

Teaching and Learning Policy

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Contents Page

Section Title	Page Number
1.0 High Quality Learning at YAA	3
2.0 Aims	3
3.0 Key Principles	3
3.1 Create a Positive Climate	4
3.2 Plan for All	4
3.3 Build Knowledge	4
3.4 Assess Everyone's Learning	5
3.5 Promote Independent Practice	5
3.6 Provide Constructive Feedback	6
4.0 Learning Support and Inclusion	7
5.0 Raising Attainment, Monitoring and Evaluating	7
6.0 Monitor, Evaluation and Review (MER)	7
6.1 Lesson observations	7
6.2 Learning Walks	8
6.3 Book Looks	8
6.4 Assessment	
7.0 Continuing Professional Development	9

High-Quality Learning at YAA

1.0 Introduction

Current educational research emphasizes the need for a holistic approach to teaching and learning that nurtures confident, knowledgeable, and passionate learners. This approach is key to fostering the skills and attitudes necessary for students to actively engage in a diverse and sustainable global society. Research by Hattie (2009), Sweller (2011), and Black and Wiliam (1998) highlights the importance of creating positive learning environments, building on students' prior knowledge, promoting independent practice, and providing effective feedback. This policy is designed to guide the implementation of these evidence-based principles, supporting our mission to develop well-rounded individuals ready to make meaningful contributions to the world.

2.0 Aims

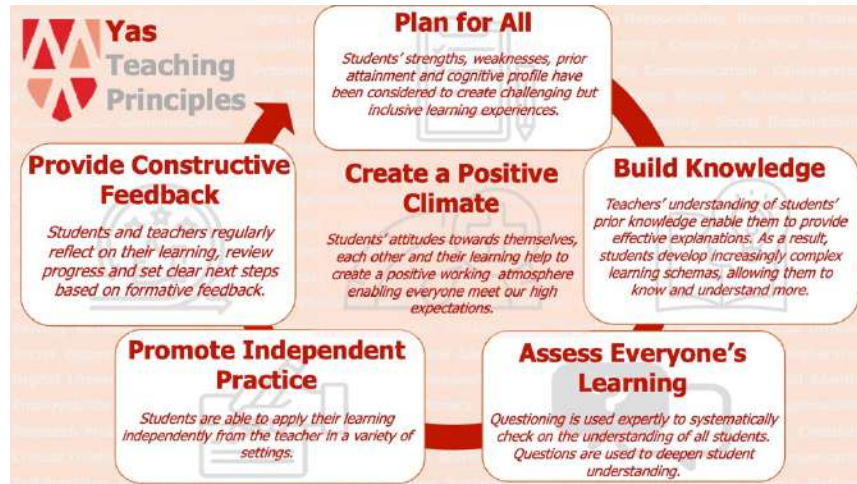
- To provide a consistent and structured learning environment that promotes inclusivity, engagement, and academic excellence.
- To implement teaching practices that address diverse learning needs, ensuring every student progresses and thrives.
- To use a shared language of learning that nurtures students' holistic development, equipping them to contribute thoughtfully and effectively to society.
- To engage in ongoing professional development, enhancing teaching practices in alignment with our mission to cultivate confident, skilled, and passionate learners.

3.0 Key Principles

Our non-negotiable areas of teaching and learning that teachers must include within all lessons are rooted in Rosenshine's Principals and use the acronym of SOAP;

- Starter Activities/ 'Do Now' Tasks (ideally retrieval practice)
- Objectives and success criteria
- Adaptive Teaching opportunities (gradual release)
- Progress Assessment

The teaching principles at YAA reflect our commitment to nurturing learners who are prepared to engage with and contribute to a diverse global community. Each principle plays a part in shaping the confident, knowledgeable, and passionate individuals our mission seeks to develop.



3.1 Create a Positive Climate *Summary Statement:* "Students' attitudes towards themselves, each other and their learning help to create a positive working atmosphere, enabling everyone to meet our high expectations."

A positive learning climate creates the conditions in which all students can learn successfully. Through respectful relationships, clear routines, consistent expectations and positive interactions, students feel safe, valued and ready to learn. This supports engagement, resilience and a willingness to contribute, collaborate and take appropriate risks in their learning.

- **Core Practices:**

- *Positive Framing:* Teachers reinforce expectations through positive, clear and constructive language, focusing students on the behaviours and actions that support successful learning. Positive interactions, recognition and consistent expectations help create a respectful and purposeful classroom culture.
- *Meet and Greet:* Teachers welcome students at the start of lessons, establishing positive relationships and reinforcing expectations before learning begins. This provides an opportunity to build connections, create a sense of belonging and ensure students enter the classroom ready to learn.
- *Start Strong:* Lessons begin promptly with clear routines a 'do now' task and purposeful learning. Students know what is expected of them and engage quickly in an appropriate task, maximising learning time and establishing high expectations from the outset.

3.2 Plan for All *Summary Statement:* "Students' strengths, areas for development, prior attainment and individual learning profiles are considered to create challenging and inclusive learning experiences."

Effective planning begins with knowing the students and understanding their starting points. Teachers use prior attainment, assessment information and knowledge of their

students to anticipate misconceptions, barriers and different levels of readiness. Learning is planned to maintain high expectations while providing appropriate levels of support and challenge, enabling all students to make progress towards ambitious learning goals.

- **Core Practices:**

- *Begin with the End:* Teachers identify what students should know, understand or be able to do by the end of the learning and plan backwards from these intended outcomes. Learning activities and assessment are aligned with the intended outcomes and relevant curriculum standards, so that students understand what they are learning, why it matters and how success will be demonstrated.
- *Seating Plans:* Seating is planned purposefully using teachers' knowledge of their students and relevant information about learning needs, attainment and classroom dynamics. Seating arrangements should support participation, access to learning, appropriate challenge, effective teacher support and positive collaboration. Seating plans are reviewed and adapted where necessary.
- *Tiered Questions and Problems:* Teachers plan questions and problems that provide appropriate challenge and stretch thinking for all students. Cold calling/hands-down questioning is used alongside other questioning strategies to ensure participation is not limited to volunteers and to enable teachers to check understanding across the class. Questions should progress from checking core knowledge and understanding towards deeper thinking, explanation, application and problem-solving.

3.3 Build Knowledge Summary Statement: "Teachers' understanding of students' prior knowledge enables them to provide effective explanations. As a result, students develop increasingly complex learning schemas, allowing them to know and understand more."

Learning is cumulative. New knowledge is more readily understood and retained when it connects to what students already know. Teachers therefore identify and activate relevant prior knowledge, present new learning in manageable steps, provide clear explanations and models, and deliberately develop the vocabulary students need to understand increasingly complex ideas.

- **Core Practices:**

- *I Do, We Do, You Do Modelling:* Teachers explicitly model new knowledge, skills and processes, breaking complex learning into manageable steps and making their thinking visible. Responsibility is gradually transferred from teacher modelling, through guided practice, to increasingly independent application as students become more secure.

- *Activate Prior Knowledge:* Teachers use purposeful retrieval to activate the knowledge students need for new learning and identify gaps or misconceptions that may prevent them from accessing new content. Where gaps are identified, teachers address these before or alongside new learning.
- *Deliberate Vocabulary Development:* Teachers explicitly teach and regularly revisit the vocabulary students need to understand and communicate subject knowledge confidently. Pre-teaching key Tier 3 (subject-specific) vocabulary can be particularly helpful for students with SEN and EAL, reducing barriers before they encounter new or complex content. Students should have repeated opportunities to hear, read, use and apply key vocabulary accurately and in context.

3.4 Promote Independent Practice *Summary Statement:* "Students are able to apply their learning increasingly independently from the teacher across a range of contexts."

Independent practice enables students to apply and strengthen what they have learned with decreasing reliance on teacher support. Teachers ensure students have sufficient knowledge and understanding before moving towards independent application, with scaffolds gradually removed as students become more secure. Over time, students should be able to apply their knowledge and skills accurately, confidently and in increasingly unfamiliar or challenging contexts.

- **Core Practices:**

- *Set the Standards:* Teachers make clear what successful learning looks like through explicit success criteria, modelling and the use of exemplars where appropriate. Students are supported to understand the features of high-quality work so they can evaluate and improve their own performance.
- *Scaffolding:* Teachers provide purposeful support to enable students to access appropriately challenging learning. Scaffolds may include modelling, worked examples, prompts, sentence starters, knowledge organisers or structured steps. Support should be matched to student need and gradually removed when students are ready, promoting increasing independence while maintaining high expectations.
- *Independent Practice:* Once students have developed sufficient understanding through modelling and guided practice, they are given purposeful opportunities to apply their learning with reduced teacher support. Teachers check the accuracy and quality of independent practice, provide feedback where necessary and progressively increase challenge so that students can transfer their learning to new and unfamiliar contexts.

3.5 Assess Everyone's Learning *Summary Statement:* "Questioning is used expertly to systematically check on the understanding of all students. Questions are used to deepen student understanding."

Effective assessment is about understanding where students are in their learning journey and guiding them forward. Through thoughtful questioning and feedback, we help students reflect on their progress, think more deeply, and take their learning to the next level.

- **Core Practices:**

- *Think-Pair-Share:* Encouraging students to discuss and share their thoughts helps them learn from each other, develop their ideas, and build communication skills that are valuable in any collaborative setting.
- *No Opt-Out:* Ensuring that every student has the opportunity to contribute reinforces the idea that every voice matters, fostering a learning environment where students feel empowered to participate.
- *Show Me Boards:* Instant feedback allows us to address misunderstandings quickly, ensuring that all students are on the right track and reinforcing their confidence in their abilities.
- *Peel Away and Respond:* Use evidence from retrieval tasks, diagnostic questions, hinge questions and checks for understanding to identify different starting points and respond accordingly. Students who demonstrate secure understanding can 'peel away' into independent practice or greater challenge, while the teacher works directly with a smaller group requiring further explanation, modelling or guided practice. As understanding develops, further students can move into independent work, while the teacher circulates, regroups and intervenes where needed. Extension and deeper application should be available so that students who are ready can continue to progress.

3.6 Provide Feedback to Advance Learning

"To support student learning, effective feedback should be descriptive, constructive, timely and specific." — OECD

Effective feedback should lead to action and improvement. Feedback helps students understand what they have done well, identify misconceptions or areas for development, and know what they need to do next. Students should be given appropriate opportunities to respond to feedback and demonstrate improvement, supporting them to become increasingly reflective, independent and responsible for their own learning.

- **Core Practices:**

- *Feedback as an Action:* Feedback should lead to a meaningful student response. This may include redrafting or redoing work, correcting misconceptions, rehearsing or repeating learning, responding to further questions, or relearning and reassessing. Teachers should provide appropriate time for students to act on feedback and check that it has resulted in improved understanding or performance.
- *Feed Forward:* Feedback should provide clear, specific and actionable next steps that help students improve future performance. Feedback should prioritise the most

important area for improvement and provide sufficient guidance while maintaining student thinking, responsibility and independence.

- *Purple for Progress:* Students are given dedicated opportunities to respond to feedback and improve their work, using purple pen in written subjects where appropriate. The focus is not simply on showing that feedback has been received, but on demonstrating that students understand the feedback and can use it to improve the quality of their work or learning.

4.0 Learning Support and Inclusion

Teachers should know and understand the specific learning needs of the pupils they teach and ensure that these needs are reflected in lesson planning, teaching and assessment.

Teachers should:

- Be familiar with the IEP goals and agreed learning targets of pupils in their classes and be able to comment on their progress towards achieving them.
- Be able to explain how lesson objectives, activities and success criteria support pupils in making progress towards their IEP goals and relevant curriculum standards.
- Plan and implement appropriate scaffolds, strategies and interventions that enable pupils to access learning and make progress towards the intended outcomes.
- Make appropriate curriculum modifications where required, while maintaining high expectations and ensuring pupils continue to work towards relevant standards.
- Ensure that assessment is accessible and appropriately modified where required, in line with the pupil's identified needs and agreed access arrangements.
- Use assessment and observation to monitor progress, evaluate the effectiveness of support and adjust teaching or intervention where necessary.
- Work effectively with Classroom Assistants (CAs), Inclusion Teachers and other adults, ensuring that support is purposeful and promotes pupil independence.
- Consult with parents, the Head of Inclusion, Inclusion Teachers and relevant outside agencies when appropriate to ensure a consistent approach to supporting the pupil.

5.0 Raising Attainment, Monitoring, and Evaluating

At YAA we;

- Use formative and summative assessments to monitor student progress, ensuring that all students are moving towards achieving their full potential.
- Regularly review student data to identify strengths and areas for improvement, using this information to guide instruction and provide individualized support.

- Engage students in self-assessment and peer assessment to promote reflection, encouraging them to take ownership of their learning and develop as reflective, self-aware individuals.

6.0 Monitor, Evaluation, and Review (MER).

- A well-established cycle of monitoring, evaluation, and review is used to ensure the effectiveness of our teaching and learning policy, continually refining our approach to meet the evolving needs of our students.
- Feedback is gathered from students, teachers, and parents to assess the impact of our teaching practices, using this input to make informed, data-driven decisions.
- Lesson observations, learning walks, Assessment data, book moderations to evaluate progress, adjusting [as necessary to enhance student outcomes and maintain alignment with our mission.

6.1 Lesson Observations

At YAA we;

- Conduct regular lesson observations (at least three per year) to evaluate the quality and impact of teaching and learning and ensure practice aligns with our key principles and school priorities.
- Consider the impact of teaching on student learning, engagement, progress and achievement, rather than focusing solely on teacher actions.
- Evaluate how effectively teaching meets the needs of all learners, including the level of challenge, support, scaffolding and adaptation provided for different starting points and identified learning needs.
- Consider how effectively teachers use assessment for learning to check understanding, identify misconceptions and adapt teaching in response.
- Use lesson observations to evaluate progress against school and department priorities, as well as individual performance management objectives where appropriate.
- Provide constructive, developmental feedback that identifies strengths, areas for development and clear next steps for improving teaching and learning.
- Use observations to identify individual, department and whole-school professional development needs and support continuous improvement in teaching practice.
- Provide timely formative feedback following lesson observations, with feedback and agreed actions recorded on BlueSky.
- Where appropriate, use subsequent observations, learning walks or professional dialogue to review progress against agreed areas for development and performance management objectives.

6.2 Learning Walks

At YAA we;

- Carry out regular learning walks across all phases to gain short, focused snapshots of student learning and classroom practice and evaluate consistency in the implementation of our teaching and learning principles.
- Make the purpose and focus of learning walks clear through the MER Schedule, linking them to identified school and department priorities.
- Focus primarily on the student experience, including engagement, challenge, progress, inclusion, classroom routines and students' understanding of what they are learning.
- Include student voice and the review of students' work, where appropriate, to evaluate their understanding of what they are learning, how they know they are successful, the support available when they experience difficulty, and the progress they are making over time.
- Use learning walks to monitor progress against school and department priorities and identify patterns, strengths and areas for development across subjects, phases and the wider school.
- Gather evidence on the effectiveness of teaching strategies and learning environments to inform future planning, professional development and the sharing of effective practice.
- Use findings to support professional development and promote greater consistency in high-quality teaching and learning across the school.
- Record learning walks and relevant feedback on BlueSky, in line with the school's monitoring and evaluation processes.

6. 3 Book Looks (Peer, Head of Department, SLT)

Book looks support high standards of teaching, assessment, feedback and student progress across the school. Conducted by peers, Heads of Department (HoDs) and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) against a shared rubric, they provide evidence of the quality and consistency of learning over time.

Book looks should demonstrate alignment with the school's Assessment Policy and Marking and Feedback Policy, as well as agreed curriculum expectations and school and department priorities.

- **Peer Moderation:** Teachers regularly review students' work and each other's marking and feedback during departmental meetings. Reviews consider student progress over time, curriculum alignment, the quality and impact of feedback, assessment practice and how effectively the needs of different learners are being met. Findings and examples of effective practice are shared within departments.
- **HoD Moderation:** Once per unit, HoDs lead formal moderation to evaluate consistency and quality across the department. Feedback is shared with teachers to identify strengths, areas for development and examples of effective practice. Where appropriate, moderation is carried out alongside other Heads of Department to support consistency across the school.

- **SLT Moderation:** SLT conducts ongoing school-wide book looks to evaluate the quality and consistency of teaching, learning, assessment and feedback. These reviews consider alignment with the Assessment Policy, Marking and Feedback Policy, curriculum expectations and identified whole-school priorities.

The moderation rubric considers the quality and presentation of student work; curriculum coverage and alignment; the regularity and quality of marking and feedback; students' responses to feedback; the impact of feedback on subsequent learning and progress; the quality and use of assessment; appropriate levels of challenge, scaffolding and adaptation; and evidence of progress over time.

Book looks should also consider whether assessment and feedback are being used to identify gaps in knowledge and understanding and whether these are addressed through subsequent teaching, intervention or support.

Findings from book looks are used to identify strengths and areas for development in curriculum implementation, assessment and feedback, and to support consistency and the sharing of effective practice across departments and the school.

6.4 Monitoring of Assessment Data

Regular monitoring and analysis of assessment data, including MAP and internal assessments, is used to evaluate student attainment and progress and identify where additional support, challenge or intervention may be required.

Pupil progress meetings between teachers and Heads of Department (HoDs) are held at calendared points throughout the year to review student performance, identify learning gaps and groups or individuals requiring additional support or challenge, and agree appropriate actions. Teachers are expected to use this information to adapt subsequent teaching, intervention and support.

HoDs present department data during calendared reviews, enabling leaders to identify trends, evaluate progress against department and school priorities, and determine areas requiring further action. Department action plans are informed by assessment evidence, teacher feedback and student performance.

Actions and interventions identified through pupil progress and data reviews are monitored and reviewed to evaluate their impact on student progress and determine whether further support or adjustment is required.

7.0 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Effective implementation of the Teaching and Learning Policy is supported through a sustained programme of professional development, coaching, collaboration and quality assurance. Professional development is aligned with identified school and department

priorities and supports teachers in developing a shared understanding of the YAA Teaching Principles and their application in the classroom.

Implementation is treated as an ongoing process rather than a single training event. Priorities are introduced, developed, monitored and revisited over time to ensure that improvements become embedded and have a positive impact on student learning.

- **Phased Implementation:** Teaching and learning priorities are identified through school self-evaluation, the MER Schedule, student outcomes and other relevant evidence. A small number of priorities are selected for focused implementation at any one time, allowing teachers sufficient opportunity to understand, practise, apply and embed the identified approaches.
- **Professional Development:** Whole-school CPD establishes the shared understanding, evidence base and expectations for each priority. Departmental and phase-based CPD then supports teachers in applying these principles appropriately within their subject, phase and context.
- **Modelling and Practice:** Professional development provides opportunities for teachers to see effective practice modelled, practise approaches, discuss their application and reflect on how they can be adapted to meet the needs of their students.
- **Coaching and Triads:** Teachers work collaboratively through cross-grade and/or cross-department triads, using peer observation, coaching and professional dialogue to observe practice, provide feedback, share effective approaches and reflect on their own development. This process is developmental and supports professional learning.
- **Shared Language of Learning:** The YAA Teaching Principles provide a common language for discussing teaching and learning across the school. This shared language is used within professional development, coaching, departmental meetings and quality assurance to support consistency and clarity while recognising appropriate differences between subjects, phases and contexts.
- **Monitoring Implementation and Impact:** Lesson observations, learning walks, book looks, student voice, assessment information and other relevant evidence are used to evaluate how successfully identified priorities are being implemented and their impact on the student learning experience. Findings inform subsequent professional development, coaching and support.
- **Reflection and Refinement:** Teachers and leaders are provided with opportunities to reflect on implementation, identify barriers, share effective practice and make appropriate adjustments. Where implementation is not yet secure, further support, modelling, coaching or professional development is provided.
- **Sustaining Effective Practice:** Once priorities are embedded, they continue to be reinforced through induction, departmental practice, coaching and quality

assurance. This ensures that effective practice is sustained while allowing future teaching and learning priorities to be introduced.

This policy establishes a cohesive and consistent approach to teaching and learning at YAA, underpinned by the YAA Teaching Principles and a commitment to high expectations for every student. It provides a shared framework for creating a positive learning climate, planning and adapting learning to meet individual needs, building and retrieving knowledge, developing independence, assessing learning and providing feedback that leads to improvement.

Our aim is to ensure that every student experiences high-quality, inclusive and ambitious teaching that enables them to make meaningful progress from their individual starting points and achieve the highest standards possible.

Through high-quality professional development, collaboration, coaching and a shared language of learning, we support teachers to continually develop and refine their practice. The impact of this policy is evaluated through our monitoring, evaluation and review processes, with evidence used to celebrate effective practice, identify areas for development and inform future school and department priorities.

Through consistent implementation and continuous improvement, we aim to provide a learning experience that develops well-rounded, independent and confident learners with the knowledge, skills and passion to contribute thoughtfully to a diverse and sustainable global society.