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Inspiring excellence, empowering global minds

WESGREEN TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

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Section 1   Introduction

Learning is about acquiring knowledge and skills, which make changes to our long-term memory. By working hard to make the knowledge flexible, we can apply it confidently and accurately to a range of topics and situations, thus making us successful learners.
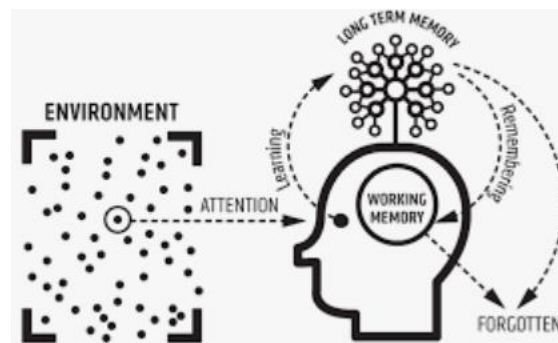
At Wesgreen, we are working towards a shared understanding amongst all of our teachers of what **a typical lesson** might include, so as to achieve consistency of high-quality teaching. We therefore emphasise:

1. Using the techniques that **work best** to promote learning
2. The crucial importance of **knowledge** for all learning
3. The use of retrieval strategies such as **quizzing/testing** and **drilling** as powerful tools for promoting learning
4. **Explicitly teaching students what they**   **need to know** - we call this 'Direct Instruction'
5. **Recapping** previously studied material   constantly, to make it stick.

This approach to teaching derives from evidence-based research around effective learning and teaching. We have incorporated these our non-negotiables so that we can teach with no limits to what students can achieve as per the High Performance Learning goal.

What do great teachers do?

- Understand the content they are teaching and how it is learnt
- Set challenging learning objectives and clear success criteria so that students know what is expected of them and why
- Provide challenging tasks
- Use metacognitive strategies to support learning
- Provide regular opportunities for students to review their learning
- Scaffold learning to ensure students succeed
- Create a supportive learning environment
- Manage the classroom to maximise opportunity to learn
- Present content, activities and interactions that activate students' thinking
- Use effective questioning and Assessment for Learning techniques to support and challenge students to elicit learning and clarify misconceptions
- Model how they would tackle questions and tasks to show students how to approach their work
- Create structured opportunities for independent student practice and collaborative tasks
- Provide regular and meaningful feedback in class and in books, which will move learning forward
- Adapt their teaching to meet the needs of learners
- Use data to inform their planning for students in their classroom

For further information, look at the links in the appendices, which form the basis of our policy:

Section 2 Wesgreen Non-Negotiables

A Typical Lesson FS1-KS5

It is hard to be prescriptive about how *every* lesson will be structured in the wide range of subjects that make up the Wesgreen timetable. However, we believe the following elements should form part of teachers' *typical* teaching at Wesgreen - this does not mean that every single one will be seen in every lesson, but over time, their use should be typical of a teacher's practice.

In a typical lesson, we expect teachers to consider and include the following:
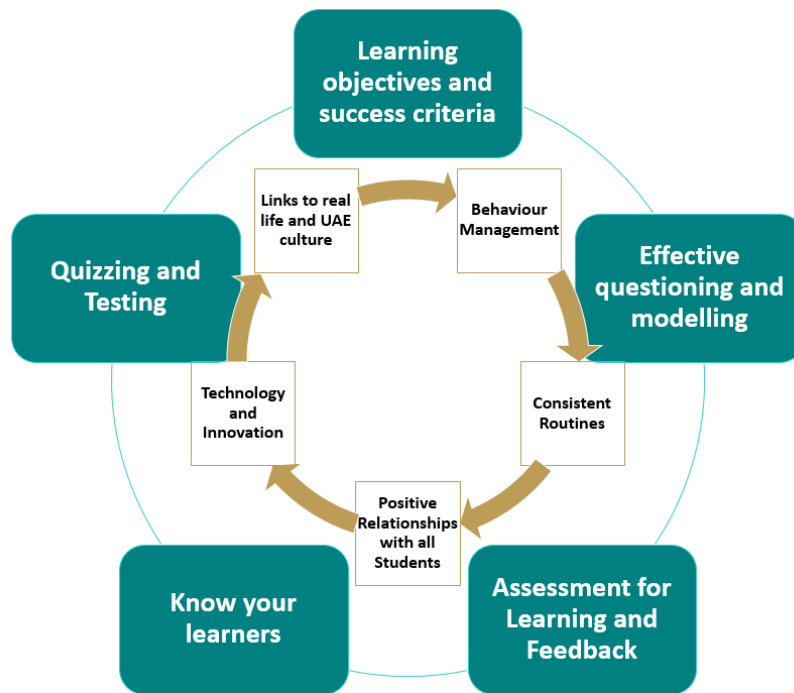
Learning objectives and success criteria

The learning objective for the lesson will be common to all students, with progressively more challenging success criteria, ensuring that an appropriate level of challenge is given to all students. This does not put a cap on what students can attempt or achieve in a lesson. Students should have SCAFFOLDING to enable almost all of them to achieve the Learning Objective.

Example:

Today we are learning to understand how coastal processes cause the formation of coastal landforms

- I can identify different coastal landforms, for example: caves, arches, stacks and stumps
- I can describe how each of the landforms are formed
- I can explain what might happen to coastal landforms in the future

Effective Questioning and Modelling

- No hands up (apart from when a student wants to ask a question)/ cold calling
- Oblige all students to think by asking the question to the whole class, giving thinking time and then picking a student to answer
- No opt-out – if a student doesn't know the answer, go back to them after the correct answer from another student and ask them again
- Think, Pair, Share
- Everybody writes – in books or on mini-whiteboards
- Give examples of what a good one looks like / what a bad one looks like

- Blank levels for questioning in EYFS
- Pose, Pause, Pounce, Bounce
- Scaffolded questioning (moving from closed to open questioning, as appropriate)

Assessment for Learning and Feedback

When checking for student understanding, avoid RAG/thumbs up/asking do you understand? Instead, check smartly using some of these techniques:
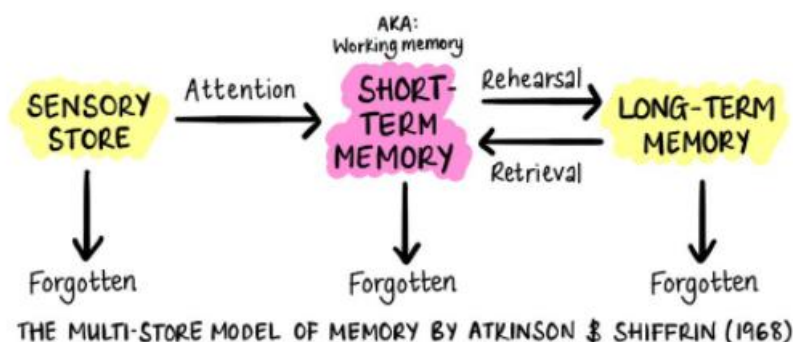
- Effective questioning at the start/middle/end of the lesson to check understanding and progress
- Low-stakes testing (whole-class quizzes)
- Identified tasks for SID marking and feedback
- DIRT opportunities to move learning forward
- Opportunities to self-quiz
- Self and peer assessment and feedback/reflection
- Mini whiteboards

Know your learners

- Do you know what each student's strengths and weaknesses are?
- Have you used data to inform your planning?
- Have you scaffolded the work to ensure that it is both accessible and challenging to all learners?
- Have you considered and are you using effective strategies to support Students of Determination and/or Gifted and Talented?

Quizzing and testing

In order for learning to stick in the long-term memory, it is vital for individuals to reguarly retrieve and practise key knowledge and skills, remembering to correct any mistakes made. By interleaving topics covered in the past with more recent learning, the brain has to work harder and is more likely to retain the information in the long-term.

AKA:
Working memory

SENSORY STORE → Attention → SHORT-TERM MEMORY → Rehearsal → LONG-TERM MEMORY
LONG-TERM MEMORY → Retrieval → SHORT-TERM MEMORY

Forgotten   Forgotten   Forgotten

THE MULTI-STORE MODEL OF MEMORY BY ATKINSON & SHIFFRIN (1968)

- Have you included time for students to do low-stakes individual quizzing and testing on what they have been learning?
- Have you given them a quiz to check for understanding?
- The very best teachers quiz and test students throughout the lesson, including starters and plenaries

Behaviour management/ Behaviour for Learning

All teachers should have high expectations of student behaviour, both in and out of lessons. Ensure that you are reinforcing positive behaviour as well as addressing inappropriate behaviour in line with the behaviour policy.

Positive behaviours for learning are promoted by appropriate levels of challenge and engagement.

Consistent routines

Do you always have the same routine and demonstrate high expectations to students both in your lessons and around the school?

- Entry and exit routine
    - o Secondary building: On transition – wait outside door/ silence before going in. In class, stand up on teacher entry to signal start of lesson. Exit – single line exit afterstanding behind chairs.
- Presentation in books/on documents on computer
    - o Presentation guidelines (see Marking and Feedback Policy)
- Completion of work
- Application of behaviour policy

Positive relationships with all students

The more we know about our students, the better we can understand them and build positive relationships.

- Respect is mutual. How do you build positive and respectful relationships with all students?
- Do you take the time to listen when students try to talk to you?
- Do you speak to them in a calm manner, even if you are annoyed?

Technology and innovation

- Are you providing your students with appropriate opportunities to use and experience technology and innovation?
- Does the technology you have planned to use enhance and scaffold the learning for all or some groups of learners?
- Can 'collaboration be encouraged through the use of shared online spaces?

Links to real life and UAE culture

- Have you tried to make what you are teaching relevant to the students in your lesson?
- Does what you are teaching have links to real life?
- How might what you are teaching relate or compare to UAE culture?

## High Performance Learning

Everything we do ties into our journey to becoming a HPL World Class School.

Section 3   Planning at Wesgreen

Staff use the following routines in their lessons so that students know what to expect in every class. The lesson plan below guides teachers by providing more detail about how to create the best opportunities for learning to take place.
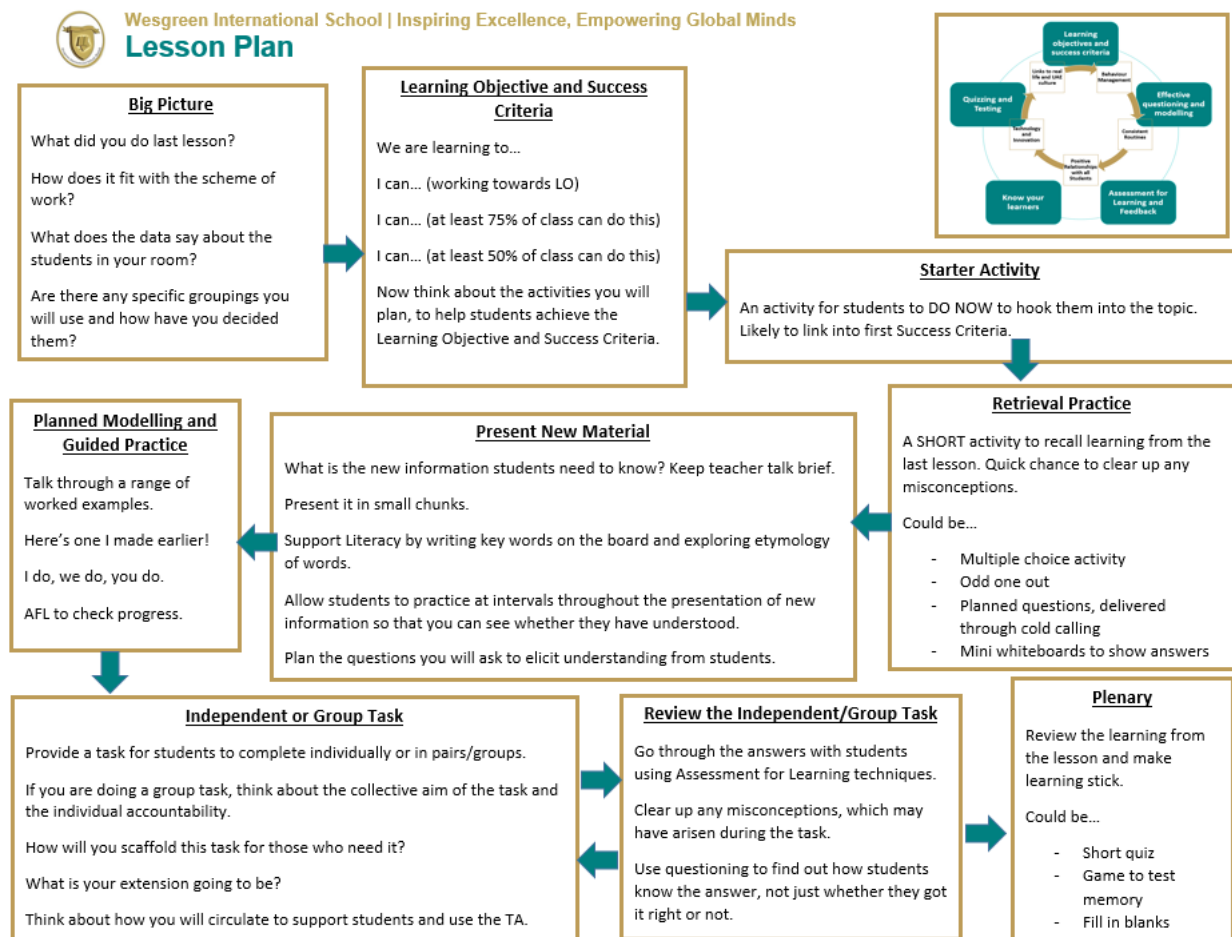
Section 4   Monitoring and Evaluation of Teaching

Monitoring and evaluation is a crucial contributing factor to ensuring that Teaching and Learning is consistently of a high standard. Below are the details of how we monitor and evaluate Teaching and Learning at Wesgreen.

GEMS
EDUCATION

Lesson Observations

Teachers are observed at regular intervals and this is usually done in pairs with the Line Manager and a member of SLT. The duration of the observation varies from 20 minutes up to a full lesson and observers may leave and come back to see a different part of the lesson.

Term 1: Teachers select a group to be observed with in conversation with their Line Manager and formative feedback is provided about the strengths and areas of development seen in the lesson.

Term 2: Observations are unannounced as this provides the school with a good idea of what usually happens in the classroom. If a colleague's lesson does not go as well as desired, another observation is arranged. A support plan is put into place for any teacher who is struggling, with the aim to help them to improve in the areas, which have been highlighted as requiring further development.

Term 3: The Term 2 process is repeated.

We aim to provide feedback within 24 hours of all observations, where possible.

Learning Walks

Regular Learning Walks take place and feedback is given to the teacher. This is a rolling programme and the focus varies. Sometimes the Learning Walks are for a general picture of how lessons are going and students are behaving and learning and at other times, there is a specific focus, which will be shared with staff in advance.

Surveys

Surveys are given to Parents, Students and Staff at varying intervals to find out how they perceive the Teaching and Learning to be in the school. This helps the school to develop and improve.

Line Management

Heads of Department and Heads of Year have regular line management meetings with their SLT link. Teaching and Learning is a standing item on the agenda in order to ensure that there is consistency across the department and across the school.

Parent Working Group

Termly meetings take place with the parents who volunteer to be part of the parent working group. It is an excellent opportunity to gain feedback on their children's experience with teaching and learning at school. The parents have a development plan, which ties into the school's overall strategic aims and they are responsible for implementing it.

Roles and Responsibilities

a. Local Advisory Board/ GEMS - GEMS will carry out regular internal reviews to monitor the standards of teaching and learning across the school and provide support for the WGP team.

b. Leadership Team - The members of the Leadership are accountable for standards of teaching and learning across the school. On the basis of the monitoring and evaluating cycle, including pupil data and pupil progress interviews, appropriate in-service training will be identified and offered. Teachers are encouraged to engage with other GEMS teachers through network meetings and are directed to where appropriate for external training, including courses provided by TELLAL.

c. Subject, Year and Department Leaders - To be effective, collaboration between all leaders is required. All leaders need to take responsibility in achieving the highest standards of teaching and learning in all subjects, supporting their team members and senior leaders.

 d. Teachers - Teachers are responsible for meeting all of the non-negotiables for teaching and learning, which are noted in the Teaching and Learning Handbook. They must comply with the GEMS Global Teacher Standards which are aligned with the UAE Teacher Competency Standards.

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Teaching and Learning Policy – Appendix 1

Below are links to some of the educational research we have referred to in this policy.

Education Development Trust

Education Endowment Fund

GEMS
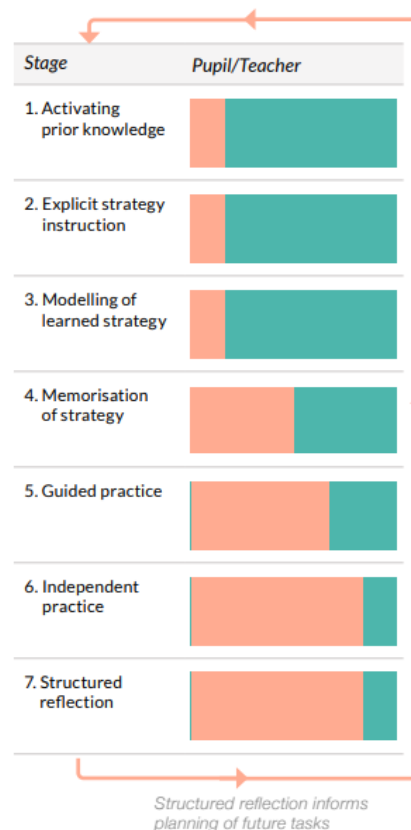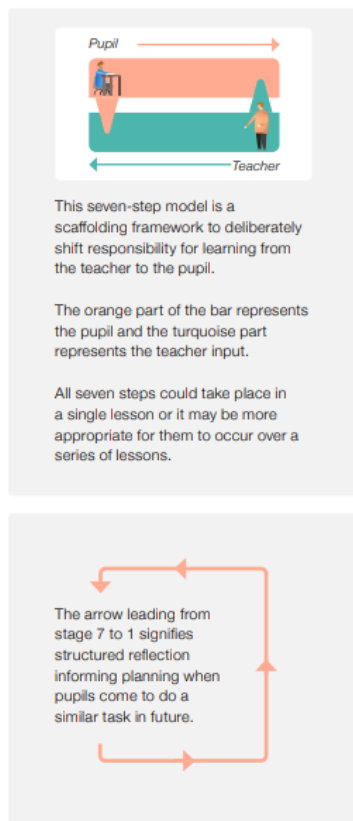EDUCATION

[Great Teaching Toolkit](#)

[High Performance Learning](#)

[Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction](#)

METACOGNITION
The seven-step model

This seven-step model is a scaffolding framework to deliberately shift responsibility for learning from the teacher to the pupil.

The orange part of the bar represents the pupil and the turquoise part represents the teacher input.

All seven steps could take place in a single lesson or it may be more appropriate for them to occur over a series of lessons.

The arrow leading from stage 7 to 1 signifies structured reflection informing planning when pupils come to do a similar task in future.

Stage	Pupil/Teacher
1. Activating prior knowledge	
2. Explicit strategy instruction	
3. Modelling of learned strategy	
4. Memorisation of strategy	
5. Guided practice	
6. Independent practice	
7. Structured reflection	

Structured reflection informs planning of future tasks

Metacognition—The seven-step model

Appendix 2: The importance of knowledge

'What you already know determines what you can learn and how you think. Learning proceeds quietly and efficiently when what is new builds directly on what is already secured.' (John Hattie, The Science of How We Learn,' 2014)

At Wesgreen, we believe that knowledge is the foundation of all learning. We want our students to build a bank of knowledge in their long-term memory, including knowledge of many facts and 'inflexible' knowledge*, because as students accumulate knowledge over time, the interplay between different pieces of knowledge will allow for deeper learning to occur. This deeper learning will, in turn, encourage 'inflexible' knowledge to become flexible* - capable of being used in a variety of ways and across subjects. Knowledge really matters because, as Daniel Willingham says, 'The processes of thinking are intertwined with the content of thought' (Willingham 2007, 'Critical thinking: why is it so hard to teach?') or, put more simply, thinking well requires knowing facts - to think well, we have to have something 'in there' to think about.

Our emphasis on knowledge is why we have **Knowledge Maps** that are compulsory in core subjects (and optional for other subjects).

Knowledge Maps are intended to distil, for each subject, the key knowledge that students are expected to commit to their long-term memory - to learn for years to come and, ideally, forever. Their creation obliges our teachers to think hard about which key knowledge is the most important, and commit this to a maximum of 2 sides of A4 for each module of work. Knowledge Maps are designed to provide clarity for everyone; students, parents, teachers and others about what students are expected to learn by heart, through daily self-quizzing. We believe that helping our students to build their bank of knowledge will, over time, make a significant contribution to their progress and attainment as well as supporting their literacy development.

*Inflexible knowledge is knowledge that, at the point of being acquired, is tied to a specific context and cannot **yet** be generalised from. For example, a student is studying a new poem and learns for the first time that the words 'the snake's soft sounds of hissing' are an example of alliteration in the poem. The student is taught that alliteration means the repetition of the same first letter, the 'S' in this case, in 3 adjacent words but the knowledge is not yet sufficiently embedded to ensure she can spot the alliteration in a different poem she reads 6 months later, when it is not pointed out by the teacher. The ability to spot instances of alliteration in other texts, at different times, **would** suggest strongly that the student's learning about alliteration had moved from being inflexible knowledge to being flexible knowledge.*

Appendix 3: Quizzing/Testing - The testing effect

At the heart of the Wesgreen Teaching Approach is the importance of testing as a tool for learning. Just because teachers have 'taught' a thing, that GEMS doesn't mean that students have learned it, so we need to create multiple opportunities for our EDUCATION students to retrieve their learning - this is what teacher quizzing, self-quizzing and tests/exams are mostly for. Over 100 years of scientific research suggests

that the testing effect can have a powerful impact on remembering and forgetting. ***If nothing has been retained in long-term memory, nothing has been learned.*** Testing, by ensuring students retrieve their learning regularly, can arrest the forgetting process and help ensure they remember for the long term; in other words, we should mostly view our testing as retrieval practice.

Drilling

By 'drilling', we mean the techniques we use to ensure ***repeated practice***, with the aims of embedding knowledge in students' long-term memory and facilitating easy retrieval in the future.

Drilling happens principally during the teaching/input stage of a lesson and it is usually oral (although it can be written or include a written element). Through drilling, the teacher is aiming to reinforce key points and facilitate automaticity in the retrieval of key information by students. Drilling aims to engage all students; it is active and participatory and it is often fast-paced.

Key drilling activities are:

Repetition: the teacher says something and the students repeat it a number of times.

Finish my sentence: the teacher starts a phrase or sentence and this acts as a prompt to help students finish it off: 'The square root of 81 is 9. The square root of 81 is…'

Cold calling: the teacher asks a question and calls on a student or group or the class to answer it.

Drilling works by being done multiple times, including during review. Since it often involves the use of questions, it is closely linked to quizzing/testing.

Recapping

By 'recapping' we mean going over with students the key learning from work they have previously done. Unless we regularly go over material with students that they have already studied, over time much of what they have 'learned' will be lost and very hard or impossible to retrieve. Teachers should systematically:

- Recap current key learning
- Recap recent key learning, for example key learning from the previous lesson or two
- Recap key learning from the previous unit(s) of work
- Recap previous key learning, for example from previous years

The best way to recap learning is through testing - if we constantly recap key learning, through testing, if we recap over time and if we interleave old learning with new as part of our recapping, learning will stick.