*2024 Tony Stephens, Education Support*

**Post 16 leadership and management**

Ideally the aim should be to develop real comprehensive post 16 provision which is planned in a 13/14-19 context and is firmly based on partnerships with a range of other players within the post 16 environment, with the offer of academic and vocational level 2 and 3 courses, , foundation learning, traineeships and supported internships. The School should aim for academic excellence, but at the same time takes the lead in developing provision for vulnerable students and especially those who are in danger of becoming NEET

There has also to be much thought put into overcoming the difficulties inherent in running small sixth forms and the limited choice and low attainment that can follow.

In too many academies the Sixth Form is just left to look after itself, whereas it should be a key area for development **with all the initiatives that schools have introduced into KS4 in recent years also being introduced into the Sixth Form**, e.g:

* There is an achievement culture throughout the sixth form and in each class room based on high expectations of staff and students, with challenging, personalised targets and learning plans for all; everyone connected with the school accepts that the aim is always to be outstanding
* A Data tracking system is in place which provides;
* Traffic lighted spreadsheets for both subjects and sixth form leadership that show clearly individual student underachievement based on a comparison of predicted grades with targets
* Progress tracking sheets for each timetabled class
* Evidence justifying individual student praise and success
* Discrete data on the progress of the higher ability, SEND, “PP”, ethnic students and other ASP student groupings
* Identification of outcomes being achieved by subjects and individual teachers
* Predictions of School future public examination performance for all students and for the ASP student groupings in a grid relating to the key indicators in ASP
* Data that can be used as part of the monitoring of the impact of the School Improvement Plan
* Production of data reports for each student which, when enhanced with other data, e.g, attendance, behaviour and praise records, can be the basis of both reports to parents and also individual learning plans for students
* Based both on data tracking and day to day teaching experience, there are then sustained and comprehensive, personalised intervention strategies put in place by each subject, supported by mentoring from the sixth form leadership, to deal with **all** individual student underachievement in **both** Years in **all** subjects with equal priority given to each Year.
* There is a sixth form extended learning policy and practice which ensure that there is;
  + Relevant, meaningful, differentiated extended learning of different types personalised to meet the needs of different types of students, which are integrated into schemes of work
  + Extended learning set according to the agreed school policy in terms of type and time expectation
  + Extended learning that is marked appropriately
* All possible support is in place for students, including intensive public examination preparation, so that every possible action is taken to ensure that all students achieve the best possible results
* There is the enhancing of provision for higher ability, gifted and talented students, especially in the class room, but also in extra-curricular support
* The sixth form leadership instantly recognises when there are signs of a drop in performance of any particular subject, and take effective remedial action; the performance of each subject is also checked every half term
* There is work being done with individual teachers to ensure that there is mainly good and outstanding teaching overall and no inadequate teaching, and in the process developing staff understanding of what is outstanding learning built on challenge, differentiation, student engagement and securing real progress in learning.
* Assessment of teaching to cover not just the lesson but also the progress over time being achieved in terms of quality of student work, how well this work is marked and assessed and the progress being made by students

Teachers are encouraged to use a mixture of personalised praise and motivation, along with skilled AFL, to transmit high expectations to students, resulting in a striking enhancement of the quality of student work, whilst at the same time making a major contribution to the development of a real achievement culture in the school.

Lesson observation practice modified to include consideration of the extent to which the teacher demonstrated the use of strategies to not just make general progress but to actually raise attainment

Teachers ensure that students have some control over their own learning, with the chance to show initiative and self-reflection. Students are encouraged to become life-long learners who show a real pride in their work and their achievements

Teachers are expert at how best to teach their subject

* A calendar and process is in place for the review of schemes of learning, thus ensuring that the SOLs reflect and cement best practice in terms of T and L, extended learning, high expectations and raising achievement without excessive staff work load. These also incorporate lesson outlines and thus mean that staff no longer have to write lesson plans.
* There is a consistent and comprehensive assessment, recording and reporting policy for the sixth form, with the prioritising of staff use of assessment for learning techniques and evidence of:
  + - Work marked up to date as defined by the school policy and as observed by all subjects
    - Supportive and helpful AFL comments expressed in a way in which students understand
    - Evidence that students have responded to, and acted on, these comments, having been given the time and opportunity to do so
    - Marking of extended learning
    - Provision of grades and levels where appropriate
    - Praise where justified
    - Student and/or peer comments on their work
    - Assessment systems in place which minimise staff workload
* Heads of Department and sixth form leadership spend time reading through students’ work, with the aim of checking how much progress is being made over time, and looking in particular for;
* Evidence of there having been a variety of learning activities
* Evidence of challenging work in relation to the targets of the students which is based on high expectations
* Evidence of “deep learning” having taken place
* Evidence of students producing extended pieces of writing
* Evidence of high standards of literacy
* Relevant, meaningful, differentiated extended learning of different types, which is integrated into schemes of work and set according to school policy
* Evidence of progress in learning over time as shown by the improving quality of work
* There is an effective quality assurance system that is based on knowing the strengths and weaknesses of individual teachers, and thus focuses on each individual’s areas for development in terms of quality of student work produced, marking and assessment, role as tutor, etc
* There is in place an e-learning strategy and driver so that ICT and technology is used as effectively as possible to enhance teaching and learning based on the best possible ICT systems
* Regular past paper practice, with an emphasis on students getting practice in understanding the wording used in questions and what the question actually means and is wanting as an answer Departments checking regularly that they are with the best exam board in terms of the results likely to be achieved. Close contact with exam boards to get all possible clues and tips to what is expected from answers – exam board courses; visits from exam staff; regular in-house moderation; use of staff who are exam markers; partnerships with departments in other schools who are following the same exam spec
* Departments being aware of what were the national attainment averages in their subject last year and with a determination to meet and beat them
* Continuous issue and demonstration of exemplars of all sorts to show students what outstanding actually looks like
* Practice, roles and processes to monitor and improve school attendance/punctuality and reduce the level of persistent absence are well led and managed, and produce data that is better than national averages, with no ASP student grouping doing less well than the overall student cohort
* There is a praise culture throughout the sixth form and in the classrooms, supported by a highly effective rewards and recognition system, that means that students’ achievements are fully recognised and celebrated and, in particular, student self- esteem is boosted and students are motivated to produce work that reflects the highest of expectations
* Student voice involves a wide range of students and allows the student body to have an influence the key issues of sixth form development and improvement, whilst students are fully involved in organising all types of school activities and events and also receive leadership training
* Parents/carers are closely involved in the education of the students and are given guidance in helping their children learn, and they and other stakeholders are also consulted fully in terms of sixth form policies and practices and how these develop
* There is a warm and caring pastoral support system built on a personalised approach towards each student and excellent relationships between staff and students. Students feel safe and secure with best practice safeguarding procedures. The school follows the requirements of the Prevent agenda
* There is excellent higher education and careers advice, with good links to business

**Audit and measurement of impact**

The first step is to audit the school’s present post 16 provision, possibly under these headings;

**Numbers, Retention, Courses, Results, Destinations**

* No. in Y11 2022-2023
* No. in Y12 2023-2024

No. from school

Retention %

No. from outside

* No. in Y12 2022-2023
* No. in Y13 2023-2024
* No. in Y13 2022-2023
* Leavers in Y12
* Retention %
* No. of leavers on one year courses

No. leaving two year or one year courses early

* Courses offered in Y12 2023-2024 and numbers on each

Level 3

Level 2

* Courses offered in Y13 2023-2024 and numbers on each

Level 3

Level 2

**2023-2024 results, level 3**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **All** | **Male** | **Female** | **BAME** | **Disadvantaged** |
| **A-levels** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Progress |  |  |  |  |  |
| Progress rating |  |  |  |  |  |
| Average result |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Academic quals** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Progress |  |  |  |  |  |
| Progress ratings |  |  |  |  |  |
| Average result |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Destinations** |  |  |  |  |  |
| To employment, in education |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Applied generals** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Progress |  |  |  |  |  |
| Progress rating |  |  |  |  |  |
| Average result |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Tech Levels** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Average result |  |  |  |  |  |

**Number of students achieving C+ for the first time whilst in the sixth form:**

**Maths**

**English**

**Record in terms of minimum standards**

**Any vocational courses causing concern**

**A-level courses/subjects causing concern based on points score by entry and also value added**

**Highly successful courses/subjects**

**2022-2023 achieving a HE place**

No. of students

No. of students trying but not successful

**% of students leaving in 2023 who are NEET**

**Effectiveness of policies and procedures in key areas**

* Entry policy
* Recruitment arrangements
* Funded study programmes in place for each individual student
* Student and subject retention; avoidance of NEETs
* 13-19 planning and curriculum development
* Monitoring of teaching and learning arrangements
* Assessment, AFL, marking
* Extended learning policy and effectiveness
* Gifted and talented provision
* Independent learning and development of study skills
* Data sources used to analyse performance
* Target setting, student tracking and progress monitoring mechanisms used
* SEND provision
* Maths and English skills enhancement
* Attendance monitoring procedures
* Praise and rewards
* Y12/Y13 management structure
* Y12/Y13 pastoral support
* Role of tutors
* Tutor time; PSHE; SMSC
* Extension studies provision, e.g, General Studies, Extended project
* Extra- curricular provision and social events; PE and Sporting arrangements
* Non-qualification provision
* Work experience and work related learning
* Student voice provision
* HE/Careers advice arrangements
* Private study arrangements
* CPD for Y12/13 teachers as regards Y12/13 teaching and learning
* Y12/13 work with Lower School students
* Code of dress
* Counselling and other external agency support and links
* Parent liaison and reporting arrangements
* Partnership arrangements with other education institutions
* Links with businesses
* Accommodation
* Y12/13 self- evaluation procedures
* Y12/13 action planning to enhance performance
* Developments planned for Y12/13 in next three years

**Department/faculty leadership self–evaluation –Post 16**

**Department**

**Date**

**Key**

1 – Fully in place

2 – Substantially in place

3 – Partly in place

4 – Not in place

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ACHIEVEMENT** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| * **Establishment of a culture of high expectations and achievement** |  |  |  |  | |
| * + Is seen in all aspects of the departments post 16 work |  |  |  |  |
| * + Quality of most students’ work and attainment matches these expectations and targets, and is improving over time |  |  |  |  |
| * + There is high quality CPD available for all post 16 teachers |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas for development** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| * **Y13** |  |  |  |  |
| * + Intense and personalised raising attainment initiatives in place as then reflected in public examination results |  |  |  |  |
| * + Analysis of results from the previous year and lessons learnt and applied to secure higher attainment the next year |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas for development** |  |  |  |  |
| * **Y12** |  |  |  |  |
| * + Intensive work begins straight away, building on a detailed and personalised profile of each student’s KS4 performance |  |  |  |  |
| * + Intense and personalised raising attainment initiatives in place as then reflected in public examination results |  |  |  |  |
| * + How the students perform show that the Post 16 school entry policy was appropriate |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas for development** |  |  |  |  |
| * **Underachievement intervention** |  |  |  |  |
| * + All students having very challenging targets |  |  |  |  |
| * + Rigorous and sustained interventions in response to identified individual student underachievement as shown by data tracking |  |  |  |  |
| * + Performance of Raiseonline student groups monitored – Student premium; Gender; Lower ability |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas for development** |  |  |  |  |
| * **Higher ability, Gifted and talented** |  |  |  |  |
| * + Personalised provision to meet the needs of these students as part of overall high quality differentiation with clear evidence of impact |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas for development** |  |  |  |  |
| **--- SEND** |  |  |  |  |
| * Personalised provision to meet the needs of these students as part of overall high quality differentiation with clear evidence of impact |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas for development** |  |  |  |  |
| **TEACHING and LEARNING** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| * **Teaching and learning** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| * + The developing of the teaching and learning offered by each teacher through personalised CPD following lesson observations, which is also reflected in appraisal |  |  |  |  |
| * + Students show good independent learning skills |  |  |  |  |
| * + Homework and extended learning of different types integrated into schemes of work, differentiated and set and marked as per the agreed timetable |  |  |  |  |
| * + There are procedures in place to ensure that students make the best possible use of private study time |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas for development** |  |  |  |  |
| * **Assessment** |  |  |  |  |
| * + AFL fully used in teaching and overall assessment |  |  |  |  |
| * + ARR is systematic, and there is high quality marking of assessments with AFL comments upon which students act |  |  |  |  |
| * + Regular checks on the quality of students’ notes, with guidance having been given on the best way to write and store notes |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas for development** |  |  |  |  |
| * **Schemes of learning/lesson plans** |  |  |  |  |
| * + These are detailed and show progression and that all the elements that produce differentiated, challenging learning are in place in relation to the examination syllabi   + There is a calendar and process for the continuous review of schemes of learning |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas for development** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| * **Student support** |  |  |  |  |
| * + Praise and recognition culture in place in classrooms and with department support |  |  |  |  |
| * + Full attention to student voice |  |  |  |  |
| * Skilled and personalised pastoral support available for students |  |  |  |  |
| * + Higher education and careers advice and support is outstanding |  |  |  |  |
| * + Student retention is at very high levels |  |  |  |  |
| * + Student destinations are tracked and there are no NEETS |  |  |  |  |
| * + There are effective procedures in place to monitor and enhance student attendance |  |  |  |  |
| * + All tutors play an effective role in all the above |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas for development** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| * **Quality Assurance** |  |  |  |  |
| * + Planning, monitoring and review processes in place |  |  |  |  |
| * + Listening to student voice |  |  |  |  |
| * + Recording of evidence in the QA file |  |  |  |  |
| * + Outlining of areas for development in the context that the department is; |  |  |  |  |
| * + - Using self evaluation to identify areas for development |  |  |  |  |
| * + - Taking appropriate actions |  |  |  |  |
| * + - Evaluating the impact of these actions |  |  |  |  |
| * + - Modifying actions in the light of the impact analysis |  |  |  |  |
| * Case studies or examples of where the department is making good progress in relation to areas of development are available |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas for development** |  |  |  |  |
| * **Curriculum and Schemes of Work/Lesson Plans/Examination syllabi** |  |  |  |  |
| * + Study programmes and the overall curriculum meet the needs of the students |  |  |  |  |
| * + Continuous curriculum and specification review is in place |  |  |  |  |
| * + Maths and English courses are appropriate and effective for those students who did not achieve a C in GCSE |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas for development** |  |  |  |  |
| * **ICT provision and e-learning** |  |  |  |  |
| * + Department use to enhance teaching and learning |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas for development** |  |  |  |  |
| * **Extra Provision** |  |  |  |  |
| * + Extra-curricular activities provided |  |  |  |  |
| * + Community engagement in place |  |  |  |  |
| * + Business links; enterprise; work related learning; work experience are developed to enhance learning and achievement |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas for development** |  |  |  |  |
| * **SMSC** |  |  |  |  |
| * + SMSC features in post 16 teaching |  |  |  |  |
| * + PSHE is delivered effectively |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas for development** |  |  |  |  |

**Issues for Success in a Sixth Form**

* Is every teacher positive with students from day 1?
* Do staff understand the aspirational Minimum Target Grades?
* Do students?
* Does teaching get off to a brisk start at the start of term?
* Do teachers set target grades with students in the first week?
* Do teachers have one-to-one sessions termly with each of their students to discuss progress against targets and to set targets for the following term?
* Do tutors have one-to-one interviews in the first few weeks to get to know students personally?
* Does each student get three hours appropriate work to do per subject per week?
* Does the department have a policy where students can freely call on teachers in non-contact time?
* Are teachers selected to teach level 3 work because of their abilities to teach at this level?
* Are extra sessions arranged especially in the spring term to (1) stretch the most able and (2) help the lesser able to understand concepts?
* Do teachers have an adult-young adult relationship with their students rather than a parent-child relationship? a crucial question
* Do teachers act in concert with personal tutors in a supportive way when things are not going well for a student?
* Do all staff treat each and every student as an individual with dignity and value?
* Do teachers in departments share good practice with each other and work together on resources for students and themselves?

**Superb Sixth Forms can differ greatly in character but they also share key features**:

* Passionate, inspiring teaching. Teachers who relish their Sixth Form lessons and create an inner sanctum in their classroom where students are free to explore ideas, challenge themselves and learn from a teacher who is an expert, and from each other.
* Teaching that fosters curiosity. Teachers who are not afraid for ideas, concepts or even knowledge, to be challenged by students in the pursuit of greater understanding and broader horizons. The intangible ‘buzz’.
* An atmosphere where individuals are truly well known by the staff (from the receptionist to the head teacher) and this knowledge is used to cajole, encourage and nudge each student to achieve what they don’t even know what they are capable of yet. UCAS references are written from the heart and based on detailed knowledge of each student.
* Ambition. An ethos where students are encouraged to think big.
* Students are treated as the mature, intelligent thoughtful young people that they are, it has a different feel to the rest of the school. Relationships with staff are important and focussed on mutual respect and a shared educational objective.
* Younger students cannot wait to be a Sixth Former.
* There is awareness of the world around and focus on the important issues. Energy is not taken up worrying about appearance, outfits or the latest relationship gossip. Students are interested in politics. They are interested in the environment and they engage readily and genuinely in meaningful community service. The get outraged by injustice. They write an EPQ on a topic in which they have a genuine academic interest, they might even read a broadsheet or listen to Radio 4 (perhaps in secret!).
* Sixth Formers who are balanced and do not forsake all of their co-curricular interests for the sake of A Level study. They still play sport, they sing in the choir, they debate, they know how to have fun!

**The transition from secondary school to sixth form**

If the previous stages have been handled positively and sensitively, the transition to sixth form and equivalent should be a little easier, especially if the sixth form is attached to the school, and teaching and other staff know the strengths and weaknesses of the pupil.By now, the academically more able older pupils may have a clearer idea about what he or she needs to do to achieve their ambitions and it is hoped that there will be less need for intervention from either parents/carers or professionals to help make that happen. If this isn’t the case, we will consider this a little later.

At this age, some of the key issues to watch out for related to transition are likely to include:

* The step up from GCSEs to ‘A’ levels (and equivalent).
* Perfectionism and fear of failure.
* The need for ‘More than A\*’.

**Before transition:**

Before transition, it is useful to ensure that the appropriate policies and approaches towards supporting academically more able children are in place, including how these young adults are identified and supported. At this age, more able sixth form students will have high expectations for their future and for what you can deliver. So giving them the opportunity, along with other pupils, to play a full part in the lives of the school or college is important as they should have a great deal to offer. For example, using gifted and talented sixth formers to mentor or support children further down the school or even in other schools can often be a good use of their skills. Taking the time before transition to think about this and develop a framework for implementation in the new term would be useful.

Many academically more able children will sail through their GCSEs and get good grades without breaking into a sweat. In fact, academically more able children are well known for coasting at secondary school and cramming their revision into the night before the exam and still getting good grades! This is not so easy at sixth form and many gifted young people will find the transition to ‘A’ level work something of a shock. This transition can:

* Expose gaps in knowledge which have not become apparent before because the work was relatively easy. One example of this is where the child is a gifted mathematician who just ‘knows the answer’ and has been allowed to skate over some of the essential building blocks which are necessary for some aspects of the ‘A’ level curriculum.
* Be difficult for gifted young people who have found it easy to complete their work so far in their lives. If they have not had academic challenge on a regular basis, they may have had limited opportunity to develop critical learning skills such as persistence, resourcefulness and resilience that would assist them in future achievements. It can also mean they are more likely to become frustrated and feel that they do not belong in the environment and may even lead to a distorted self-perception.
* Mean that they move from being one of the best in the school to competing for the top spot with other young people who are as good as, if not better, than they are. This can be difficult for a young person and can cause them to question their own abilities.
* Be difficult, especially if the young person’s GCSE results were not as good as everyone had predicted. Many academically more able young people are perfectionists and feel guilty when they do not get everything right all the time. Many perfectionists also fear failure and for many this will lead to picking easier work ‘within their comfort zone’; or being extremely stressed when it comes to homework, tests and exams.

Such issues can mean that many gifted and talented young people will find the transition to sixth form extremely stressful, especially in the early days whilst they adjust to their new circumstances. Such transition issues need to be recognised and, if possible, a framework needs to be put in place to address those which are likely to arise. As the work gets harder, differentiation for individual students has a continuing role to play both within the classroom and outside with homework and extra-curricular opportunities. Involving businesses and universities at the earliest opportunity is important, as academically more able children and young people benefit from real experiences. All of these will need to be considered in the school’s approach, prior to transition. Some academically more able pupils will have a clear vision of what subjects they want to study and what they are aiming for. Others will not have as clear a vision. It is essential that they are given robust advice and provided with opportunities to ‘test’ their decisions. Careers’ advice, extra-curricular university and business visits, and mentoring are particularly useful for these pupils. Mentoring is especially significant for pupils who lack family support. It is essential that academically more able pupils understand the significance of the subjects they are studying.

**At transition:**

Sixth form is an essential, and hopefully, enjoyable, stepping stone to higher education and the world of work. This is the same for every young person, whether they are academically more able or not. However, it is essential for students who are gifted and talented if they are to maximise their potential. As with children at secondary school, it is easy to say that they will succeed no matter what; however, the evidence suggests that this is not the case. Common issues which need to be addressed at this transition include:

* Poor social skills.
* High incidence of mental health issues (especially, but not exclusively, amongst girls and perfectionists).
* Some evidence that high ability children can have lower levels of resilience.

Universities and employers are looking for ‘more than A\*’ from students. Therefore, whilst a student might be heading for A\*s in their academic life, many are shy or introverts or focus exclusively on their academic studies and nothing else. To be guaranteed of a place at the best university or with the top employer, they need to develop a more ‘rounded and grounded’ skill set. Supporting them to be able to do this should take place right from the moment the young person enters sixth form. This is also important if the young person is to show that they are contributing to the life of the sixth form and the wider community on their personal statement form when they apply to university. Suggestions for addressing such issues at transition and beyond include:

Ensuring all staff members have high aspirations for their students (as well as the students themselves). This can be fuelled by a programme of e.g. visiting speakers from universities on specific subjects or links with e.g. Russell Group universities.

* Teaching essential skills such as networking skills or interview techniques.
* Developing the timetable so that everyone has at least one period of a different subject outside their ‘A’ level choices or where individuals or groups of students undertake a community project.
* Encouraging the expansion of interest or hobby groups on different subjects which is driven by students, or jointly by students and teachers.
* Developing a programme of university visits throughout the year.

Relationship Building. Some useful questions you may want to ask them:

* Why did you choose ….(subject)? Please be honest!
* What aspects do you enjoy about ….(subject)?
* What aspects do you not enjoy about ….(subject) and why?
* What do you hope to do after leaving school?
* What are your interests?
* Tell me one interesting thing about you
* Describe yourself in 3 words
* How would others describe you in 3 words?

Finally, through its approach to education, the sixth form will be helping to prepare all young people for independent living in the future. It can therefore seem as if parents/carers are an invisible partner in their child’s education at this stage. However, that is not the case. Given tuition fees and the level of unemployment for young people, many parents will be anxious to ensure that their child makes the right decisions about their future careers. It is therefore incredibly important that, at the same time as the transition programme is being implemented for academically more able young people, there is a programme of activities to ensure that parents are kept involved in the work of the sixth form and the range of future opportunities for their children. This could include:

* A meeting at the beginning of the school year outlining what the school will be doing and how parents can help.
* A timetable on the sixth form website reminding everyone, including parents, what needs to be done and when.
* Talks (or even a film on the website) from key people about different universities, applying to universities overseas, school finances and other subjects of interest.

Whatever is delivered for parents, should be as accessible as possible in the appropriate language and bearing in mind that some parents will find it difficult for childcare, work or other reasons, to access the ‘parents’ evening’ type structure.

**Ten tips for teaching post-16**

**Post-16 lessons work best when:**

* Learning is fun, interactive and practical.
* There is a strong understanding of the purpose and importance of holding post-16 qualifications, and these qualifications are related to real-life situations.
* Learning has a personal relevance which is explained to students, and the feedback given to students about their performance relates activities to the qualification they are studying towards.
* Appropriate time and support is given to students to practise challenging topics, both in and out of the classroom.
* There is a clear assessment process with clarity on mark schemes, enabling students to adequately prepare for exams and assignments.
* Timely initial assessments are carried out in order to identify students’ individual support needs, and any additional support that students require is put in place as soon as possible at the start of year 12.
* Class sizes are kept small, enabling teachers to have sufficient time to support all students.
* Teachers have strong behaviour management skills which they use to good effect in order to reduce the impact of students distracting their peers during lessons.
* The teacher fosters a supportive environment in the classroom and students are encouraged to ask for help from the teacher as well as from peers
* Teachers listen to students’ needs and tailor their approaches accordingly**.**

**Strategies for Raising Attainment**

* **Regular Recall Quizzes**

Even A\* students need to know the basics, so recall tests and quizzes as starters or as homework are great for all students. Throwing in a few random questions from last week’s topics will keep them on their toes.

* **Peer Support**

Using the most able to support others is not a new concept and can have mixed results. Sometimes students respond positively to peer teaching and sometimes it can make the divide between the abilities even greater. However, one way of addressing this is to use peer support in a more structured way, with year 13 students attending and helping out at structured support sessions (for example at a lunch time or after school). This has a number of benefits – it shows year 12 students the progression into year 13, weaker students in Year 13 will benefit from recapping the Year 12 material by teaching younger students and all year 12 students would benefit from the support from year 13. It can be developed further with a mentoring scheme, where year 13 can be recognised in school for their support and therefore, strengthen university applications.

* **Mark It Yourself**

“Where did I lose the marks Miss?” Make students figure it out by not telling them where they dropped the marks. Make students look back over their answers, find the correct/relevant information and then improve their responses – thereby actively developing their understanding.

* **Teaching and Learning Strategies**

Ensuring all students, especially lower ability ones, are fully engaged in the material covered is of utmost importance. When left to their own devises, many students will merrily highlight large chunks of text or copy out whole pages from the textbook without giving the information a second thought. To avoid this, use more active techniques to help them engage with and retain the information being covered.

* **This is ‘What a grade A looks like?’**

Always share examples of what an A grade piece of work should look like – either by using model answers for students to mark, or by developing ideas in class in the style of an auction. This works by asking the lower ability students to contribute their ideas first, and then the higher ability students are not only challenged towards the end, but the whole class then has access to more detail which has been developed by the whole group.

* **Mindsets**

This is probably more important than for any other age you teach. Your students will almost certainly struggle at times and this may be a new feeling. Many have sailed through the first 11 years of school without having to deal with failure.  Having a strong relationship with your students based on trust will facilitate the development of a growth mindset; the ability to see their failures as learning experiences. To be able to distinguish ‘I have failed’ from ’I am a failure’ and the potential subsequent feeling they are not smart enough to do well at the subject. Often students feel their prior successes are down to them simply being clever.  Now they are struggling their cleverness is suspect and they may withdraw from challenges. They may feel they have no power to control their performance. It may be helpful to talk to them about internal and external loci of control. Performance does depend on an innate ability to some extent, but this is not fixed. [Neuroplasticity](https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-athletes-way/201702/how-do-neuroplasticity-and-neurogenesis-rewire-your-brain), the ability of the brain to adapt and change structurally with new experiences indicates we all have the ability to be more effective learners whatever our [age](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/psychology/dnl/personalpages/Thomas_EdPsych.doc)

It is easy to talk about growth mindsets, but the reality can be that failure crushes self-confidence. Students will sometimes blame you for their failure. It is important for them to understand that success is usually a combination of;

* Experience – They can correctly interpret the requirement of the questions
* Knowledge – They know enough about the topic in order to answer the question and to see the connections between related topics.
* Skills – They can explain or use concepts and can transfer these skills to possible unfamiliar material.

Failure is due to a deficiency in one or more of these areas. All of these can be addressed with more effort (or more effective effort

* **Upskilling**

It is unlikely that your students will have all the skills needed to be successful at this higher level. Many will have passed GCSE with flying colours simply by learning what the examiner wanted from them -Parroting answers without any deep understanding. What are the most important skills for your students to have? Narrow them down to four or five and teach them explicitly.

* **Note Taking**

**For students:**

* Avoid transcribing notes (writing every word the teacher says) in favour of writing condensed notes in your own words. Review your notes on the same day you created them and then on a regular basis, rather of cramming your review into one long study session prior to an exam.
* Test yourself on the content of your notes. Testing yourself informs you what you do not yet know from your notes and successful recall of tested information improves your ability to recall that information later (you will be less likely to forget it).
* Carefully consider whether to take notes on pen and paper or with a laptop. There are costs and benefits to either option. For example, note-taking on a laptop may allow you to include more content in your notes, but at the risk of being distracted by unrelated tasks.
* Avoid the misperception that you know lesson content better than you actually do, which can lead to poor study habits. While course topics may appear easy to understand in class, they may be rather difficult as you are reviewing them several weeks later while preparing for the exam. Be aware that you will forget some of what you have learned and adopt better study habits to address the gaps in your knowledge.

**For teachers**

* Explain your course policies on note-taking and/or better learning practices and their rationale at the beginning of term. Support your reasoning with data from prior terms and/or educational research, particularly if students feel that your policies are counter-intuitive or different from their preferred practices.
* Provide students with materials prior to lessons that allow them to become familiar with the main ideas or topics. Students will be more likely to identify the important concepts during class and take more selective notes. However, avoid giving students so much material that they elect poor study behaviours such as relying on the materials instead of attending class and taking notes.
* Encourage students to take notes in their own words rather than record every word you say in class. Doing so will lead to deeper understanding during lecture, more student engagement in class, and better retention of course content.
* Make connections between current and previously discussed course concepts, and encourage students to make such connections on their own. Doing so will help students retrieve related ideas when they are needed (i.e., during an exam).
* **Thinking Skills**

Get in the habit of asking “Is thinking visible here?” are thoughts being aired, justified, evaluated? Who is doing the thinking? Using no hands up and ask students individual questions

Ask “Is the language of thinking being used here, and key words are; compare, analyse, predict, evaluate, speculate

Are your students asking questions?

In spite of the obvious educational advantages of emphasising higher order questions, research studies of classrooms show that only 20% of classroom questions posed by teachers require more than simple factual recall, and this is mainly because teachers are using **closed** questions. A closed question is one in which there is a limited number of acceptable answers, most of which will have been anticipated by the teacher

**What types of questions then should teachers be using as an alternative?**

An **open** question is one for which there are many possible answers, most of which will not have been anticipated by the teacher. Higher order questions encourage divergent thinking, e.g;

* + **Application Questions:**  these questions ask students to apply essential knowledge to new settings and contexts. For example: How could you demonstrate the use of this concept? How would you illustrate this concept in action?
  + **Analytical Questions:**  ask students to dissect key information and analyse essential concepts, themes and processes. For example: How are these two characters alike or different? What is an analogy that might represent this situation? How would you classify these literary works? What are the major elements that comprise this sequence of events? What are the major causes of this situation?
  + **Synthesis Questions:** require students to formulate a holistic summary of key ideas, make inferences, or create new scenarios. For example: What would you hypothesise about these unusual events? What do you infer from these statements? Based on the facts, what predictions would you make? How might you find a solution to this ecological problem?
  + **Interpretive Questions:**  are open-ended questions that require students to formulate opinions in response to ideas presented in print or non-print form (e.g. art work, music etc). Students must support their opinions with direct textual evidence. For example: What does Frost mean when he says, “I have miles to go before I sleep?” Why does the photographer emphasise only the subject’s eyes? What mood does the composer want to convey in this passage?
  + **Evaluate Questions:** require students to formulate and justify judgements and criticisms based upon clearly articulated evaluative criteria. For example: Why did you decide to choose that course of action? How would you rank these choices? How might you defend that characters actions? How would you verify that conclusion?

Teachers should also be using these types of questions when they are moving around the class as student work independently. Students may at first take some time getting used to this type of questioning where they are challenged and really have to think, but teachers need to persevere

In addition

**Questions for clarification:**

* Why do you say that?
* How does this relate to our discussion?

**Questions that probe assumptions**:

* What could we assume instead?
* How can you verify or disapprove that assumption?

**Questions that probe reasons and evidence:**

* What would be an example?
* What is….analogous to?
* What do you think causes…. to happen…? Why?

**Questions about Viewpoints and Perspectives:**

* What would be an alternative?
* Is there another way to look at it?
* Would you explain why it is necessary or beneficial, and who benefits?
* Why is ‘x’ the best?
* What are the strengths and weaknesses of…?
* How are…and …similar?
* What is a counterargument for…?

**Questions that probe implications and consequences:**

* What generalisations can you make?
* What are the consequences of that assumption?
* What are you implying?
* How does…affect…?
* How does…tie in with what we learned before?

**Questions about the question:**

* What was the point of this question?
* Why do you think I asked this question?
* What does…mean?
* How does…apply to everyday life?

**Other ideas**

**Think /Pair /Share** – Individuals are given a situation and asked “What is going on here?” “What makes you say that?” Then they are asked to pair up and compare their views with their partner. They are then asked to agree and share with others their thoughts

**Fairness routine** – Given a situation or dilemma. “Who might be affected by this? Who might care? What might their viewpoint be? (This can also be used in a historical context in taking the prevailing views of the time about slavery, witchcraft etc.)

**Circle of Viewpoints** – Students are asked to put across opposing viewpoints for a dilemma or a decision. The structure is: I am thinking … topic … from the point of view of ……. . I think … (give view of that person with a justification). A question that my view generates is ….. They then do the same for as many characters as appropriate to the task

**Claim/support/question** – A way of structuring ideas. What is your claim? What supports your claim? What may be questioned about your claim?

**Reporter’s Notebook** – A very powerful technique in this world of political spin this puts things in context for analysis

* Identify the story/situation/dilemma
* What are the facts? What are the events? What do we really know?
* What are the thoughts/feelings of the parties?
* What more information do you need?
* What is your judgement and why?

**Traffic Lighting** – Ideal for analysing newspapers for bias. Using different coloured highlighters

* Red – Highlight strong – Sweeping statements, beliefs, feelings, self- interest, one sided arguments, uncorroborated claims
* Amber – Highlight milder versions of the red claims
* Green – Highlight the facts or strongly evidenced claims
* **What motivates students?**
* Students feel the way to make lessons enjoyable and stimulating is to have a variety of activities, including group work, debates, class discussion, role play and practical work.
* Lessons are made more interesting by the enthusiasm of the teacher, although interest in the subject is also important.
* Homework tasks that are interesting and relevant are most likely to motivate students. Positive feedback and high teacher expectations also motivate students to want to complete work.
* The main causes of students’ failure to complete homework are a lack of understanding of the task and long deadlines. These are closely followed by other commitments, such as part-time employment and social life.
* Students’ motivation is increased by teachers who are friendly, approachable, understanding and helpful.
* The key motivating features in students’ relationships with other students are the ability and opportunity to work together and to share ideas in a supportive environment.
* Teachers’ actions are heavily linked to teaching style. Students found the most motivating styles to be those that encourage participation and those where teachers show enthusiasm and organise individual teacher-pupil contact. The most demotivating forms of teaching are dictation, being “talked at” and working from the overhead projector.
* **Teaching strategies to enhance higher-order thinking skills in your students.**

**Teaching Strategies to Help Determine What Higher-Order Thinking is**

Help students understand what higher-order thinking is. Explain to them what it is and why they need it. Help them understand their own strengths and challenges. You can do this by showing them how they can ask themselves good questions. That leads us to the next strategy.

**Encourage Questioning**

A classroom where students feel free to ask questions without any negative reactions from their peers or their teachers is a classroom where students feel free to be creative. Encourage students to ask questions, and if for some reason you can’t get to their question during class time, then show them how they can answer it themselves, or have them save the question until the following day.

**Connect Concepts**

Lead students through the process of how to connect one concept to another. By doing this you are teaching them to connect what they already know with what they are learning. This level of thinking will help students learn to make connections whenever it is possible, which will help them gain even more understanding. For example, let’s say that the concept they are learning is “Chinese New Year.” An even broader concept would be “Holidays,” and if you take it one step further it can be “Celebrations.” Each small concept can be connected to a bigger, broader concept.

**Teach Students to Infer**

Teach students to make inferences by giving them “Real-world” examples. You can start by giving students a picture of a people standing in line at a soup kitchen. Ask them to look at the picture and focus on the details. Then, ask them to make inferences based on what they see in the picture. Another way to teach young students about how to infer is to teach an easy concept like weather. Ask students to put on their raincoat and boots, then ask them to infer what they think the weather looks like outside.

**Use Graphic Organizers**

Graphic organizers provide students with a nice way to frame their thoughts in an organized manner. By drawing diagrams or mind maps, students are able to better connect concepts and see their relationships. This will help students develop a habit of connecting concepts.

**Teach Problem-Solving Strategies**

Teach students to use a step-by-step method for solving problems. This way of higher order thinking will help them solve problems faster and easier. Encourage students to use alternative methods to solve problems as well as offer them different problem-solving methods.

**Encourage Creative Thinking**

Creative thinking is when students invent, imagine, and design what they are thinking. Using your creative senses help students process and understand information better. Research shows that when students utilize creative higher order thinking skills, it indeed increases their understanding. Encourage students to think “Outside of the box.”

**Use Mind Movies**

When concepts that are being learned are hard, encourage students to create a movie in their mind. Teach them to close their eyes and picture it like a movie playing. This way of higher order thinking will truly help them understand in a powerful, unique way.

**Teach Students to Elaborate Their Answers**

Higher-order thinking requires students to really understand a concept, not repeat it or memorize it. Encourage students to elaborate their answers and talk about what they are learning. Ask parents to reinforce this at home, as well by asking the right questions that make students explain their answers in more detail, or to answer their child’s question with a more detailed response.

**Teach QARs**

Question-Answer-Relationships, or QARs, teach students to label the type of question that is being asked, then use that information to help them formulate an answer. Students must decipher if the answer can be found in a text or on the Internet, or if they must rely on their own prior knowledge to answer it. This strategy has been found to be effective for higher-order thinking because students become more aware of the relationship between the information in a text and their prior knowledge, which helps them decipher which strategy to use when they need to seek an answer.

* **Ways to boost your students' employability**
* **“Make explicit that which is tacit”...**As a teacher you know the skills and attributes used and developed during an Advanced Level course, but do your students recognize that through preparing and delivering a presentation they have developed one of the many skills required by employers? There are countless other examples.
* **“Don’t reinvent the wheel”...**The curriculum addresses many aspects of employability. Talk to colleagues and make an audit of activities that take place every day in school that support the development of employability. For example, take history, students learn to research and analyse facts to identify truth and propaganda. Being able to think critically and evaluate information is a crucial employability skills. Encourage students to demonstrate they can take responsibility for their own learning and development by taking a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course). Practical examples of how the curriculum can be used to boost student employability are available at http://www.cegnet.co.uk, an online community for teachers, careers professionals and supporters of career development to share resources.
* **Value work related activities...** Often students find it hard to recognize the importance of the skills they learn within the most routine part time jobs. A kitchen porter is working under pressure to deadlines, whilst a shop assistant is communicating and identifying customer need. Work can be unpaid, students who volunteer, whether it is helping to teach ICT to older people at the local library, assisting at a primary school or offering time to be a peer mentor, students can develop their emotional intelligence and ability to teach others. Work experience, business days and employer based projects offer valuable opportunities for students to gain a greater awareness of the demands of industry, including the need to be flexible and creative in their approach. Students can actively participate in marketing themselves through the application process, and once completed students have the opportunity to reflect on their learning. Unfortunately, work experience is not compulsory in schools, and with universities demanding high grades, the temptation is for teachers and students to focus on purely academic achievement, a trend concerning the Institute of Directors.
* **Make the Most of Support Available**... Linking with the Careers and Enterprise Company is a way to access support to develop student employability. Established in 2015, the CEC is working in partnership with the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPS) to put in place an Enterprise Adviser network, pairing senior business volunteers with individual educational establishments. The company have awarded funding to projects throughout the country that aim to build links between industry and education. The company website offers a range of helpful resources. The Career Development Institute have produced the Framework for Careers, Employability and Enterprise which is a practical resource for teachers covering all aspects including employability and makes suggestions as to how learning outcomes can be achieved.
* **Encourage Extra Curricular Interests...** As students progress up the school, there is a tendency for them to reduce the extra- curricular activities they take part in, however 70% of businesses believe that these activities are important, often making a student stand out from the crowd. Taking part in sport, playing an instrument or belonging to a youth group shows commitment, perseverance and team work. An unusual hobby or passion for something….anything!, can contribute to students employability, as the experiences gained can be translated into skills, attributes and qualities such as problem solving, risk taking and initiative.
* **Embrace Technology** Finally, one aspect of employability where students are likely to be ahead of their teachers is proficiency in the use of digital technology, including the understanding of social media and its applications within the workplace. In the future, businesses will connect and collaborate remotely with freelancers and independent professionals through digital talent platforms. It is worth noting that 95% of graduate employers currently use social media in their recruitment activity. Students should be aware too that 50% of employers viewed candidates’ social media profiles before making a job offer!
* **Ofsted and post 16 inspection**

**Evaluating sixth-form provision in schools**.

Inspectors are required to grade the quality of education in any sixth-form provision in schools and to write a section in the inspection report that summarises its effectiveness. Inspectors must use all their evidence to evaluate what it is like to be a student in the sixth form. . The effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding students is reflected in the main judgement for the school. Inspectors should take account of the key judgement areas in the evaluation schedule. They should consider:

 the extent to which leaders and teachers have high expectations for achievement and progress and the effectiveness of the systems they use to monitor and develop the quality of sixth-form programmes for all students, including the most disadvantaged and those with high needs

 how leaders and teachers develop a curriculum that provides progression, stretch, mathematics and English for those young people without GCSE grades 9 to 4 (or legacy grades A\* to C), as well as work experience or industry placements and non-qualification activities103

 the effectiveness of high-quality impartial careers guidance in enabling all students to make progress and move on to a higher level of qualification, employment or further training when they are ready to do so.

Through observing teaching and training activities and by holding discussions with students, teachers and support staff, inspectors will consider how well:

 students develop personal, social and independent learning skills

 students achieve high levels of punctuality and attendance

 students’ conduct and attitudes, including in non-qualification or enrichment activities and/or work experience, prepare them for employment or progress to higher levels of study.

**Grade descriptors**

**Outstanding (1)**

 The school meets all the criteria for good in the effectiveness of sixth form provision securely and consistently.

 The quality of sixth form provision provided is exceptional. In addition, the following apply:

 The work that sixth-form students do over time embodies consistently demanding curriculum goals. It matches the aims of the curriculum in being coherently planned and sequenced towards building sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and destinations.

 The impact of the taught curriculum is strong. Students acquire and develop high-quality skills and produce work of a consistently high standard.

 Sixth-form students demonstrate consistently highly positive attitudes and commitment to their education. They have consistently high levels of respect for others.

 The sixth form consistently and extensively promotes learners’ personal development. The sixth form goes beyond the expected, so that learners have access to a wide, rich set of experiences that teach learners why it is important to contribute actively to society. This is achieved through activities that strengthen considerably the sixth form’s offer.

**Good (2)**

 Leaders adopt or construct study programmes that are ambitious, appropriately relevant to local and regional employment and training priorities and designed to give sixth-form students, particularly those with high needs and the most disadvantaged, the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life. [If this is not yet fully the case, it is clear from leaders’ actions that they are in the process of bringing this about.]

 The curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment. [If this is not yet fully the case, it is clear from leaders’ actions that they are in the process of bringing this about.]

 The school is ambitious for all its sixth-form students, including those with SEND and those who have high needs. This is reflected in the curriculum. The curriculum remains ambitious and is tailored, where necessary, to meet individual needs. [If this is not yet fully the case, it is clear from leaders’ actions that they are in the process of bringing this about.]

 Sixth-form students study the intended curriculum. The school ensures this by teaching all components of the full programmes of study.

 Teachers have expert knowledge of the subject(s) and courses they teach. Leaders provide effective support for those teaching outside their main areas of expertise. When relevant, teachers have extensive and up-to-date vocational expertise.

 Teachers present information and/or demonstrate skills clearly, promoting appropriate consideration of the subject matter being taught. They check students’ understanding systematically, identify misconceptions and provide clear, direct feedback. In doing this, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary without recourse to unnecessary, time-consuming, individualised approaches to subject matter.

 The work that teachers give to sixth-form students is demanding. It ensures that students build knowledge and acquire skills, improving and extending what they already know and can do.

 Teachers encourage students to use subject-specific, professional and technical vocabulary well.

 Over the course of study, teachers design and use activities to help students to remember long term the content they have been taught, to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts and to apply skills fluently and independently.

 Teachers and leaders use assessment well. For example, they use it to help students embed and use knowledge fluently and flexibly, to evaluate the application of skills, or to check understanding and inform teaching. Leaders understand the limitations of assessment and do not use it in a way that creates unnecessary burdens on staff or students.

 Teachers create an environment that allows sixth-form students to focus on learning. The resources and materials that teachers select and produce – in a way that does not create unnecessary workload for staff – reflect the school’s ambitious intentions for the course of study. These materials clearly support the intent of a coherently planned curriculum, sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning, independent living and employment.

 Students develop detailed knowledge across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well in their study programmes. Students make substantial and sustained progress from their identified and recorded starting points in their study programmes. Where appropriate, this is reflected in results in national examinations that meet government expectations, or in the qualifications obtained.

 Students are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. They have gained qualifications or met the standards that allow them to go on to destinations that meet their interests, aspirations and intended course of study. Students with high needs have greater independence in making decisions about their lives.

 Students have high attendance and are punctual. Their attitudes to their education are positive. Where relevant, attitudes improve over time.

 The sixth form prepares its students for future success in education, employment or training. It does this through providing: unbiased information to all about potential next steps; high-quality, up-to-date and locally relevant careers guidance, and opportunities for good quality, meaningful encounters with the world of work.

**Requires improvement (3)**

 The quality of education in the sixth form is not yet good.

**Inadequate (4)** The quality of education is likely to be inadequate if any one of the following applies.

 The design, coverage or teaching of the curriculum does not provide adequately for all students.

 The curriculum does not prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain.

 Weak assessment practice means that teaching fails to meet students’ needs.

 The attainment and progress of students are consistently low and show little or no improvement over time, indicating that students are underachieving considerably.

 Students do not develop or improve the English and mathematical skills they need to succeed in the next year or stage of education, or in training or employment.

 Students have not attained the qualifications, skills or behaviours appropriate for them to progress to their next stage of education, training or employment.

 Students’ attendance is consistently low and shows little sign of sustained improvement. Their lack of engagement, motivation or enthusiasm inhibits their progress and development.

 The school does not ensure that sixth-form students get access to unbiased information about potential next steps, high-quality careers guidance, or opportunities for encounters with the world of work.

**Tony Stephens**