibilities for students to explore the same concepts/questions at much greater depth.

Why are you assessing knowledge and not assessing skills?

We do not see knowledge and skills or application of knowledge as unconnected or unimportant in the learning process. For example, excessive exam preparation is not the same as teaching a knowledge based curriculum; in fact, it is almost the opposite. Exams rightly focus on complex skills and tasks, but these complex skills depend on a hidden body of knowledge.¹⁶

Why don't you use GCSE grading (1-9) at KS3?

In Years 7, 8, 9 we are teaching our own curriculum, albeit largely informed by the KS3 NC, it is also local and influenced by our school's vision and ethos. We cannot assign GCSE grades to our assessments as they would be meaningless as we are not teaching GCSEs in Years 7-9.

Why don't you use age-related grades?

We have decided that the use of age-related grades would not assist us in enhancing students' knowledge and application of skills. Our APs:

- provide information on how much of our curriculum has been learnt,
- help teachers to address gaps in students' learning,
- contribute to our self evaluation of the strategies/activities we are using to teach new concepts.

Why do you do 2 formal assessments each year at KS3? Isn't one enough?

Our two summative APs provide students, parents, teachers and leaders with different information.

AP3 is used formatively and reports on a narrow domain of learning (10 weeks).

AP6 in Years 7, 8 and 9 is used to benchmark how much of the curriculum taught overtime has been learnt. At the start of the following year, the results are used:

¹⁶ Making Good Progress. Christodoulou, 2017

- to adapt teaching at whole department level (schemes of work) and students (question level analysis [QLA]),
- measure the implementation and impact of our curriculum and
- Inform overall improvements.