

KGGS Standards Committee

Implementation Review of KGGS Teaching and Learning Policy

Kay Hardiman, February 2021

Context

This report refers to the Teaching and Learning Policy updated in June 2020.

An in-depth conversation was held with Ms Zoe Anderson, Assistant Head Teacher on 25th November 2020 and subsequent emails and supporting documents were used to provide the detail in this report. I would like to extend my gratitude for the generosity Ms Anderson showed in the time and support she afforded this process.

It is important to note that this report looks at policy implementation relevant to a very specific time - reflecting how the policy has been implemented through a blended model of teaching and learning during the Coronavirus pandemic of 2020 and early 2021.

For consistency with previous reports, key thematic areas of the policy were drawn out, but understandably much of the focus of conversation and reflections drew on the extraordinary circumstances of how KGGS delivered teaching during a global pandemic.

It was not possible to make a school visit to observe teaching and learning in practice due to Coronavirus restrictions. At the time of finalising the report, I am due to observe online lessons, which will be reported on verbally at the February Standard Committee meeting.

Areas of discussion

1. How has Covid-19 impacted the Teaching and Learning policy?

In line with Government guidance during the pandemic, KGGS needed to adapt its teaching to different models. For eg. for Term 3, KGGS was operating within a Covid-compliant environment and the majority of students were engaged in face to face learning with their teachers. Isolating students were in addition being supported through remote learning. For Term 4 and the third national Lockdown, the majority of students were learning from home, with only key worker children and vulnerable students being taught in school.

Despite the considerable challenges of implementing teaching and learning within these restrictions, it was apparent that the core value of the policy to provide a broad and balanced curriculum was being retained.

1.1 New ways of working brought challenges which included:

The practical challenges of delivering online to isolating students at the same time as delivering face to face lessons.

Ensuring every student had adequate access to necessary IT equipment for home learning.

1:1 support that enabled issues and feedback to be discussed in private was not possible due to lack of space.

Classroom conversations were restricted, the space teachers needed to occupy in the classroom preventing movement around the room and individual conversations with students.

Collaborative and group work was in most part not possible.

When schools were open, it was taking longer to teach the curriculum due to the need to follow safety measures which impacted on teaching time.

Curriculum content – practical subjects presented significant challenge; PE - all activity outside only and close contact not possible, DT - practical element restricted, Music - no singing, Art - no close demonstration (although technology has been helpfully used.)

1.2 Overcoming the challenges

IT Provision - ensuring every single student has access to a suitable device on which to access learning remotely. All parents in KS3 and KS4 were sent an Access to Digital Devices Questionnaire, the front office and support staff ensured each family returned these, posting out paper copies and making phone calls where necessary. <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=-QoYzVipaEK0ilop9D2QtboYPfsgWQhOhEQjMnpRXaNUOUI1WTVTSjRERFVBN01DSUZOVFgwVDNQRS4u>

Heads of Year and subject teachers checked for digital access/devices in KS5.

Any student in the school with barriers to accessing their education online was offered support/loan of a device/paper resources/a space in school to work if they are a vulnerable student or the child of a key worker.

Catch Up Premium Fund - £70,500 funding was received from the Government. KGGS deliberately took time to review the areas of highest need, wanting to assess students learning fully before committing the spend. They did this through a number of techniques, including 20 min check ins during lessons, using specific questioning and small tasks, a formal assessment in Term 1 and online diagnostics for numeracy and literacy levels.

This has resulted in teachers really knowing students' strengths and what is needed to support them. For those requiring more support, a smart approach to using funding streams was taken, so that SEND and Pupil Premium funding was drawn on as well as Catch Up Funding for all students.

It became evident that Year 8 needed most support with average reading levels showing they were below the usual expected level as well as core numeracy and literacy skills. It was considered that the lock down had prevented the full transitioning that would usually have occurred in Year 7.

All students in Year 7 and 8 were tested for their reading age. An online package Lexia <https://www.lexialearning.com/> was bought to support students reading and processing when working at home and to address any gaps in their reading or speed reading and processing and comprehension skills caused by Lockdown 1.

I was sent a copy of the funding plan, which sets out how the fund would support the needs of targeted and all students across key stages through additional teaching and additional appointments in Maths and English.

By Feb 2021 all the support and catch-up provision for all years has been collated for each student and I was shown anonymised screen captures for this.

Although KGGS did not get funding for KS5 catch-up, the Senior Team have worked together to ensure they can fund catch up with KS5.

Ms Anderson has been working very closely with all faculties, Heads of Years, SENCo and Pupil Premium leads to ensure they deliver on catch-up during the next year and for as long as it takes following COVID.

2. Student engagement

2.1 Examples of how you create a climate in which students are encouraged to be resilient learners and critical thinkers?

Subject Leaders were asked to visualise what leads to a well-rounded and independent learner as they leave KGGS and track back to determine the key elements that would contribute to that result over the course of their curriculum. This mapping exercise considers how students are supported to build their resilience, confidence and critical thinking learning skills. I was able to review a number of these Curriculum Maps across subjects which showed how teachers were identifying resilience and critical thinking skills amongst the key things they wanted all students to know and do by the end of Key Stage 5

2.2 Examples of behaviour management strategies

The pandemic has provided challenges and opportunities for addressing behaviour in a digital context. For example, appropriate communication over email, online behaviour /politeness on Teams etc. The school has provided guidance and assemblies on this area, and how to use language in technology has been developed in English classes. The school has found this was a much-needed area for developing skills that would be essential for the future workplace.

Taking control of the space – teaching in a Covid-compliant environment meant that the children were based in one space, which the teachers enters, meaning the power dynamic needs to shift at the start of the lesson. In usual circumstance the Head of Faculty would be able to support any behaviour issues but currently the most senior in the bubble and pastoral support is available with behavioural referrals.

3. Student progress

3.1 Examples of lesson planning to show how learning progresses at an appropriate pace

I was able to review a number of lesson plans which indicated how learning progressed through the lesson and offered differentiation. I was also sent teacher training slides, which reflected the key advice to all teachers for blended or remote learning. This included keeping lesson structure and lesson objectives simple so students at home can follow regardless of their ability level/device/broadband speed. The pace of a lesson is still considered good but it takes longer to teach the same content when working online as well as face to face.

3.2 How is learning being reviewed?

Lesson plans show how learning is reviewed during the lesson. The 20 min check in is still used to ensure learning is reviewed at key points in a lesson.

When students are working online, Team Insights can provide information about who is doing what and how they are building their skills.

Student progress monitoring was described by Ms Anderson as “meticulous” and tracking progress is now further aided by the introduction of the new IT system Bromcom. Progress Tracking will be shared with parents this term, but it will have been a long time since the last tracking, which was before March lockdown.

4. Differentiation

4.1 How is data used to actively meet the needs of different kinds of learners?

SEND and Pupil Premium data is shared better across the school with Bromcom. It aids the provision of Specific Language Difficulties (SLD). Data is then used to inform lesson planning and training.

Once back in Lockdown, Ms Anderson began working with the SENDCo to pull together some advice for teachers for supporting SEND students online. To enable her to do this, Questionnaires were sent out for all students identified for subject monitoring, plus some SEND students, and some Pupil Premium students. For eg -<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=-QoYzVipaEK0ilop9D2QtboYPfsgWQhOhEQjMnpRXaNUMIJZWEFFTzZMOFFNUVdXSTZLM0xKQjVEWC4u>

SEND provision and the KGS 15 bespoke strategies cover all lesson planning for a normal context, but Remote Learning provision for SEND hadn't made its way onto lesson plans yet although this is soon to be implemented.

4.2 How do we ensure our most able learners are regularly challenged, and encouraged to be resilient learners able to overcome failures?

KGS teaching does not take a “one size fits all approach” and that includes how the most able are supported.

In observations of live streamed lessons, Ms Anderson has identified that teachers are generally differentiating the learning via the questions asked to students via video, sound, or the POSTS in Microsoft teams, by targeting lower-level knowledge focused questions to less confident/able students and higher-order knowledge or evaluative questions to more confident/able learners.

Monitoring of feedback and marking online, thus far, shows differentiation by the level of difficulty of ‘areas to develop’ offered to students in response to their work.

I saw evidence of extension tasks being used in lesson plans for faster finishers as a way to differentiate learning.

In addition, all students in Year 9, 10, 11 also now have GCSE POD logins to support and extend their learning <https://www.gcsepod.com/>

5. Marking and Feedback

5.1 Examples of how marking and feedback is consistent with the policy

This is an area which has been changed recently, so that marking is streamlined and focussed to where it is really needed. With marking reduced in quantity, it is believed it will be more focussed to really help students move on and also free up more time to be spent directly with the students. In Term 3 an audit of Remote Learning, including, marking and feedback, has been completed, and I was able to see the first draft of this audit. More thorough QA of RL and M&F is planned for Term 4, which will be done remotely, if necessary.

6.. Monitoring and Evaluating the Quality of Teaching and Learning

This was paused when the school first re opened. However, with classroom doors mostly left open for ventilation, informal monitoring was possible. More formal learning walks were planned to start again in January, where members of SLT would dip in to two or three lessons in an hour and provide formalised feedback. Formal 1-hour observations were still being done allowing staff to drill into the quality of the lessons.

Under normal circumstances, SLT visit and evaluate around 200 lessons each academic year; which is on top of faculty lesson visits and appraisal observations. COVID has meant monitoring and evaluation has had to be different during the last 12 months, and the same level of data as usual is not available. However, there has still been monitoring of Teaching and Learning, via other means: including virtual CPD, and virtual sharing-good-practice meetings, student outcomes, parental and student questionnaires, and looking at curriculum plans, resources and student work in faculty meetings.

As we are currently in lockdown, monitoring of Teaching and Learning has taken place this term via line-managers in each subject area. Every Microsoft Team has the appropriate subject line-manager added as a member in that group, so all online lessons are monitored daily and weekly. A full schedule of lesson visits involving SLT is planned for Term 4.

Student feedback - verbal feedback is still part of all lessons and an important part of how teachers' assess learning during lessons, to check student progress lesson-to-lesson without waiting for students to hand in their termly assignments. It is still a part of lessons delivered online, too. I was able to see a copy of KGGS most recent document for the website which outlines how they are meeting the new DFE requirements for Remote Learning, which references feedback and assessment-for-learning strategies in lesson, including verbal feedback.

Teacher appraisals - The thorough appraisal process has not been impacted and continues as before, which includes teachers review of their own professional development. Monitoring has needed to shift to that of the year group bubble rather than by subject area and is the responsibility of all of the leadership team.

7. Remote Learning

7.1 How well does the policy cover the reality of Remote Learning? As a new section to the policy introduced in June 2020, are there any adaptations that should be made at this stage?

The policy is considered to be working well in practice, despite the current challenges. Some changes to definitions needed to be made and additional information relating to safeguarding was added to the policy. I was able to see how this information was shared in SLT Remote Learning update slides. There needs to be some minor adjustments to the policy as technology has evolved, and as they have rolled through Microsoft Teams training for all staff and further sharpened safe-guarding protocols.

7.2 How do we support learners who are not engaging with remote learning?

This is considered to be everyone's responsibility, and the curriculum and pastoral staff work together on this. Work is also done with whole families with teachers checking in with parents by phone.

In conclusion

Whilst working with Ms Anderson to review the implementation of the Teaching and Learning Policy, I have been provided with extensive evidence of how KGGS has adapted its provision in order to still deliver the policy despite the extraordinary circumstances they have had to face since March 2020.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks and congratulations to the full team at KGGS for their considerable work in this area.