

SIRIUS ACADEMY WEST

Teaching and Learning Magazine

Issue
No 2

THE
CONSTELLATION
TRUST



Sirius
ACADEMY WEST

WHERE STARS ARE BORN



14
Competition

16 & 17
Lockdown Chic



C CONTENTS PAGE

Pg 4 - 5 - HOS Introduction- GRA

Pg 6 - 7 - Tips for supporting online behaviour - VST

Pg 8 - 9 - Supporting pupils mental health and wellbeing during lockdown and beyond - ADU

Pg 10 - Vision, Values and Priorities - GRA

Pg 11 - Love cooking this lockdown - ACU

Pg 12 - 13 - Online Classroom Management - LLC

Pg 14 - 15 - Competition and Screen Time

Pg 16- 17 - Lockdown Chic - fashion tips - VRI

Pg 18 - 19 - Exercise tips when stuck at home - MDE

Pg 20 - 21 - Recommended reads - summary of the recommendations by staff on twitter each week - KBE

Pg 22 - 23 -Strategies to support improvements in pupil grammar - lessons from MFL - JHP

Pg 26 - 27 - ADHD - KSU

Pg 28- 29 - Assessing pupils online - SNO

Pg 30 - 31 - Lockdown learning - excellent practice - APR

Pg 32 - 33 - Engaging pupils online - LLC

Pg 34 - 35 - Differentiation - lessons from teaching mixed ability classes - LYA

Pg 36- 37 - Securing learning in long term memory - online - JEV

Pg 38 - 39 - Strategies the schools are using to improve reading during lockdown - JPA

Pg 40 - 41 - Bonner's Books - DBO

Pg 42 - Bonner's Books - DBO

Pg 43 - CPD Leaderboard - APR

Pg 44 - 45 - Teaching and Learning Star Award - APR

Pg 46 - 47 - The last word - why you teach and why at Sirius - AHA



H

EAD OF SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION



It gives me great pleasure to introduce the second edition of the SAW Teaching and Learning magazine. After the roaring success of issue one, this is a document with a lot to live up to!

I cannot overstate the pride I felt leafing through our first edition during the break. Not only was it a wonderful reflection of the quality teaching that takes place in the Academy every day, it also substantiated our position as a true learning community. Our building is full of interested, dedicated professionals, all motivated to provide the best standard of education to our young people. The publication overflowed with practicable tips on a wide array of topics and disciplines, both academic and pastoral. It was a watershed moment for how we celebrate and utilise our provision. Thank you to everyone who organised, designed, contributed to it or read it, I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did.

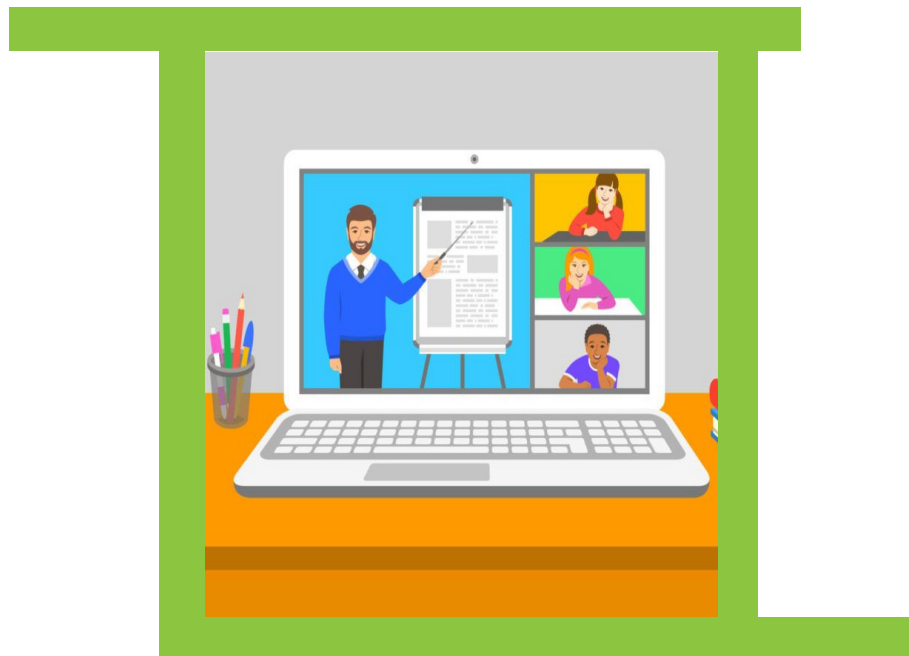


It is my hope that the second issue will be no less powerful or illuminating. Advertising the best of what is taking place at the Academy, not only in terms of teaching and learning, but pastoral care, development of relationships and case study. Whilst the lockdown has no doubt altered how we teach and there will be a need to reintegrate students sensitively and empathetically, these magazines enhance my belief that we can continue with our core mission: providing our students with a holistic education where academic development, artistic flair, critical thinking and an active mind are fostered and celebrated.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts, and reading your contributions.



TIPS FOR SUPPORTING ONLINE BEHAVIOUR



When teaching online, we must learn to do without many of the classroom management strategies we are used to. Students need clear direction as well as us trying to push for their intrinsic motivation. This can be quite tricky when you are staring at a blank screen!!

A few pointers to help with online classroom management:

Be prepared – have a test run of the technology if time allows

Be clear with your expectations. Let the students know what will be required from them by the end of the session. Let them know your 'rules'

Try and mix your sessions up to help to prevent the novelty wearing off

Provide opportunities for praise and feedback.

Encourage some kind of collaborative learning if possible.

Report any unwanted behaviour or comments to the year team.

Ensure you are in control of your virtual classroom and make it clear when students can add to the chat facility use count downs to allow this type of thing to be done in a controlled manner.

Make sure you are happy with any expectation you have of the students and that you feel confident to carry out these expectations.

Make students aware of possible consequences – eg they could be temporarily 'banned' from future online sessions and have to work from the recording in their own time.

If you are creating a discussion situation – make sure everyone is aware of the 'rules' to allow you to remain in control of the situation.

Make sure students understand the difference, and the impact, of attendance versus engagement.

Keep teacher chat to a minimum – they are online – they can research. This will prevent boredom and a tendency to misbehave.

Show some empathy. Let the students know that even though you're not there you are there.

Try and create opportunities where the class can be broken in to small groups – this allows for a slightly more personal touch and for positive relationships to develop.

Try and build in more personal conversations which make students know you have an interest in them – don't be a robot on the other side of the screen.

Give lots of extra encouragement during these difficult times.

Encourage students to set their own goals to stay motivated.

Regularly reflect on their progress.

Challenge if deadlines aren't met.

Create opportunities for students to ask questions.

Try and turn the online experience into a personable experience. Students need human connection now more than ever. This will help keep them motivated and their motivation will reduce disruptive behaviour during whole group lessons.

Understand that students will need time to adjust to this new way of learning – understand this. Try not to overwhelm students with too much too soon. It will take some students longer than others to adjust.

Make sure students feel 'comfortable' in your online classroom – their confidence will grow.

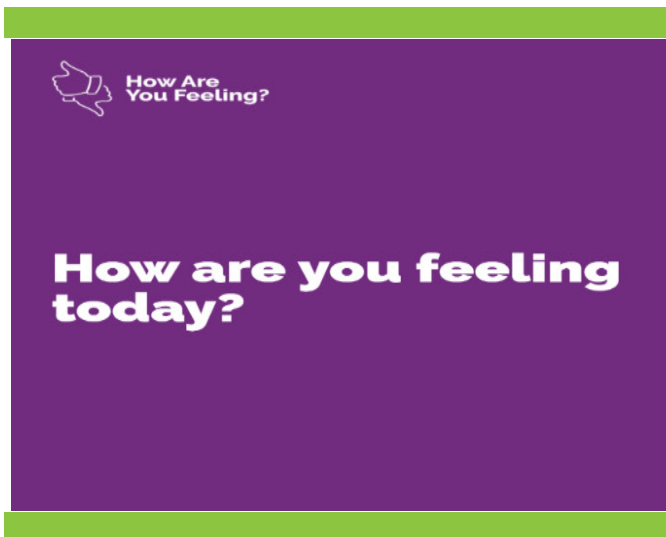
Let them have fun. Let them make mistakes. Make them feel ok. You will get better results with a supportive and understanding approach than by trying to force things.

Realistically, we have very little power in an online classroom. Try not to worry about the students we can't control, take the opportunity to shift control. Taking a step back gives students the chance to take a step forward. By giving students more responsibility, they will make more progress.



SUPPORTING PUPIL'S

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Long before the national pandemic, supporting our students' mental health and well-being had been a priority. Both the Constellation Trust and Sirius West had, and continue to, make significant investments enabling us to deliver high quality support to the right students, at the right time.

The approach has been to offer three tiers of support.

Universal, targeted and bespoke.

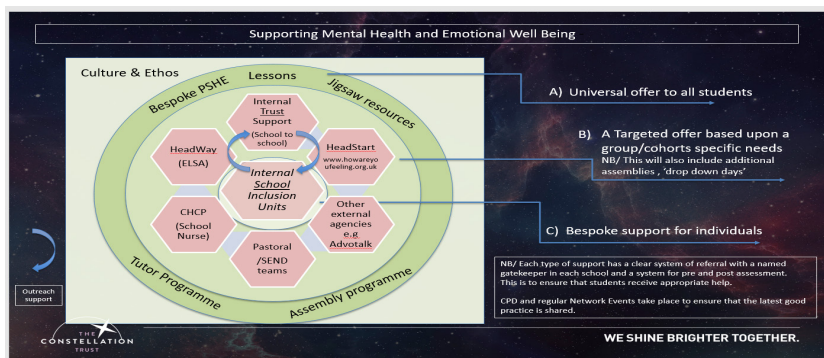
There has been an avalanche of new resources and guidance released in the last 12 months but what can we do every day to support our students? Be it during remote learning (live lessons), face to face activities or eventually when schools fully reopen.

In its simplest form

Mental health is about how we think, feel and behave

During a normal working day, you will have hundreds of interactions with dozens of children.

Remember – “Every interaction is an intervention”



The wider Pastoral Teams are now signposting, when appropriate, to the how are you feeling section of the school website.

This link will take students, parents and carers to www.howareyoufeeling.org.uk/

HeadStart Hull is a National Lottery Community Fund programme, which aims to:

“Enable children and young people to have positive mental health and well-being, thrive in ‘their communities’ and to ‘bounce back’ from life’s challenges” it is one of six HeadStart programmes being run across England.

HeadStart Hull is a collection of services and interventions for supporting young people’s emotional health and well-being.

The website aims to be the trusted source for young people, parents and carers to find advice and guidance.

All schools in Hull are now actively signposting to this resource.

Other useful links and sources of information re: 5 ways to check in

www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/improve-mental-wellbeing/

<https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing/>

Organisations offering resources and support

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/>

<https://www.heyminid.org.uk/>

Thank you for your endless efforts to support pupils’ mental health throughout the pandemic and beyond. We know that while the majority of children are learning from home, this is impacting the mental wellbeing of children, young people and adults in different ways. Whilst awareness of children’s mental has been promoted in our monthly safeguarding theme and nationally, during Mental Health week (1-7 February), it’s really important that we look after our own wellbeing as well.

Please don’t hesitate to speak to your line manager or any of the Senior Team.

The DfE’s Teacher bulletin (4th Feb) has published an extensive list of organisations and resources to support us, students and parents.

https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2021/02/01/mental-health-resources-for-children-parents-carers-and-school-staff/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery.



VISION, VALUES AND PRIORITIES

Sirius Academy West, where every child achieves and believes in success. Our fully inclusive school nurtures high aspirations and respect and removes all barriers to learning to enable all students to reach their potential and become productive citizens in our community.

Our Values

We are guided by our 6 core values of RESPECT. Our staff explicitly model our values in everything they do.

1. Respect for yourself
2. Respect for each other
3. Respect for the environment
4. Respect for the community
5. Respect for education
6. Respect for the future

Our Curriculum Principles

To achieve our vision we are guided by the following curriculum principles known as “the 5B’s”

1. Broad and Balanced
2. Built on Firm Foundations
3. Barriers to learning removed
4. Beyond the classroom
5. Bold and Brave – The Best

Our Teaching and Learning Priorities 2020-21

To ensure effective implementation of our curriculum and achieve excellence in teaching and learning, our 3 CPD areas of focus to drive us to be the best are:

1. Literacy
2. Securing Learning in Long Term Memory
3. Removing Barriers to Learning

We need to remain focussed on the Academy priorities and to remind ourselves regularly of our vision – where we’re moving to as a team

LOVE COOKING THIS LOCKDOWN

Cooking a good meal can sometimes feel like a chore, however we have an opportunity to use this extra time to create tasty and nutritional dishes at home.

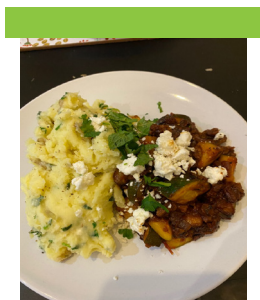
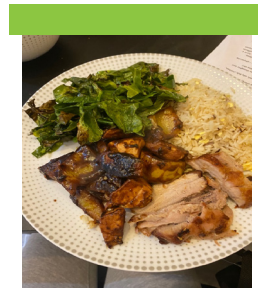
Recipes

- 1- Honey roasted pork belly, seaweed and egg fried rice
- 2- Harissa lean beef ragu and herby feta mash
- 3- Chicken katsu curry
- 4- Pizza

Honey roasted pork belly, seaweed and egg fried rice

This is a creative and tasty dish that is suitable for an evening meal. This dish combines a mixture salted seaweed, crispy honey roasted pork belly and spicy egg fried rice.

This dish takes around 1 hour to prepare and cook.



Harissa lean beef ragu and herby feta mash

This is a hearty dish that is quick and simple to cook.

This dish is made up of a creamy feta cheese mash and a spicy harissa beef ragu with roasted peppers.

This dish takes around 30 minutes to prepare and cook.

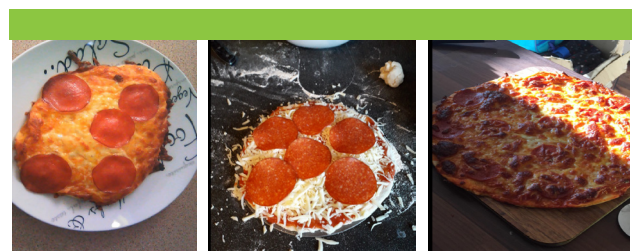
Chicken katsu curry

This dish has a combination of spices that are blended together to make this exciting dish. This meal is a combination breaded chicken, boiled basmati rice and a flavourful curry sauce.



Homemade pizza

A simple and quick dish that the whole family could make would be a pizza. For this you only need a handful of ingredients and a short amount of prep and cooking time. This dish only takes around 20 minutes to prepare and cook. Included are some images of students' work, as they created this pizza dish at home during lockdown.



RESPECT



RESPECT
for yourself



RESPECT
for each other



RESPECT
for the environment



RESPECT
for the community

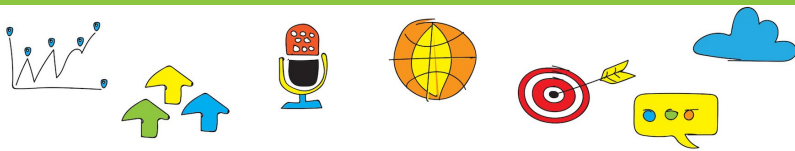


RESPECT
for education



RESPECT
for the future

ONLINE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT



BLENDED LEARNING



There will be times when your students don't follow directions. There will be times when they are not highly motivated. There will be times when the behaviour of the students in your online lessons will be of a concern to you. This will feel more of a challenge when you can't actually physically see the student(s) and being able to create a supportive learning environment becomes a unique obstacle that we haven't faced before.

Online classroom management isn't impossible. In some ways, online classroom management is easier than managing a live classroom. It does, however, require a different approach.

When teaching online, we must learn to do without many of the classroom management strategies we are used to. Students need clear direction as well as us trying to push for their intrinsic motivation. This can be quite tricky when you are staring at a blank screen!!

A few pointers to help with online classroom management:

Be prepared – have a test run of the technology if time allows

Be clear with your expectations. Let the students know what will be required from them by the end of the session. Let them know your 'rules'

Try and mix your sessions up to help to prevent the novelty wearing off.

Provide opportunities for praise and feedback

Encourage some kind of collaborative learning if possible

Report any unwanted behaviour or comments to the year team

Ensure you are in control of your virtual classroom and make it clear when students can add to the chat facility use count downs to allow this type of thing to be done in a controlled manner

Make sure you are happy with any expectation you have of the students and that you feel confident to carry out these expectations.

Make students aware of possible consequences – eg they could be temporarily 'banned' from future online sessions and have to work from the recording in their own time.

If you are creating a discussion situation – make sure everyone is aware of the 'rules' to allow you to remain in control of the situation.

Make sure students understand the difference, and the impact, of attendance versus engagement.

Keep teacher chat to a minimum – they are online – they can research. This will prevent boredom and a tendency to misbehave.

Show some empathy. Let the students know that even though you're not there you are there.

Try and create opportunities where the class can be broken in to small groups – this allows for a slightly more personal touch and for positive relationships to develop

Try and build in more personal conversations which make students know you have an interest in them – don't be a robot on the other side of the screen

Give lots of extra encouragement during these difficult times.

Encourage students to set their own goals to stay motivated.

Regularly reflect on their progress

Challenge if deadlines aren't met

Create opportunities for students to ask questions

Try and turn the online experience into a personable experience. Students need human connection now more than ever. This will help keep them motivated and their motivation will reduce disruptive behaviour during whole group lessons.

Understand that students will need time to adjust to this new way of learning – understand this. Try not to overwhelm students with too much too soon. It will take some students longer than others to adjust.

Make sure students feel 'comfortable' in your online classroom – their confidence will grow.

Let them have fun. Let them make mistakes. Make them feel ok. You will get better results with a supportive and understanding approach than by trying to force things.



C

OMPETITION - ENGAGING

HIGH ABILITY PUPIL PREMIUM BOYS



One of our cohorts that have been disadvantaged most by the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown are high ability, pupil premium boys. These boys are struggling across the academy with attendance, work completion and achievement. The reasons for the poor attendance and poor work completion are student specific and varied. This cohort were underperforming prior to the lockdown, but the gaps that this lockdown has created in their learning has put them significantly further behind than their peers than before the lockdown.

I am keen to identify any ideas/strategies that can be used to engage this cohort back in learning in the academy. This will support closing the gaps between them and their peers and will give them a fair chance at success at the end of year 11.

The gap is most obvious at KS4, but it does begin to develop at KS3. Any ideas that can address the gap early on are also welcome.

If you have any ideas that would engage and support this cohort, not already in place, please write your answers on a postcard (and include your name!) to be in with a chance to win this issue's star prize!

S

CREEN TIME AND WELLBEING

THE PITFALLS OF LIVING LIFE ON A LAPTOP

Twelve months ago I had never attended a Zoom birthday party with my child, family get-togethers were in person, and work involved driving into the academy every day. During the past year, the way we complete many ordinary functions of work and human interaction have changed beyond recognition and increasingly varied aspects of our lives and work have become screen based. This has not just been the case for teachers but for our students and our own children as they have engaged with live lessons and negotiated the demands of life in front of a laptop.

The two obvious starting points when considering screen time and wellbeing are our own and our students' physical and mental health. A cursory glance at your daily step counts is an instant testament to how physically inactive we are in danger of becoming. Have you also noticed you are getting more headaches or how your eyes can no longer quite read the small print? Have you been worried when your own child moves from on-line lessons to playing on a games console or tablet at the end of the virtual school day? Is it not quite as easy to drift off to sleep at the end of the evening? All of these are signs that we are spending too much of the day in front of a screen.

Much of this has been unavoidable, but research shows that even in these constrained circumstances there are things we can do to protect our wellbeing and that of our students. These tips can help us and those we teach to protect their wellbeing from the over use of screens.

1. Get the balance back. Set yourself a time to go for a walk or run every day to ensure that you get some fresh air. If this can be done where you can see trees and a more natural environment your mental health will get a boost alongside your physical fitness.
2. Set a timer to remind you to move and stretch every thirty minutes. Simply standing up where you are and stretching your arms and legs, rotating your shoulders, getting a glass of water and looking out of the window works to reduce stress. Try literally 'thinking on your feet'.
3. Practice a sleep hygiene routine. Take a warm bath to relax the muscles. No screens for two hours before bed. No drinks containing caffeine (and avoid alcohol which reduces sleep quality). Good ventilation and no TV in the bedroom to avoid blue light which can prevent us from relaxing and going to sleep. Keep to the same times for going to bed and waking up – even at the weekend.
4. Try to book a 'no screens' slot at the weekend where whatever you are doing cannot involve screens. Getting out and tidying up the garden, cooking a family meal together or dusting off the dreaded board games are easy activities without having to travel.
5. Eat healthily. Inactivity is taking a toll making a healthy diet so much more important right now. Plenty of fruit and vegetables are useful in keeping the heart healthy as well as the chemical balance of our brains.

For children and young people, research differs widely as to whether extensive screen time has a negative impact on their mental and emotional wellbeing with some giving grave warnings and others suggesting that it is not detrimental at all.

However, the question remains, if a young person is spending many hours at a screen, what are they missing out on? Perhaps that is where we should be looking together to redress the balance as we open back up to face-to-face learning.



L OCKDOWN CHIC

#LOCKDOWN3FASHION



Are you up to date with lockdown fashion chic? Have you spent five months wearing leggings and tracksuit bottoms? Have you furloughed your bra, jeans and party clothes? Have you located a pair of trendy shoes at the bottom of your wardrobe and instantly slammed the door on these reminders of a pre-quarantine life? If so then you are a lockdown fashionista!

The Gown

It is time for the elegant ball gown to be furloughed; there is a new kid on the block. Make way for the dressing gown. A friend to many for a while, the dressing gown has risen to the dizzy heights of fame, proving itself to be a front- runner in the fashion world. Yes! Lockdown is not complete without the humble dressing gown. Once brought out only for weekends, a bout of the flu or mad dash from the bedroom to the bath, the gown has proven itself to be both versatile and invaluable. Wear with jeans and a jumper as a cosy warmer during the harsh cold of winter. For a more glamorous look, team with heels for a strut from the living room into the kitchen. Add boots and a scarf to use for outdoor wear or pair with headwear for the ultimate lockdown look.

The PE Teacher Look

For years, PE teachers have roamed the halls dressed in their PE Kit. Winter, Spring, Summer or Autumn, their choice of clothing never wavered and now the fashion world seems to have caught on. Leggings, tracksuits, shorts and t-shirts are the staple of any lockdown fashionista's wardrobe. Perfect for sitting on the couch for hours, they allow the wearer to feel a sense of determination that today will be the day when they take up the opportunity to exercise. Don with socks and sliders to stay cool and retro or add trainers for the ultimate look of a fitness fanatic, one thing is for sure, all teachers will be dressing like the PE teacher for many months to come.

Smart/Casual Look

We may have said goodbye to face-to-face meetings, to parents evenings and open nights, but that does not mean we have lost our pride. The nation expects the best from its teachers and a level of professionalism that never wavers. The smart/casual guide is easy to achieve and presents an image second to none, whilst allowing you to remain comfortable and true to your lockdown Zen. Firstly, choose which parts of the body are going to be smart and which are casual. For meetings and face-to-face lessons over TEAMS, present the top half of your body as smart by donning the recently relegated blouse/shirt and tie and newly retired blazer, whilst on the bottom half you maintain lockdown integrity by wearing tracksuit bottoms and slippers. Similar looks can be created by pairing smart glasses with a casual cap to cover the unwashed, unbrushed, untamed hair.

Loungewear

There's a reason we've never connected loungewear with fashion or considered it part of our actual style. For most of us pre-COVID, leggings, joggers and sweatpants were merely the comfy clothes we changed into after work, too casual to wear in the "real world." Now, of course, that liberating feeling of ripping off your suit and wrapping yourself in fleece isn't even happening: Our entire day is spent in a comfy, cosy dream state. Loungewear, the term that crept into our vocabulary and settled like a bee in a hive has become the lockdown essential that we just can't live without. Fashion rookies often mistake loungewear for pyjamas but do not be fooled, loungewear is a staple of our fashion diet and allows you to exit the house once a day whilst feeling as comfortable as if you were heading to bed. Men can finally embrace their inner child and spend the day with Spiderman, the Hulk or Wonder Woman on their trousers whilst women can replicate the look of a fuzzy, wuzzy bear and wear fluffy, matching, pastel tops and bottoms- great for keeping warm whilst we adhere to socially distanced high fives instead of the much loved cuddle.

Wellies

The shining star of the pandemic has to be the wellington boot. Usually associated only with the farmer's field or toddlers, the welly has been the surprising champion of lockdown. Long gone are the days of strutting like a catwalk model in high heels; wedges and boots are on the non-essential list. When partaking in the daily 'get out of the house' allowance, wellies are the way forward. Windy, rainy, snowy or extremely muddy, the welly takes in the weather and laughs in the face of any danger. To maximise the look, wellies must be suitably dirty; covered in mud as evidence that you have thoroughly enjoyed the cold and repetitive walk through the sludge that was once a beautiful, flourishing field. Wear to pop to the shops or for the school run to allow all others in your society to know that you are fashion forward and rocking lockdown in style; that you are indeed rocking the lockdown chic.



STAYING ACTIVE DURING LOCKDOWN

Tips to staying active during lockdown.

This article includes some simple ways you can include physical activity into your lock down lifestyle. Many of you are busy with work and other commitments but it's also important during this difficult time of lockdown that we look after our physical and mental wellbeing.

Physical activity has many benefits such reducing stress and anxiety through releasing lots of feel good hormones in particular the release of cortisol, this helps us manage stress. Being physically active also gives your brain something to focus on and can be a positive coping strategy for difficult times.

My top tip would be to find something you enjoy doing, exercise should be fun and not a chore. I have listed below some activities you and family can get involved in, my family and I have tried some of these activities out over the last few weeks and have had a great time!

Get active outdoors

Have a walk at lunch time, a bit of time away from the screen

Scavenger hunts (For the kids)

Geo caching

Meeting a friend for a walk is great for our well-being

Night time walks and take a look at the at the stars

Coach to 5K: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/couch-to-5k-week-by-week/>

This mum runs: <https://www.thismumruns.co.uk/app>

Find a fitness challenge

The family daily mile: <https://thedailymile.co.uk/at-home/>

Strava challenges: <https://www.strava.com/challenges?hl=en-GB>

10000 steps a day in March: https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/get-involved/find-an-event/walk-all-over-cancer?gclid=EALalQobChMIu-n19fvh7gIVj-3tCh1hBgJDEAAYASAAEgJz4vD_BwE&gclidsrc=aw.ds

Virtual challenges (Climbing mountains and famous treks) <https://www.theconqueror.events/all-challenges/>

Get active at home

Free

Nike Training Club: <https://www.nike.com/gb/ntc-app>

Just dance: bop around your living room to your favourite songs https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVf-gTw_W_JY

Fitness blender: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9BxR5YTI0vw>

Joe Wickes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibGsVS3LChg>

Yoga with Adrienne: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7JfqOfqSml>

Paid for options

Les Mills (Lots of different of different workouts)

https://signup.lesmillsdemand.com/friendsandfamily/?utm_medium=digital&utm_source=sportengland&utm_campaign=sport-england

Cost: £11.95 per month to £95.60 for an annual package. (30 day free trial available)

Davina McCall OYG from £4.99 a month (Excellent choice of work outs)

https://ownyourgoalsdavina.com/?utm_source={{site_source_name}}&utm_medium={} &utm_campaign={{-campaign.name}}&utm_content={{adset.name}}&ad+name={{ad.name}}&gclid=EALalQobChMI8taBtO_h7glVkr7tCh2_Vw69EAAYASAAEglAL_D_BwE

Work outs and activities for children:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/watch/bp-feel-good-fitness>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/fun-exercises-to-do-at-home-with-kids>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCokO71NW3TgndaSNyHlqwtQ> (Get kids moving)

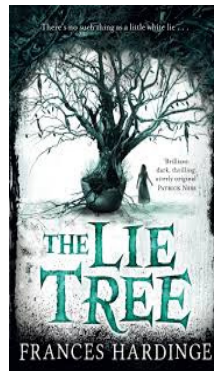
<https://www.thisgirlcan.co.uk/activities/disney-workouts/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/10-minute-shake-up/shake-ups>



S TAFF

RECOMMENDED READS



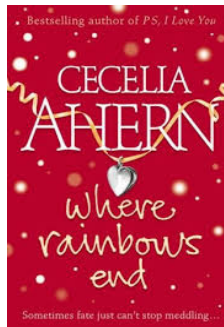
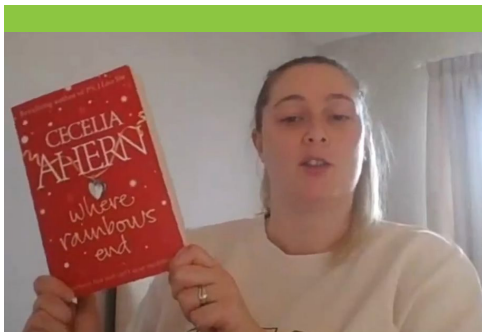
Mrs Palmer chose: The Lie Tree by Frances Harding

This is one of Mrs Palmer's favourite books, and I can understand why. When Faith searches through her father's belongings, she uncovers 'a tree that feeds off whispered lies and bears fruit that reveals hidden secrets.' Set in Victorian England (now we know why it's one of her favourites), it follows Faith's difficult journey to find out more about her father's mysterious demise. Faith is dismissed and ignored on her journey (reflective of the time period) and that is one of the reasons this is a favourite of Mrs Palmer's. Winner of the Costa Book of the Year 2015, this is a story that has dark elements but is easy to read.

Miss Midgeley chose: The Midnight Library by Matt Haig

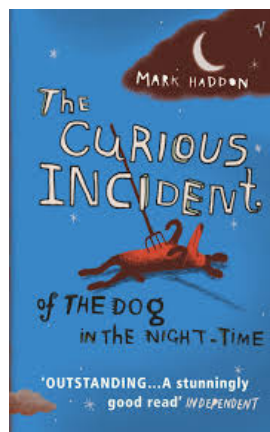
Miss Midgeley's favourite book follows a troubled character that feels a little bit trapped and lost. Although difficult to read at the beginning of the book, the main character finds herself in the 'Midnight Library'. This gives her the opportunity to read books loosely based on events in her life that she has had regrets about. In the library she has the opportunity to relive some of these experiences and reassess her regrets and look at things differently. A great book addressing empathy and just being kind to others and what they are going through. Definitely a positive message!





Miss Ledingham chose: Where Rainbows End by Cecelia Ahern

You had me at 'unconventional'! This is a favourite of Miss Ledingham's because not only is it set out in an unconventional way (notes, emails, text messages between the main characters), she found it to be a really dyslexia-friendly book. As well as being easy to read, it was engaging and easy to follow. It made her laugh, it made her cry, and it made her feel good. What's not to like? I love the fact that you have celebrated this book and shown that dyslexia should not stop you from escaping into wonderful stories!



Mrs Bentham chose:

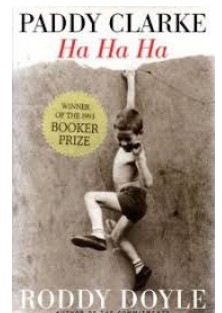
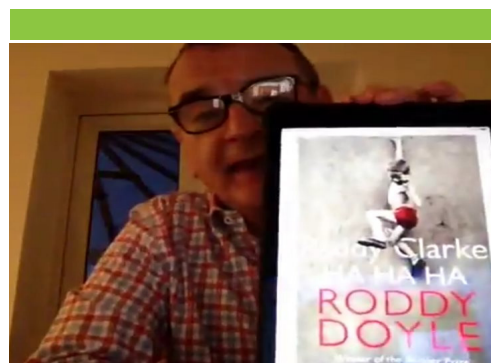
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time by Mark Haddon

This is Mrs Bentham's favourite book because she loves murder mysteries. In this book, Christopher (the main character) has Aspergers' Syndrome. One day he finds a neighbour's dog murdered, which prompts him to write this book as a murder mystery. Christopher is 'very good with numbers, not so good with people', and along his journey to find the murderer, he learns lots of things; about himself, his family and how to tell a good joke. This really is an inspiring book with an unusual viewpoint. @mark_haddon 'a very nice thing to hear. thank you mrs bentham...' You are welcome, Mr Haddon...

Mr Provan chose:

Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha by Roddy Doyle

This must have had a great impact on Mr Provan – still a favourite after reading it in the 90s! That was, well, a long time ago! A Booker Prize Winner in 1993, this story is from the mind of a young boy growing up on the streets of Dublin, where he has various encounters (one can only imagine). This book reminds you of the thoughts you yourself had as a youngster, and how you might deal with things differently. Mr Provan was desperate to spill the beans on some of the juicy bits of the book, but instead want you to find out yourself. In his own words, 'Have a go at it. It's great!'



S

TRATEGIES TO SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT IN PUPIL GRAMMAR



Over recent years the teaching of grammar has changed in Languages, reflecting more closely how we acquire grammar in our first language. That is to say by modelling good grammar in what students hear and read.

The change has come about as research has shown that traditional pedagogy causes cognitive overload enabling only the brightest or most gifted students to succeed. Recent pedagogical research suggests that teaching grammar through modelling is much more effective in terms of understanding, self-efficacy, and cognitive load. This is after all how we learn our first language.

Research shows that the concept of priming plays an important part in the acquisition of language in the long-term memory and I would include 'correct' English in this. Priming is when we subconsciously process which words follow each other and how the use of one word affects those which follow i.e. it is a little like how advertising works, we see an advert for a product and then when we see it in the supermarket, we are more inclined to buy it. Our subconscious has been primed.

In terms of grammar or structural priming in Languages research shows that if students re-use language they have just heard this is short-term priming and involves explicit memory. However, to commit priming to the long-term memory implicit learning is needed (Bock & Griffin 2000). Students are more likely to remember structures when they have manipulated the language. The strategy we use for this in Languages is by using grammar patterns in the expectation that students pick them up in their short and long-term memory.

We do this by using sentence builders, and flooded input via listening and reading of the grammar patterns we want the students to develop.

Sentence builders allow students to manipulate sentences to say something unique but following a set structure to practise a grammar rule. In the example here we are training students to use a time phrase at the start of a sentence. We also include an opinion and justification allowing students to create longer sentences with minimum cognitive load, as they are primed to produce this structure. There are tens of activities we would use to practise and use a sentence builder to model and manipulate the structures: faulty echo, predict the next word, missing word, climb the word wall, complete the sentence from the initial letter of each word to name a few.

Ça c'est bien passé? (Describing a date)			
Time phrase	verb	Opinion	Adjective
Hier <i>Yesterday</i>	Je suis sorti(e) avec... <i>I went out with</i>	C'était... <i>It was...</i>	cool/génial <i>cool/great</i>
Hier soir <i>Yesterday evening</i>	Je suis allé(e)/ On est allé... <i>I went/ We went...</i>	Je me suis bien amusé(e) parce que c'était... <i>I had a good time because it was...</i>	intéressant <i>interesting</i>
Hier après-midi <i>Yesterday afternoon</i>	Je suis resté(e) à la maison... <i>I stayed at home</i>	Je l'ai aimé parce que c'était... <i>I liked it because it was...</i>	marrant <i>funny</i>
Hier matin <i>Yesterday morning</i>	J'ai /On a... <i>I/We...</i>	Je ne l'ai pas aimé parce que c'était... <i>I didn't like it because...</i>	romantique <i>romantic</i>
Samedi dernier <i>Last Saturday</i>	... bavardé <i>... chatted</i>		sympa <i>nice</i>
Le weekend dernier <i>Last weekend</i>	...bu du coca <i>...drank cola</i>		ennuyeux/ barbant <i>boring</i>
L'année dernière <i>Last year</i>	...fait des magasins <i>...went shopping</i>		horrible <i>horrible</i>
Il y a deux semaines <i>Two weeks ago</i>	...fait une promenade <i>...went for a walk</i>		nul <i>rubbish</i>
	...joué au bowling <i>...went bowling</i>		un désastre <i>a disaster</i>
	...mangé un hamburger <i>... ate a burger</i>		
	...regardé un DVD <i>... watched a DVD</i>		
	...bien rigolé <i>...had a real laugh</i>		
	...dansé (ensemble) <i>... danced (together)</i>		

Flooded input would be several sets of similar short paragraphs each containing the grammatical structure(s) being learnt with a range of activities exploiting the text. Students will re-read or re-listen to the structures repeatedly, priming them to predict and use the structures themselves. (Smith & Conti 2016)

If students hear, read, use, and manipulate the structures you want them to use, they are 'primed' and use them subconsciously. 'The human brain has limited cognitive space for processing language, so it automatises lower order receptive and productive skills to free up space and facilitate performance.' (Gianfranco Conti).

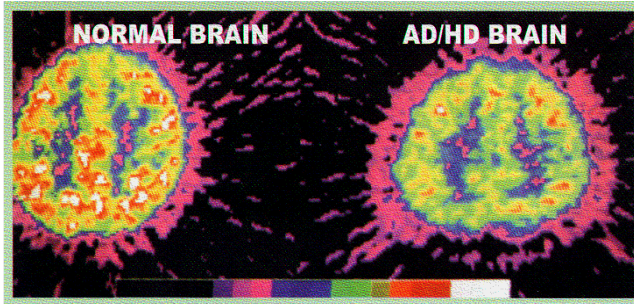
When we wish students to write using structures appropriate for an exam, we want them to use their working memory to recall subject knowledge and the structures they use to convey this to be automatised, thus avoiding cognitive overload. To do this, students need to see and manipulate example answers which contain the grammar and structures we need them to use. After all students are not exposed to the type of grammar and language needed to perform well in exams daily, so they are not primed to use it.







ADHD



I have run out of fingers for the amount of times a parent has told me their child has ADHD as they cannot cope with them at home, but in school we see a very different picture of their behaviour. However I have run out of fingers for the amount of times staff had said to me, 'That kid hasn't got ADHD, he's just naughty!' Historically many have thought it was just 'naughty behaviour'. It is important to stress that **ADHD is a medically proven disability**.

So what is ADHD?

Characterised by hyperactivity and impulsivity

Children with ADHD may be:

Inattentive, but not hyperactive or impulsive.

Hyperactive and impulsive, but able to pay attention.

Inattentive, hyperactive, and impulsive

Inattention

- Does not attend
- Fails to finish tasks
- Can't organise
- Avoids sustained effort
- Loses things – forgetful
- Can be easily distracted

Hyperactivity

- Fidgets
- Leaves seat
- Runs/climbs excessively
- Cannot play/work quietly
- Always 'on the go'
- Talks excessively

Impulsivity

- Talks excessively
- Blurts out answers
- Cannot wait their turn
- Interrupts others
- Intrudes on others' activities and conversations

So if you see a child quietly looking out of the window day dreaming and not seemingly engaging with anything happening in your classroom or unable to sit, fidget, wriggle, shout out, wave their hands around both could be ADHD, however inattentive, hyperactive impulsive is the most common form of ADHD

ADHD is:

Considered as a disorder of age-inappropriate behaviour.

This means that it is not part of their normal developmental process. By age four or five, most children have learned how to pay attention to others, to sit quietly when instructed to, and not to say everything that pops into their heads. So by the time children reach school age, those with ADHD stand out in all three behaviours of inattentiveness, hyperactivity, and impulsivity.

Impaired verbal and motor inhibition.

Excessive task-irrelevant movement and verbal behaviour.

Impulsive decision making; cannot wait or defer gratification.

Greater disregard of future consequences.

This basically means they are impulsive, making impulsive movements and noises, fidgeting, squirming, running, climbing and touching; but they cannot help themselves and will not consider the consequences of their actions for themselves or others in the class.

Restlessness decreases with age, becoming more internal, subjective by adulthood.

Emotionally impulsive with poor emotional self-regulation.

So what can we do?

In Sirius Academy we tried a number of strategies with children diagnosed with ADHD. We are not saying we are experts, however some of these have worked for some, some not so much, but they are all worth a shot as it completely depends on the child.

Think about the seating and keep away from stimulations: Keep their seating away from the window and from the door, seat them where you can directly gain their attention, close enough to say their name and catch their gaze to bring them back on task.

Name the person: Make direct contact with learner and wait until you have eye contact and attention before saying the instructions.

Work in small chunks/tasks: Give them a hard copy of tasks or a whiteboard to write a to-do list. Don't overwhelm them once you have their attention, short sharp tasks are best with regular check-ins.

Limit instructions/repeat them back to you: Ask them to summarise the instructions so you know they have an understanding.

Use visual aids: This could be key words and definitions, to-do lists, the classroom rules and routines, anything you may refer to, to get your point across, to get their attention, to explain a concept.

Keep consistent, clear routines: This is essential, set your stall out early, refer to the rules of the Academy, have them on display and use them as a visual aid.

Use lots of praise and provide immediate rewards: Everyone enjoys praise, but children with ADHD are highly motivated and this will support their motivation. Be genuine with your praise and follow through with any positive promises of phone calls and contact with parents.

Avoid singling out the individual... name the behaviour not the person: Try not to refer to 'you', use a method of ABC of behaviour to support how you want the behaviour to look in the future.

Antecedent

Discuss what happened before the incident, what was the lead up to it?

Behaviour

Discuss the behaviour, what it looked like, how it presented

Consequence

Discuss the consequence of the behaviour, what happened because of the behaviour

The ABC of Behaviour helps the young person and the adult recognise what the behaviour looked like and can help show strategies to support either the trigger, the behaviour, which can be wanted behaviour/positive behaviour, and consequence of behaviour, both negative and positive for the child.

RESPECT



RESPECT
for yourself



RESPECT
for each other



RESPECT
for the environment



RESPECT
for the community



RESPECT
for education



RESPECT
for the future

A SSESSING STUDENTS ONLINE



Are my students learning what I think I am teaching them? Without face-to-face contact and the subtle hints that we have become so great at reading in the classroom, that question can seem quite daunting.

Assessment is not only crucial in measuring whether our students have understood a new concept or mastered a new skill; assessment is an essential part of the planning process. What knowledge have my students managed to retain? Can I move on to more challenging concepts? Do I need to re-think and re-approach the teaching of a particular skill?

In order to plan our assessment strategies, we need to consider what we desire as an outcome. During lesson, we may want to set our students formative assessment tasks that determine immediately whether or not our students are understanding the new content we are delivering. These assessments will then inform further teaching strategies and help us to plan differentiated tasks, ensuring that all students are making progress. There are also times that we need to assess how much our students' knowledge has grown after we have delivered the content. Summative assessment tasks enable us to grade our students and compare their learning journey to previous attainment and to the attainment of similar students.

The key to assessing online (and also in the classroom) is knowing why we want to assess the pupils in the first place. Before planning our AFL strategies we may want to ask ourselves the following:

Is this assessment directly linked to the lesson objective and outcomes?

How am I going to mark this- do I want a formal grade or am I using this information to direct my planning and differentiation?

How will this assessment impact the learning of the students in my class?

Formative and summative assessment strategies for online learning.

Online quizzes- These are great for testing our students' knowledge in order to plan the next stages of the learning sequence. You can create your own using FORMS through the TEAMS app and then download an Excel file, giving you a breakdown of student performance on each question. There is also a wealth of resources available online. Quizlet is a great online resource for retrieval practice of keywords.

Online polls in the chat feature- There are a few ways of creating quick and easing voting systems whilst measuring understanding online. You can type a couple of responses in the chat feature and ask students to 'like' the response they most agree with. You can also type @FORMS into the chat to create multiple choice or true/false questions. Polly is a great app that you can download to create live online polls with your students. Simply type @POLLY into your chat function to explore the app's features.

Peer evaluation- This is a great way to encourage collaborative learning in an online space. Students can put forward their own ideas and their peers can respond to these with a 'thumbs up' or perhaps an angry emoji to disagree. This creates a fantastic springboard to use the breakout rooms for discussion.

Breakout rooms- This is a feature that requires students to be well trained in using TEAMS and requires mutual trust. You can create separate rooms within the chat for students to think, pair and share before coming back to the main room to discuss with other peers. As mentioned above, this works great when used with peer evaluation as it allows the teacher to put students with opposing views together so that they can debate and conclude their ideas.

Questioning- Questioning is an efficient and effective assessment for learning method and is a great strategy to use online. Don't forget to incorporate questioning techniques such as open-ended questioning and pose, pause, pounce bounce. Use lollypop sticks to keep a track of which students you have already interrogated and check in with PP students first. You can also type @student's name into the chat feature to alert students if they are silent after you pose a question.

Grading rubrics- You can upload the grading rubric to an assignment in TEAMS before you set the task. This way students are aware of the criterion they are being marked against and can use this as a self-assessment tool when writing their response.

Use the whiteboard feature or Padlet for low stakes answers- Using a whiteboard or a program like Padlet allows students to explore their ideas before they commit to an answer. This low stake way of assessing learning is a great way to engage reluctant or apprehensive students and allows them the space to make mistakes without consequences.

Whilst teaching in these 'unprecedented times' that are now becoming the norm, perhaps it is important to remember that the AFL strategies that are so successful in the classroom can be just as effective online; we just need a little imagination and creativity. We should not be afraid to try new strategies with our students and to learn from them- my students and I have been on a journey. I would have been lost without them telling me to unmute.



SIRIUS LOCKDOWN

TEACHING AND LEARNING



This academic year has really been like no other. I cannot remember another time in education where school staff have been required to entirely change their way of working at short notice, rapidly upskilling themselves for a new form of teaching.

The staff in our academy continue to amaze me. Their ability to adapt quickly and effectively has required proactive self-reflection, teamwork, resilience and the drive to overcome a barrier or challenge. These skills present throughout our team have helped to ensure that the quality of remote education we are providing for our pupils is excellent.

Through conversations with curriculum leaders, pupil and parent voice, I am constantly impressed at the best practice occurring in their teams that they are eager to share. I am extremely grateful to you all for your continued hard work and drive to secure the best outcomes for our pupils.

Below are just some of the examples of excellent practice happening every day in our academy, and I wanted to take this opportunity to share these stories of best practice with you all. Each of the nominations was made by a leader, and a thank you gift has been given to each person.

Sarah Noble (English) – nominated by Debbie Bonner

Debbie nominated Sarah for constantly providing differentiated and challenging lessons with impressive attendance. During a learning drop in, Debbie noted that the chat function was alive in the lesson with probing questions and answers with some really thoughtful dialogue. This ensured that all of the students were actively engaged in the lessons.

Colin Byrne (Science) – nominated by James Evans

James nominated Colin for embracing online technology. Colin has shown great initiative finding out new and engaging ways to teach online and he has shared these strategies with the whole department. A particular highlight was the use of an online tool that allowed his students to carry out a remote Science experiment.

Sharon Wincott (Technology) – nominated by Ruth Shaddick

Sharon was nominated by Ruth for continuing to provide engaging and supportive lessons for all of her KS4 and 5 classes. It is clear Sharon cares about the students she teaches through the work she puts into planning and assessment. Sharon continues to support the department as a whole and shares good practice with the rest of the team.

Ange Fairless (MFL) – nominated by Julia Hepworth

Ange was nominated by Julia for finding and including a range of resources and activities in her live lessons, including using Teach Vid and Whiteboard.fi to make her lessons more interactive. Her KS3 resources have a wide range of engaging activities and provide scaffolding and support where needed. Ange always provides feedback for her students and ensures that pupils are acting on it at home.

Grace Hughes (Humanities) – nominated by Sarah Murphy-Corish

Grace was nominated by Sarah for her hard work in all lessons in the lockdown. Grace has thoroughly differentiated every lesson and has been very thoughtful to ensure all lessons are suitable for each student even if this means she has to spend 30 minutes printing all the coloured paper whilst in school! All of her remote lessons and key worker lessons receive clear feedback each week and she has been keen to improve her live lessons by trying out different delivery methods such as Padlet.

Leigh Sinderson (IT & Business) – nominated by Nigel Scott

Nigel nominated Leigh for his continued innovative use of resources which have helped to bring the remote learning for his students to life.

Rachel Fussey – (Photography, CAPA) – nominated by Julia Quillin

Rachel was nominated by Julia as she has used innovative demonstrations to help students with their edits. She found that many students were unable to edit photography work due to not having photoshop so she found an app they could download onto their phones and use. Julia saw her demo-ing the app via screen share where she talked through the editing steps, explaining her thought process whilst doing so in a metacognitive manner and posed questions to students to help solidify their understanding of what was happening and why.

Cally Pritchard – (Drama, CAPA) – nominated by Julia Quillin

Cally was nominated by Julia for using quizzes to engage students and check understanding including her Y10 'Pug In A Mug' competition where students compete in regular quick fire quizzes with the winner getting the honour of naming Cally's pug tea strainer. Students really engage with it and the element of competition brings a high level of focus and fun to the lesson.



E NGAGEMENT IN REMOTE LEARNING

Engagement. A phrase we would normally attribute to Silicon Valley tech companies and social media moguls has now become somewhat of a buzz word in teaching. You only have to scroll through a couple of tweets on EduTwitter to see how we have become consumed by creating the most interactive lessons and giving youtubers a run for their money with their snazzy recorded videos. But is this really tracking engagement or just creating entertainment? There has to be a significant distinction between entertainment and engagement in learning. After all, our subjects are inherently engaging. The knowledge and context of our subjects speaks for itself. The passion and drive we have as practitioners motivates our students to achieve. However, some of our tried and tested strategies for monitoring student engagement with a task are simply not possible when teaching in the online sphere, so what can we take from the classroom and adapt into the online space?

Collaborative Learning

As an English teacher, discussion and collaboration is key for my lessons as it is at the heart our subject. One of my major concerns when teaching online was 'teaching into the void' - asking for a response from students and being met with deathly silence. One way to prevent this is to promote student collaboration online. Students have the ability to work collaboratively on a document if it is posted directly into the chat box on Teams. If you prepare a Word document with specified places for each student to complete their work or create a PowerPoint document with a slide per student, you will be able to see exactly which students are actively engaging in learning and those that are not. You can then give live feedback to students and encourage students to magpie and develop ideas of others. I have found students are far more open to discussion and actually unmuting themselves and talking when approaching tasks this way.

If you are feeling slightly more adventurous, you could even use websites such as Padlet, that provide a virtual collaboration space for students to share their ideas and explore concepts – they even have a timeline option!

Breakout rooms can also be used in a similar way as they allow students to work in a much smaller group of peers. You are able to pop in and out of rooms to help guide and support students as well as providing differentiated, bespoke work for certain cohorts. However, this does come with a caveat as students will be unsupervised while you are not in the room. As a result, this is most suited to being used with KS4 and KS5.



Use the chat

As I'm sure we all found at the start of our term at the coalface, the chat was somewhat of an enigma. What do you use it for? Is this something I can post documents in? How do I stop students from posting gifs? For a while, I was unable to see anything in the chat due to the overwhelming number of notifications. However, I discovered how to engage 'do not disturb' and began to harness the beast. The chat, when used well, can be an invaluable tool for tracking student engagement in learning. Students have the ability to react to posts meaning you can do the virtual version of 'traffic lights' to see how students are getting on or use this as a tool to generate discussion alongside cold-calling students. In English, I have used this to generate ideas and responses to specific characters in 'Macbeth'. Students are aware that I can see exactly who has responded to my statement and who hasn't. They are also aware that I will call on students to rationalise their responses, therefore encouraging active learning.

You can also try delayed responses to questions as a proxy for tracking engagement as students are unable to take ideas from others and you can see who has responded. This is where you instruct students to write an answer to a question in the chat box and to not immediately send it. You give them a time limit to formulate their response and then instruct them all to send their ideas at once. This provides you with a plethora of responses which you can then build on through questioning. However, in large classes this can mean that students get 'lost' due to the sheer number of responses.

Forms and Low Stakes Quizzes

Microsoft Forms has been a godsend for retrieval practice online. You can manipulate each question to fit your needs providing: multiple choice questions; long, written responses; ratings and shorter written responses. This is brilliant for knowledge retrieval, identifying misconceptions and rectifying misconceptions as you can even set the form to mark itself! As a teacher you are able to see each student's responses meaning you can address any issues immediately. This also means you can see who has completed the quiz and who hasn't meaning you can challenge any 'ghosts' in your room.

You can also insert a form into the chat box directly by typing @forms. This is useful for any off the cuff AFL as you can quickly see each student's responses and respond accordingly. This is also great for reflections on a concept you have taught or for gauging student opinion on something as it is so quick and easy.

Engagement. We all know our students and their needs; we just need to adapt our style to fit the online space. Hopefully, these suggestions will help to bridge this gap.



DIFFERENTIATION



Differentiation. That dreaded word you find in your Sisra Observe feedback as a target for pupil progress. It's the word that sends chills down your spine and makes you sweat profusely at the thought of how you are going to manage to differentiate for all your students.

Firstly, you begin to think 'well, I'm differentiating for my students as I've got x amount of worksheets and the tasks are suitable for my class based on their end of year targets', but then you begin to question: is this effective differentiation?

Let's quash a few myths...

According to Sobel and Alston's 'The Inclusive Classroom': A new approach to differentiation', there is a move to look at 'adapting' rather than 'differentiation' and this is a word Ofsted appear to be adopting. Differentiating doesn't mean endless worksheets but would rather focus on 'small tweaks, quick interventions and small pieces of planned support.'

The book outlines some key, practical strategies you could use in your classroom to support mixed ability classes and those with pen portraits. Hopefully you will find some of these useful:

Rather than creating a different version of a worksheet for maths (for example) for a mixed ability class, try giving all of the children the same basic task. However, note that some of them may work with larger numbers or more numbers to complete it; some may use formal methods to tackle the task; some work independently; some follow modelled examples. Another group use number lines and more concrete resources. This focuses on methods of learning (visual, kinaesthetic and auditory) for all students.

Here are some other key tips when 'differentiating':

Provide key vocabulary but use images for students to visualise the words.

Pre-warning students that you will ask them a question to help students focus.

Provide all children with the LO on a piece of paper and stick into exercise books. This quickly focuses the learning and avoids presentation issues.

Consider your activities which show students can demonstrate the learning e.g. IT to record, using pictures, using photos of work, recording responses.

When annotating, give students a copy of the slides and let them annotate.

Provide a scaffold for students to make notes rather than making notes from scratch.

Are students in fear of starting the work? Problem solved:

Use whiteboards to record ideas

Use of IT

Reconstructing sentences – write the sentence out with the student. Reread the sentence and then cut it up so that each word is separate. Muddle the sentence and get the child to reconstruct the sentence and stick this into their book.

Complete sentence stems or sentence starters

Adapt model sentences: write a model sentence but change the key words or ideas e.g. 'The girl jumped out of the window and ran away' could become, through questioning and prompting (such as 'Which girl?' And 'How did they run?'), 'The Princess leaped out of the window and sprinted away.'

When students say they are 'finished':

Show students an example completed by a child in a previous year so they understand the expectation. Also, ensure that they understand steps to get there.

Use a checklist – ensure they look at this and check their work against it.

Use clear and visual measures for closed tasks.

If your classroom is too silent it might be more of a hindrance than a help. Allow for self-talk: use a volume thermometer to allow students working with TAs to have those important discussions and allow students who need thinking time to process their thoughts out loud.

More specific ideas for English include: using the criteria in which students are marked against to differentiate the learning for my mixed ability classes. I would focus on key words within the criteria such as 'clear' for Level 4 and 'explain' for Level 3 to explain and demonstrate to students a step-by-step process of how to achieve that level and how to move up to the next one. Identifying the criteria through WAGOLs also helps create a foundation where students familiarise themselves with the outcomes and can apply the method to their own learning.

I'd highly recommend reading 'The Inclusive Classroom: A new approach to differentiating' as there are a wealth of practical tips and examples for you to use in your classroom to help support our students in making positive progress.



SECURING LEARNING IN LONG TERM MEMORY

I am sure that I am not the only one who has read a chapter of a book, put it down, only to go back to it later having forgotten what I had read earlier.

Also trying to remember key dates, names or key terms can prove an absolute nightmare if they are unfamiliar to us. Our students have this type of experience every hour of every day and it is one of, if not the most, significant barrier to learning that they have in our context.

Theories of why humans forget have been tested for decades. What we do know is that learning itself is not harmed by the amount of verbal material studied, but the retrieval of that material becomes more difficult as the number of items tested increases. Research in to inference and memory suggests that we must not assume that ‘forgetting is the result only of changing context.’

Students forget. Students will always forget. Embracing and accepting this is the first step towards securing understanding in student’s long term memory. Over the years, as a Curriculum Director, I have regularly heard exasperated teachers exclaim in the Science prep room, “I only taught them it yesterday and they have forgotten it all!” or “it’s like they weren’t even listening.” I have observed lessons where teachers become frustrated with the student in question; “Come on, you know this, we only learnt this last lesson!” There is a subsequent stony silence ‘tumbleweed’ moment that simply does no one any favours at all. **Expecting forgetting** is much more proactive that becoming **frustrated with forgetting**. The afore mentioned phrases are now banned in Science.

So how do we embrace forgetting? How do we secure learning where we want it- the long term memory? First of all it is worth re-considering cognitive load theory. Students cannot and will not remember large chunks of information that is too big for their ‘working memory.’ We have all been guilty of ‘hoofing’ through content to prepare students for an exam but has it ever worked? Has it ever achieved what you wanted it to? Another important consideration is the “retention curve.” In a nutshell, this illustrates graphically that unless we review newly acquired knowledge daily, weekly and monthly, it will be forgotten.

So what strategies can help secure learning? I have summarised some of the most important ones below.

Strategy 1 - Daily, weekly and monthly review

One of Rosenshine's underpinning principles of instruction, students should be expected to review newly learned material daily, weekly and monthly. Students should become comfortable with forgetting and you should be calm and rational when it happens. Paradoxically, the more something is forgotten in the immediate term the better. Connections within the schema can be reactivated and re-established. The retention curve begins to level off and more information is stored in the long term memory. Monthly review periodically ensures that students retrieve the information that now should be stored.

Strategy 2 – Present material in small steps and checking for understanding

Ensure that you are presenting new material in small steps and crucially, checking for understanding after each step. Limit the amount of information that students are receiving at any one time, provide many examples and then check that they have understood before moving on. 80% understanding is optimal at this stage, leading to students being more likely to retain the information.

Strategy 3- Guide practice

Students should not be expected to use newly acquired information independently immediately. They are likely to initially have misconceptions and if these are practiced and rehearsed they may inadvertently become embedded in to long term memory and then a lot more tricky to unpick. Make sure that you embed time for guided practice. This will allow you to spend more time asking questions, completing worked examples together and modelling. Guidance fading can then be used to gradually withdraw support.

Strategy 4- Independent Practice

Once guided practice is complete, students should be given the opportunity to practice independently. Ideally this should be completed in silence with maximum focus. A class of students will often need training (rather than simply telling) to achieve this level of focus, but it is more than worth persisting with. At times during lesson drop ins, independent practice is far from effective due to low level chatting being permitted. Students, regardless of their behaviour, can be trained out of this and it is important that you do so. During independent practice, you can still intervene so that misconceptions do not embed themselves. A good way to do this is using the **3:30:30 technique** (see Teach like a Champion for more information on this.)

Strategy 5- Effective Questioning

It appears to be obvious, but students will only remember if they are thinking about the material. The most effective way to achieve this in a lesson is through effective questioning. Relevant instructional procedures would include; asking a large number of questions to as many students as possible. This builds ratio and ensures that all students are thinking about the material being studied. Giving students the opportunity to explain what they have learned; asking "what have you understood?" rather than "have you understood?" is a small tweak that has a major effect on the learning. It is important to check the understanding of every student after each new step of new information so that you can provide systematic feedback and corrections as misconceptions arise.

Strategy 6- Quizzing

Low stakes quizzing every lesson is a quick and easy way to reinforce connections within the schema. It can be as simple as ten quick questions, but again this should be completed independently and with the students in silence for maximum effect. Ensure that you throw in some distantly learned material as well as recently learned and most importantly, make sure that you address gaps as they arise, rather than simply reveal right or wrong answers.

Final thought

Learning could be described as transferring material in to long term memory. In fact, OFSTED do define learning as "an alteration in long term memory." Carefully and deliberately considering and checking how we do this and holding our colleagues to account will improve the outcomes for our students and therefore our school. As an Academy can we transform an exasperated "they can't remember anything!" to a calm "I expect that they may have forgotten- how can I re-establish the connections."

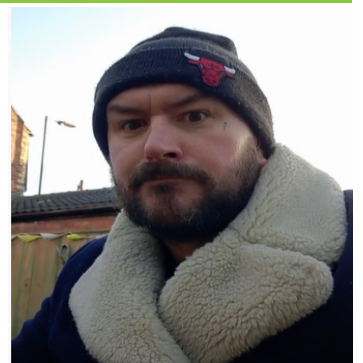
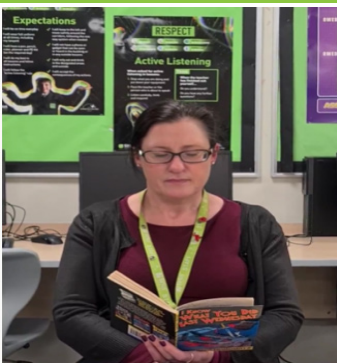


S TRATEGIES

TO IMPROVE READING DURING LOCKDOWN

In order to promote reading, there have been many strategies used across the academy to encourage students to pick up a good book during lockdown. It's always important that students read texts that are challenging and age/content appropriate but never more so than during lockdown, when young people are spending more time online than ever before!

Of course, so much of what we do for students couldn't go ahead without fantastic staff members putting themselves forward and volunteering to go the extra mile – so THANK YOU! to everyone who has provided reading content this term. It's really appreciated.



Story in 5 Parts led by KBE ('I Know What You Did Last Wednesday' by Anthony Horowitz')

This story was broken down into sections, with each part read by a different member of staff. These recordings were sent home to KS3 students on five consecutive days so that over the course of the week they read the full story. One part was read outside (very atmospheric!) and another was signed. The response we had from students was very positive.

Storytelling Week competition: Led by JMU/KFA

To celebrate National Storytelling Week (30th Jan – 6th Feb), students were tasked with writing an exciting and engaging story. The winners had their stories read out by staff and sent to local primary schools too.

Jackanory Reading Videos: Led by JPR

Different members of staff read the first chapter of a story in an engaging way in a bid to inspire students to read the rest of the novel. All of the books read by staff are available to loan for free on Open Library, which is great as having access to books can be a big barrier to reading for some students – especially with libraries closed!



Staff Book Club Recommendations: Led by APR

Over 30 staff members have now taken part in the staff book reviews and it's so good that we are able to share what we are reading with students so that reading becomes part of a conversation around learning. If students see their teachers reading then they are far more likely to be inspired to start reading themselves. Thank you to all who have taken part.

Reading intervention:

Targeted students are receiving additional live lessons in reading intervention. This means that they are able to remotely have specialist support that they have in the academy, ensuring that they are supported in making progress in reading.

Literacy Legends: Led by JPR

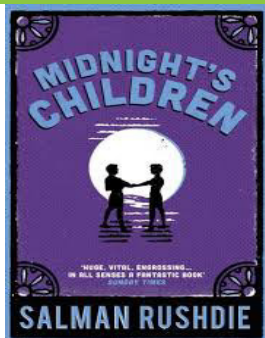
Staff have been nominating students who are producing excellent work and maintaining the high literacy standards we expect at SAW. These are put on MyEd and Twitter so that other students can see good examples of high quality remote learning.



BONNER'S BOOKS

Losing yourself in a great novel is one of life's joys and lockdown has been the perfect opportunity to finish that book from your summer holidays or start the book that you have been dying to read since Christmas. Not only does reading increase your lifespan, lower your stress levels and boost your intelligence but it can transport you to different worlds and allow you to get lost in the pages of an adventure or period in history.

So where do you start? With so many books out there it can be a bit of a minefield so I have picked 5 gripping fiction and 3 non-fiction books for you to curl up on the sofa and allow yourself to get lost in.



Fiction

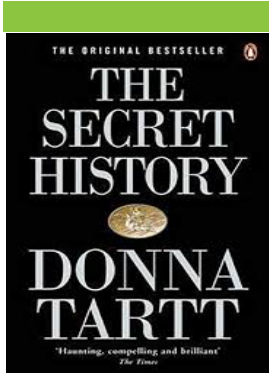
Midnight's Children by Salman Rushdie

The protagonist of Rushdie's most celebrated novel is born at the exact moment India gains independence. He's also born with superpowers, and he's not the only one. In an audacious and poetic piece of magical realism, Rushdie tells the story of India's blood-soaked resurgence via a swathe of children born at midnight with uncanny abilities.

Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

A subtle and engrossing look at racial identity, through the story of a charismatic young Nigerian woman who leaves her comfortable Lagos home for a world of struggles in the United States. Capturing both the hard-scrabble life of US immigrants and the brash divisions of a rising Nigeria, Adichie crosses continents with all her usual depth of feeling and lightness of touch.



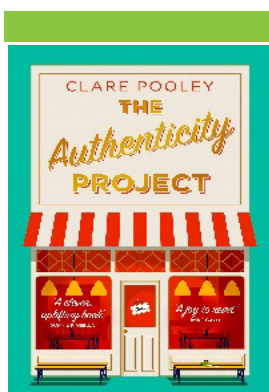
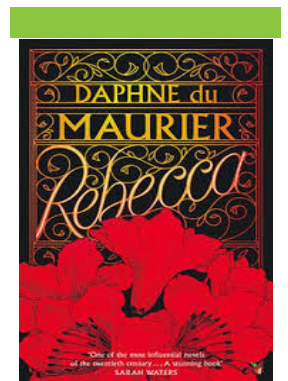


The Secret History by Donna Tartt

Stick another log on the fire and curl up with this dark, peculiar and quite brilliant literary murder tale. A group of Classics students become entranced by Greek mythology – and then take it up a level. Remember, kids: never try your own delirious Dionysian ritual at home.

Rebecca by Daphne du Maurier

The second Mrs de Winter is the narrator of Du Maurier's marvellously gothic tale about a young woman who replaces the deceased Rebecca as wife to the wealthy Maxim de Winter and mistress of the Manderley estate. There she meets the housekeeper Mrs Danvers, formerly devoted to Rebecca, who proceeds to torment her. Atmospheric, psychological horror that just gets darker and darker.



The Authenticity Project by Clare Poole

Clare Pooley's debut novel is the story of six strangers who are each living a lie. Flamboyant elderly artist Julian feels lonely and invisible to the outside world, so he decides to write the truth about his life in a notebook and leaves it in a cafe for others to read. It's picked up by successful lawyer turned cafe-owner Monica, who writes about her longing for a baby. Before long, the book has found its way across the world and brought a motley group of people together. A heartening story about the importance of truth and friendship, with characters that spring to life on the page.



BONNER'S BOOKS

Non-Fiction Books

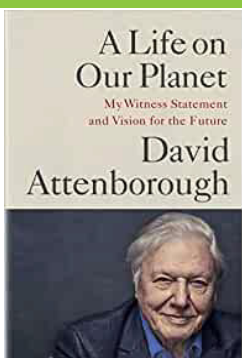
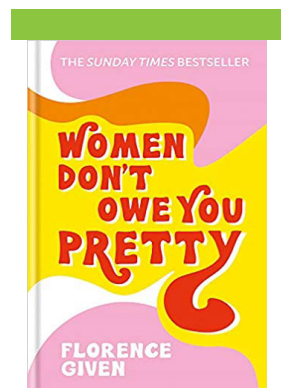
Becoming by Michelle Obama



Michelle Obama wrote this memoir shortly after leaving the White House in 2017. Having kept her counsel for eight years, the former First Lady declares: 'Here I am, in this new place, with a lot I want to say.' From her upbringing in Chicago to her first meeting with Barack Obama — she didn't fancy him and tried to fix him up with one of her girlfriends — Michelle addresses the reader as if they are her new best friend. She is admirably honest about the strains in the Obama marriage, their struggles to have children and what it's like to be constantly in the public eye. A hefty book, but a totally engrossing one.

Women Don't Owe You Pretty by Florence Given

An accessible leap into feminism, for people at all stages of their journey who are seeking to reshape and transform the way they view themselves. In a world that tells women we're either not enough or too much, it's time we stop directing our anger and insecurities onto ourselves, and start fighting back to re-shape the toxic structures of our patriarchal society. Florence's book will help you to tackle and challenge the limiting narrative you have been bombarded with your whole life, and determine feminism on your own terms.



A Life on Our Planet: My Witness Statement and a Vision for the Future by David Attenborough

Empowering and inspiring, Attenborough's new autobiography sends a powerful message about the crucial importance of will in tackling the climate crisis and preserving our precious ecosystem for generations to come. Happy reading!

NATIONAL COLLEGE

CPD STARS

The National college provide a range of CPD that supports all staff across the academy from behaviour and safeguarding to teaching online. It is great to see so many staff completing CPD, with a whopping 94 of you completing at least 1 online CPD session with the national college! This is really great to see and supports our drive for whole school improvement. I want to say a massive thank you to the 94 staff who have completed CPD so far, and if you haven't logged in yet, there is still time to get on the leader board below!



Name Number of sessions

Steven Rickard	9!!!!
Lily Blount	9!!!!
Lesley McDougall	9!!!!
Samantha Marshall	8!!
Grant Robinson	8!!
Anita Smith	8!!
Abbey Nixey	8!!
Sara Ainsworth	7!
Kerry Bentham	7!
Christina Gibson	7!
Monika Raczynska	7!
Colin Byrne	6
Ripa Khathun	6
Sarah Murphy-Corish	6
Ange Fairless	5
Emily Harrington	5
Nicola Lawson	5



RESPECT



RESPECT
for yourself



RESPECT
for each other



RESPECT
for the environment



RESPECT
for the community



RESPECT
for education



RESPECT
for the future

T EACHING AND LEARNING STAR AWARD



As a team, the Sirius staff have continued to go above and beyond for our students throughout this half term, overcoming new challenges together. We continue to ensure that our students receive a broad and engaging curriculum that addresses any gaps in learning caused by disruption to the academic year. We have adapted schemes of learning, made countless phone calls home, provided regular feedback and delivered high quality teaching and learning. We have focussed on the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils through our pastoral materials and systems and motivated students with regular contact home and rewards. As always, the Sirius team ensure that no child is left behind. We really do live our vision and values. At Sirius, stars are born. And during our time with us they are nurtured, supported and developed to be the best they can be, with your help.



This half term I would like to recognise someone that continually goes above and beyond for her students. Her unyielding positivity, drive and hard work explain why her lessons are regarded so highly by her students. The winner of this half terms award for teaching and learning is:
Sam Ledingham.

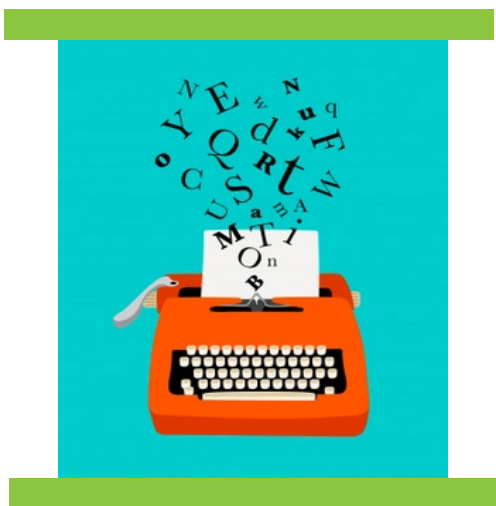
Here are some of the reasons Sam is our teaching and learning star this half term:

1. Sam leads positive praise within the department at all times, encouraging others to share praise with students and parents through Hegarty Maths rewards.
2. Sam supports the department and always asks what she can do to help others, she sees the art of teaching as a team effort, one which is strengthened through collaboration.
3. Sam has stepped in numerous times to support the department by covering a large number of live lessons during lockdown. She always ensures these are high quality and supports staff with marking.
4. Sam supports high ability students through the UKMT Maths challenge and actively promotes high level mathematics at all times across the Academy.
5. Sam has been heavily involved in promoting intervention to support Y10 students to achieve in Maths. She runs weekly intervention sessions to help them increase in confidence and make progress.

I am incredibly grateful to Sam for everything she continues to do every day for her pupils and the support she provides to the maths team.



T HE LAST WORD



Why I teach?

Having not known what I really wanted to do with my career yet knowing I wanted to be in a job where I could make a difference, I found myself in my 20s falling into the idea of teaching. Since joining the profession fresh faced and 21 I have grown to love the career. Are there many other jobs where your day every day is completely different and you never know how the end of the day will look?

Teaching is a rewarding yet a very challenging profession to be part of, the career is ever developing with new obstacles thrown our way yet at the centre of this are our young adolescents who, although they may not always show it, depend on us to show them the way and look up to us to keep them safe and well prepared for whatever their future may hold. These young minds need pointing in the right direction, can suggest ideas completely out of the box and always ensure your day at work is never dull.

Why at Sirius?

I joined Sirius Academy in 2015 as a trainee teacher not really knowing what to expect. Since joining the academy, I have grown to feel privileged to be part of such a supportive and encouraging team. Our students are always at the forefront of every decision made and are what make working at Sirius truly special. Our students are all unique and can require innumerable hours to build relationships with, yet in doing so we form amazing bonds and grow to see our students develop into the young adults that they are when they leave the academy. Even those who have been challenging to teach and may have at times felt unreachable in creating a positive relationship leave our school with a smile, as do we knowing we have had a direct impact on their life for 5 years and will have an everlasting impact on who they grow to be as adults. Can many other jobs argue they play such a pivotal and privileged role in a young person's life?

What do the Team have to say?

'I love the kids! They are one of a kind and always manage to make teaching enjoyable. They all have these funny idiosyncrasies and teaching them to help them find out and define who they are is always a pleasure.

For me as well, it's the team. There is nothing like 'The Sirius Team'. We might at times feel overwhelmed especially during exam season however, we always work together and get the job done. Sirius has helped forge some incredible bonds and friendships along the way as well, which makes coming and working at Sirius worthwhile.

Laura Yates, KS3 English Coordinator

'I attended Sirius Academy West as a child, when it was known as Pickering High School. Also being from the Gipsyville area I feel it is my way of giving back to my community by organising not just sporting events for the students but all the extra-curricular events around the Academy too.

I believe extra-curricular activities are the best way to build the character and resilience needed for school life and life outside of the academy. Also, they're a brilliant way of making new friends and finding hobbies.

Martin Smith, Cover Supervisor/Academy Enrichment Coordinator

"I didn't become a teacher for the normal 'traditional' reasons that people do. I was about to finish my degree, didn't have a clue what to do next but I knew I needed a plan. I had thought about teaching, but I was a nightmare at school, loud...didn't stop talking/not very work focused so I was not sure that path was for me. I signed up to do the 'Students Associate Scheme' so I could get a 'taster' of what school was like, they put me to do Maths and paid me to complete 2 training levels over 30 days. The school I trained with wanted to keep me as a Maths teacher, but it meant I would have to do another year of a maths 'top up' but I didn't want to spend another year training...and poor.... so Hull University changed me to the Business PGCE and here I am!

Claire Smalley, Coordinator of Business and Enterprise

'For the students! If working from home has taught me anything, it is how much I love being a teacher (pre-Covid times). I miss seeing the students, asking how they are doing, being able to tell when they don't understand and seeing them succeed. Teaching through Teams isn't quite the same. I was also not made to sit at a desk all day!

Why Sirius? I trained at Sirius West 6 years ago (only venturing out to Sirius North for 6 weeks) and I have learnt everything I know from the supportive team here. The students have brilliant personalities and make me laugh. I couldn't imagine teaching anywhere else.

Sabrina Sneyd, Maths Teacher

If you'd like to have The Last Word in next term's Sirius T&L Magazine please email Abbey Preece



