

GEMS Teaching Policy

Curriculum Implementation

This policy has been approved for operation within:	ALL GEMS Schools		
Status	Required		
Owner	GEMS Education		
Date effective from	August 2025	Date of next review	August 2027
Review period	2 years	Version	1.0

1. Introduction

The GEMS Teaching Policy sets out the shared expectations for high-quality teaching and learning across the school. It is aligned to **Teach Like a GEM (TLAG)** and the **GEMS Curriculum Policy**, ensuring that classroom practice is consistent, evidence-informed, and focused on securing strong progress and attainment outcomes for all learners. The GEMS Curriculum defines *the curriculum intent*; TLAG defines the *curriculum implementation*.

The policy establishes a common instructional language and approach that promotes clarity, equity, and excellence in teaching, while supporting teachers to make adaptive decisions in response to students' needs.

2. Policy Rationale

The GEMS Teaching Policy sets out GEMS Education's commitment to securing consistently world-class instruction and strong learning outcomes for *all* students. Evidence from research shows that inconsistency in classroom practice leads to uneven student experiences and outcomes. This policy therefore establishes a shared instructional approach that promotes equity, coherence, and excellence across subjects, phases, and schools.

Within this context, Teach Like a GEM provides the instructional backbone for the Teaching and Learning Policy. It codifies evidence-informed teaching practices into a clear, shared framework that supports effective instructional design and delivery. By reducing unnecessary variation while maintaining professional autonomy, TLAG ensures consistency where it matters most, optimising cognitive load for both teachers and students.

The policy recognises that effective teaching is not mechanical. Teachers are expected to enact Teach Like a GEM with *adaptive expertise*, using checks for understanding to adjust pacing, scaffolding, and challenge to meet the needs of all students, including multilingual learners, students of determination, and high prior attainers. This approach supports learning that is secure, transferable, and sustained over time and aligns with the principles and practices that underpin the *GEMS Genius*, *GEMS of the World*, and *Sparkling GEMS*.

By aligning instructional practice, professional development, and curriculum implementation, this policy supports sustained improvement in teaching quality and ensures coherence between classroom practice, professional learning, and internal and external quality assurance systems including inspection expectations.

3. Vision for Teaching and Learning

GEMS Schools will promote world-class instructional practice by:

- Creating a robust infrastructure that enables the implementation of the Teach Like a GEM (TLAG) Playbook with fidelity
- Providing high-quality, ongoing professional development that supports teachers on their pathway to world-class practice
- Establishing a strong culture of instructional support, using regular drop-ins, Practice Clinics, and instructional coaching to continuously improve teaching quality through universal, targeted, and bespoke professional development
- Embedding pedagogical principles grounded in evidence-based research, particularly cognitive science, to strengthen how teaching and learning occur
- Establishing a consistent, school-wide approach to instructional design and delivery
- Systematically improving the quality of education through clear structures for medium- and long-term curriculum planning
- Supporting teachers' understanding of governing body expectations, standards, and practices alongside Teach Like a GEM
- Inspiring consistent and effective curriculum implementation, ensuring appropriate adaptations for all learners, including multilingual learners, gifted and talented students, and Students of Determination

GEMS Teachers will promote world-class instructional practice by:

- Securing strong progress for all groups of students through purposeful lesson design aligned to the TLAG structure and responsive teaching
- Building deep, durable substantive and procedural knowledge, alongside conceptual understanding and transferable skills, through effective sequencing, modelling, and retrieval
- Promoting active student engagement, responsibility, and agency by making learning outcomes explicit
- Ensuring equitable access to high-quality instruction through the consistent and adaptive use of TLAG techniques
- Preparing students to apply learning meaningfully within personal, local, and global contexts
- Plan lessons with clear learning outcomes and knowledge components, aligned to high curriculum standards
- Model new learning explicitly, making thinking visible and reducing cognitive load for all learners
- Use ongoing checks for understanding to adapt pace, scaffolding, and challenge in real time
- Provide purposeful guided and independent practice, supported by timely, actionable feedback
- Create calm, orderly, and respectful classroom environments that maximise learning time and support positive learning behaviours
- Use questioning and structured dialogue to deepen understanding and promote thoughtful collaboration
- Adapt teaching to meet the needs of all learners, including multilingual learners, gifted and talented students, and Students of Determination
- Use assessment information effectively to inform planning, teaching, and next steps in learning
- Promote independent learning skills, including reflection, self-assessment, and purposeful response to feedback

4. Curriculum Implementation

The GEMS Curriculum defines the *what* of learning, setting out the knowledge, skills, and understanding that all GEMS students are entitled to learn, including what is taught, why it is taught, and how learning is sequenced over time.

Teach Like a GEM defines the *how* of learning, providing the instructional framework through which the GEMS Curriculum is implemented consistently and effectively in classrooms.

Curriculum implementation prioritises sequencing and coherence, enabling students to build knowledge cumulatively and make meaningful connections across lessons.

Teaching is structured to make learning stick, using explicit instruction, modelling, guided and independent practice, and opportunities for retrieval and application.

Assessment is used formatively to check understanding, identify misconceptions, and inform next steps, ensuring that teaching responds to what students know and can do.

Instruction is adapted to meet the needs of all learners, including multilingual learners, Students of Determination, and high prior attainers, while maintaining high expectations for all.

Leaders and teachers are familiar with the curriculum plans and syllabus for the subjects they line manage and teach.

Teachers use the curriculum plans and the knowledge micro-maps to ensure they understand how fluency composites of learning are sequenced in relation to the wider curriculum.

When planning lessons, teachers use knowledge micro-maps to ensure they are planning lessons in a way that sequentially supports students to know and remember more and make the links between new learning and prior/future learning explicit.

5. Teach Like a GEM: Playbook

The Teach Like a GEM Playbook sets out the agreed instructional framework used across GEMS schools to support consistent, quality-first classroom practice. It provides practical guidance for lesson design, delivery, and professional learning, ensuring a shared language and approach to teaching while allowing teachers to respond adaptively to students' needs.

All lessons are carefully planned to incorporate the science of learning to ensure all students make progress from their initial starting point aligned with GEMS curriculum standards, and that all GEMS Shine.

The TLAG Playbook is curriculum-agnostic and can be applied across all curricula, subjects, and year groups. It supports teachers in translating curriculum intent into high-impact instructional practice, regardless of phase or discipline.

The Playbook provides clear, actionable instructional techniques that reflect GEMS Education's commitment to world-class education. These techniques are grounded in rigorously tested, evidence-based research, including principles from cognitive science, and are designed to establish a coherent and consistent approach to teaching and learning across subjects and grade levels.

The TLAG Playbook is organised into three interrelated sections:

- **GEMS Essentials:** Structuring Learning for Impact
- **GEMS Talk:** Fostering a Culture of Discourse
- **GEMS Culture:** Optimising Learning Opportunities

6. Teach Like a GEM: In Action

In practice, the Teach Like a GEM Playbook is enacted consistently across classrooms to ensure coherence, clarity, and equity in teaching and learning.

All staff use the shared TLAG language, icons, and terminology when planning lessons, delivering instruction, and engaging in professional dialogue.

All teachers use the school-branded Learn Like a GEM PowerPoint template to support consistency in lesson structure and communication of learning to students.

The six GEMS Essentials (Do Now, Learning Outcomes, To Know, I Do – We Do – You Do, Affirmative Checking, and Exit Ticket) are embedded in *every* lesson and used in the *intended* instructional sequence to secure clarity, engagement, and strong learning outcomes.

GEMS Talk and GEMS Culture techniques are intentionally fused with the GEMS Essentials in every lesson, ensuring that high-quality discourse, positive routines, and a successful classroom culture are integral to daily practice rather than treated as add-ons.

Teachers enact the Playbook with *adaptive expertise*. While the core TLAG structures and techniques are used consistently, teachers make informed, professional decisions in response to checks for understanding, adjusting pacing, scaffolding, modelling, and levels of challenge to meet the needs of different learners.

Teachers and students can clearly articulate what the Global Goal for the Week is, why it matters, and what success looks like, supporting coherence across lessons and sustained focus on the most important learning.

Display TLAG × Science of Learning artwork prominently in an area visible to parents (e.g., school entrance).

Use the correct TLAG resources, artwork, logos, posters, and icons provided by the central team; seek approval for any changes from the TLAG Excellence Fellows Team.

Display *Learn Like a GEM Posters* in all classrooms, including specialist classrooms, and reference them actively to support teaching and learning.

7. GEMS Essentials: GEMS Essentials: Structuring Learning for Impact

The six GEMS Essentials are embedded in every lesson and used in the intended instructional sequence to secure clarity, engagement, and strong learning outcomes. Together, they provide a consistent structure that supports effective instruction while enabling teachers to respond adaptively to students' needs.

GEMS Essentials Techniques:

- **Do Now:** A short, purposeful starter that settles students quickly, activates prior knowledge, and prepares them cognitively for new learning
- **Learning Outcomes:** Clear statements that define what students are expected to be able to do (procedural knowledge) by the end of the lesson, providing focus and direction for teaching and learning; Teachers must include the sentence stem "By the end of this lesson, you will be able to + (verb)..."
- **To Know:** The specific knowledge components (substantive and declarative knowledge) students need to learn in order to achieve the learning outcome, supporting clarity and reducing cognitive overload
- **I Do, We Do, You Do:** An instructional *continuum* in which teachers model new learning, guide practice, and then provide opportunities for independent application, used adaptively in response to checks for understanding
- **Affirmative Checking:** Ongoing monitoring and checking for understanding throughout the lesson to identify misconceptions, adjust instruction, and ensure learning is secure before moving on
- **Exit Ticket:** A short end-of-lesson check that assesses whether students have met the learning outcome and understand the 'To Know' statements to inform planning for subsequent lessons

GEMS Essentials are used to secure clarity of learning, ensuring that students understand what they are learning and why it matters.

Lesson design follows a clear instructional sequence, supporting coherence, focus, and effective use of learning time. Explicit modelling and guided practice are used to reduce cognitive load and make new learning accessible to all students.

Independent practice (I Do) is structured to check understanding, strengthen learning, and secure fluency, rather than assume mastery.

Ongoing checks for understanding ensure that teaching is responsive, with pacing, scaffolding, and challenge adjusted as needed.

End-of-lesson Exit Tickets are used to confirm learning against the Learning Outcome and To Know statement and inform next steps, supporting strong progress over time.

8. GEMS Talk: Fostering a Culture of Discourse

GEMS Talk techniques are used in all lessons to foster a culture of purposeful academic discourse, ensuring that all students are actively thinking, articulating ideas, and engaging with content in every lesson. These techniques promote participation, accuracy, and depth of understanding while supporting equitable access to classroom talk.

GEMS Talk is **intentionally fused with the GEMS Essentials**, ensuring that structured talk, questioning, and dialogue are embedded within lesson design rather than treated as separate activities.

GEMS Talk Techniques:

- **Turn and Talk:** A structured partner discussion that gives all students time to think, rehearse ideas, and verbalise understanding before sharing more widely
- **Show Call:** The strategic sharing of student work to model quality, address misconceptions, and collectively refine understanding
- **Show Me:** A whole-class response technique that requires all students to demonstrate understanding simultaneously, allowing for rapid checks and responsive teaching
- **Everybody Writes:** A technique that ensures all students write before discussion, supporting retrieval, clarity of thinking, and inclusive participation
- **Cold Call:** The intentional selection of students to contribute, ensuring sustained attention, broad participation, and high expectations for all learners
- **Right is Right:** A commitment to accuracy and completeness, where students are supported to refine responses until they fully meet the expected standard
- **Stretch It:** Follow-up questioning that deepens thinking, extends understanding, and encourages students to apply knowledge in more complex or unfamiliar contexts
- **Habits of Discussion:** Explicit structures and routines that teach students how to listen, build on others' ideas, challenge respectfully, and engage in productive academic dialogue

GEMS Talk is used to increase thinking and participation ratio, ensuring that all students are actively engaged in thinking and contributing during lessons.

Classroom discourse is structured to promote active learning, with students regularly explaining, justifying, and refining their thinking through talk and writing.

Purposeful collaboration is established so that students listen attentively, build on one another's ideas, and work productively together.

Inclusive dialogue ensures that all students, including multilingual learners and Students of Determination, are supported to contribute confidently.

High expectations for accuracy, clarity, and subject-specific language are maintained across all classroom interactions. Students' communication and reasoning skills are deliberately developed, enabling them to engage thoughtfully with complex ideas and unfamiliar contexts.

9. GEMS Culture: Optimising Learning Opportunities

GEMS Culture techniques establish the conditions for successful learning by creating calm, orderly, and respectful classrooms where learning time is maximised and all students are able to engage fully.

GEMS Culture techniques:

- **What To Do (Directions and Corrections):** Clear, specific, and observable instructions and corrections that tell students exactly what to do, reducing ambiguity and maintaining lesson flow
- **Whole Class Reset:** A structured approach to refocus the class when attention, behaviour, or routines drift, restoring expectations quickly and calmly
- **Teacher Radar:** Continuous scanning and monitoring of the classroom to identify disengagement, confusion, or misconceptions early and respond proactively
- **Secure Student Attention:** Intentional strategies used to gain and maintain students' full attention before giving instructions, explanations, or key information

Classroom routines and expectations are applied consistently across the school so that learning time is protected and transitions are efficient.

Behaviour expectations are reinforced in ways that preserve lesson flow and minimise disruption to learning. Teacher actions are aligned with the **Be a GEM Playbook**, ensuring consistent expectations for behaviour, respect, and responsibility across the school.

Adult responses to behaviour are calm, proportionate, and predictable, supporting focus and psychological safety.

Classroom culture is actively maintained to support attention, engagement, and readiness to learn throughout the lesson.

10. Students' Understanding of Teach Like a GEM

Students are supported to develop a clear understanding of Teach Like a GEM and how it supports their learning. Through consistent use of shared language, routines, and visual prompts, students understand the purpose of key instructional techniques and how these help them learn effectively.

The *Learn Like a GEM posters* make the TLAG techniques visible and accessible to all students. They clarify what each technique looks like from the student's perspective and support them to understand how learning happens, what is expected of them, and how they can take responsibility for their learning.

Students are able to articulate, in age-appropriate ways, how Teach Like a GEM techniques support their understanding, memory, and progress. This shared understanding strengthens engagement, supports positive learning behaviours, and enables students to participate actively and purposefully in lessons.

By embedding TLAG explicitly for students, the school ensures that teaching and learning are transparent, consistent, and aligned, supporting learners to become reflective, confident, and increasingly independent.

11. Professional Development

Professional development is systematic, responsive, and closely connected to classroom practice, prioritising deliberate rehearsal, feedback, and refinement of practice rather than one-off training events.

At the heart of professional learning and development is for all teachers to get better faster. This is to ensure the greatest possible experience for all students.

Professional development with deliberate rehearsal and instructional coaching is an integral part of GEMS' model of creating a workforce that epitomises world class standards.

Professional development is delivered through the following **core approaches**:

- **Practice Clinics**: provide short, focused professional learning sessions where teachers rehearse and refine agreed instructional practices
- **Drop-ins** provide ongoing, low-stakes feedback that supports reflection, consistency, and continuous improvement.
- **One-to-one instructional coaching**: provides targeted and bespoke professional development, aligned to individual needs and stages of development

Together, these approaches ensure that professional development is systematic, responsive, and closely connected to classroom practice and prioritises deliberate rehearsal, feedback, and refinement of practice rather than one-off training events.

Professional development is structured within a clearly defined **three-tiered model**:

- **Universal offer**: regular drop-ins and Practice Clinics for all staff focusing on a global goal
- **Targeted offer**: regular drop-ins and Practice Clinics for specific groups focusing on a targeted goal
- **Bespoke offer**: one-to-one coaching to address individual development needs

12. Practice Clinics

Universal Practice Clinics are the central component of the teaching and learning professional development model and provide a protected, universal entitlement for all teaching staff.

- Universal Practice Clinics are scheduled *weekly* as a whole-school professional development entitlement, with protected time identified in the school calendar and attendance logged and monitored.
- Targeted Practice Clinics provide focused professional development for identified group-level priorities, including specific phases, subjects, or areas of instructional need, enabling teams to strengthen practice in response to school and system priorities.
- Bespoke professional development, delivered through one-to-one instructional coaching, provides individualised support aligned to teachers' specific development needs, supporting refinement of practice, professional growth, and adaptive expertise.

Practice Clinics are *brief and focused*, typically lasting *15–20 minutes*, to prioritise *deliberate rehearsal* and impact over discussion.

Universal Practice Clinics are aligned to the **Global Goal for the Week**, as set out in the TLAG calendar. The aim of the global goal is to help improve the teaching profile across the school.

The only teachers who will not prioritise the global goal are those who have a higher-priority action plan as part of the 1:1 bespoke offer and are working towards making rapid improvements in their instructional practice.

All staff, including teachers, middle leaders, senior leaders, and principals, attend and actively participate in Universal Practice Clinics.

Practice Clinics follow a consistent, codified structure using the See It, Name It, Do It model to ensure coherence and fidelity across the school.

- **See It:** Effective practice is made explicit through live or video modelling, including clear examples and non-examples
- **Name It:** The key features of effective practice are identified and deconstructed to build shared understanding.
- **Do It:** Teachers rehearse the practice through structured tasks, with multiple opportunities for feedback and refinement

Practice Clinic begins with a *Spotlight and Shoutout*, recognising effective practice from the previous week.

The *Global Goal for the Week* is introduced by explicitly sharing the granular steps from the TLAG Library on Steplab, ensuring clarity and accessibility for all staff.

13. Drop-ins and Developmental Monitoring

Drop-ins take the form of low-stakes, informal classroom visits designed to support professional learning and improve instructional practice. They are used to observe agreed aspects of teaching, provide timely developmental feedback, and strengthen consistency and coherence in classroom practice across the school.

Drop-ins are informal, unannounced, and non-evaluative, typically lasting 5–15 minutes, and are used to inform professional dialogue rather than judgement.

Instructional coaches conduct weekly drop-ins to support the ongoing development of teaching and learning.

Drop-ins are implemented consistently across staff to ensure equitable access to feedback and professional learning opportunities.

The focus of drop-ins is aligned to the Global Goal for the Week, drawing on the relevant micro-steps from the Teach Like a GEM Playbook or the granular steps from the TLAG Library on Steplab.

Feedback from drop-ins is supportive, developmental, and suggestive, using non-evaluative language (for example, *“It was effective when...”* and *“One next step might be...”*).

Feedback from drop-ins is recorded and shared via Steplab on the same day, ensuring timely reflection and follow-up. The ‘Suggest a Step’ feature on Steplab (using the TLAG Library) is used to identify targeted or bespoke development opportunities where appropriate.

Shoutouts are used sparingly to recognise truly exceptional practice; they are specific, celebratory, and do not include next steps.

14. Instructional Coaching

All Senior and Middle Leaders should be trained as instructional coaches and must complete the Coaching Skills Builder training available on Steplab. This also includes teachers who have achieved GEMS World Class status but do not hold a leadership position.

Coaching conversations are focused on improving instructional design and practice, strengthening decision-making, and supporting adaptive expertise.

Teachers are matched intentionally with instructional coaches to best support their professional development journey.

Instructional coaches proactively follow up with coachees to review progress against agreed next steps and support sustained improvement in practice.

There is a clear ambition to engage *all* teachers in 1:1 instructional coaching *over time*. While structured and intensive coaching is prioritised for specific groups of teachers, coaching is positioned as a universal entitlement and a core driver of continuous improvement, professional growth, and world class practice across the school.

Intensive 1:1 instructional coaching must be provided for teachers who are ‘**GEMS Causing Concern (4)**’ and ‘**GEMS Requiring Attention (3)**’. This support is mandatory and focused on timely intervention (for example, weekly 1:1 instructional coaching over a 6-week cycle as a minimum), with clear guidance to strengthen classroom practice. Teachers in this group are expected to demonstrate measurable progress within a six-week coaching cycle, evidenced through agreed criteria and observable changes in classroom practice.

Ideally, the instructional coach supporting teachers who are ‘**GEMS Causing Concern (4)**’ and ‘**GEMS Requiring Attention (3)**’ should be a subject expert and meet the GEMS World-Class Practice standards in the GEMS Teacher Pathway to World Class.

Sustained 1:1 instructional coaching is provided for teachers demonstrating ‘**GEMS Consistent Practice (2)**’, ‘**GEMS Strong Practice (1B)**’, and ‘**GEMS World-Class Practice (1A)**’. This support is focused on ongoing refinement, professional growth, and leadership impact, and is delivered at a reduced 1:1 instructional coaching frequency (e.g., one week of 1:1 instructional coaching followed by two weeks of drop-in feedback). Teachers in this group are supported to continue strengthening their practice through opportunities to share effective practice and access to development pathways, including training as instructional coaches and leadership development.

Middle and Senior Leaders must maintain a clear overview of where each teacher sits within the GEMS Teacher Pathway to World Class framework and to ensure that all staff receive the appropriate tariff of support, aligned to their level of practice and professional need.

15. Teach Like a GEM Digital Infrastructure

The Teach Like a GEM (TLAG) site sits within the [GEMS Educational Excellence Site](#) and provides a centralised digital hub to support consistent, high-quality teaching and learning across all GEMS schools.

All GEMS staff have access to the following resources:

- TLAG Playbook (English and Arabic): The core codified guidance outlining high-quality instructional practice aligned to TLAG
- TLAG Champions and Steplab Contact List: A directory of key contacts supporting TLAG implementation and instructional coaching
- TLAG Champions Hub (*restricted access*): A dedicated space for TLAG Champions, housing implementation guidance, facilitation materials, and leadership resources
- TLAG Excellence Fellows Connect: Profiles and contact details for TLAG Excellence Fellows, alongside a shared workspace to support collaboration between Excellence Fellows and TLAG Champions
- TLAG Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): Clarification and guidance on TLAG principles, implementation expectations, and common misconceptions
- Learn Like a GEM School-Branded Slides: A consistent set of slides to be used by all teachers, across all subjects and year groups, to support lesson structure, clarity, and coherence
- TLAG 'Stay in the Know': A curated collection of professional development resources aligned to Teach Like a GEM, including the TLAG Bulletin, TLAG Podbites, GEMS Collective

16. Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Adaptive Expertise	Teachers' ability to make informed instructional adjustments in response to evidence of student learning while remaining aligned with TLAG principles.
Automaticity	Fluent recall of knowledge achieved through repeated retrieval and deliberate practice, freeing cognitive capacity for more complex thinking.
Cognitive Load	The amount of mental effort required when processing and understanding new material. Effective teaching optimises cognitive load so attention is focused on what matters most.
Cognitive Science	Research into how learning, memory, and understanding work; used to inform curriculum design and instructional practice.
Connection Making	Linking new learning to prior knowledge to deepen understanding and strengthen schemas.
Deliberate Rehearsal	Structured professional practice in which teachers repeatedly rehearse specific TLAG techniques, receive feedback, and refine their practice.
Drop-ins	Short (5-15 minutes), low-stakes classroom visits that supporting professional learning through focused observation and developmental feedback.
GEMS Curriculum	The <i>what</i> of learning: the coherent, knowledge-rich curriculum entitlement that defines what students learn across subjects and phases.
GEMS Culture	TLAG techniques focused on creating calm, orderly, and respectful classrooms that maximise learning time and establish consistent routines and expectations.
GEMS Essentials	TLAG techniques focused on structuring lessons for clarity and impact. It defines the agreed lesson architecture used consistently across lessons.
GEMS Talk	TLAG techniques focused on fostering purposeful academic discourse so that all students think, articulate ideas, and engage actively with learning.
Instructional Coaching	Targeted 1:1 professional development that supports teachers to refine practice through goal-setting, feedback, and sustained follow-up.
Knowledge Micro-Maps	Lesson-level curriculum maps that break learning into precise knowledge, identify likely misconceptions, and show how learning connects to prior and future knowledge.
Knowledge Transfer	The ability to access and apply existing knowledge to make sense of new information or unfamiliar contexts.
Procedural Knowledge	The skills and processes that students learn and apply. It involves knowing how to do something and is acquired through experience, practice and repetition.
Retrieval Practice	Opportunities for students to recall previously learned knowledge from memory to strengthen retention and understanding.
Schema	A mental structure that organises, links, and stores related knowledge, enabling more efficient recall and understanding.
Sequencing	The deliberate ordering of curriculum content so that new learning builds logically on prior knowledge.
Spaced Retrieval	Revisiting previously learned knowledge over increasing intervals of time to strengthen long-term retention.
Substantive Knowledge	The core facts, concepts, and content that form the foundation of a subject.
Teach Like a GEM (TLAG)	The <i>how</i> of learning: GEMS Education's evidence-informed instructional framework that defines how the curriculum is implemented consistently and effectively in classrooms.
TLAG Playbook	The codified guidance that sets out agreed instructional principles, routines, and expectations aligned with Teach Like a GEM.
Universal, Targeted and Bespoke PD Offers	A three-tiered professional development model providing learning for all staff, specific groups, or individuals based on identified needs.



مدرسة كامبردج انترناشيونال
Cambridge International School, Dubai

Teaching and Learning Policy and Procedures

NAME OF POLICY	Teaching, Learning Policy and Procedure
APPROVED BY	Principal
DATE APPROVED	October 2026
DATE OF REVIEW	August 2028
RELATED POLICIES	1. Professional Development Policy and Procedure 2. Teacher Growth and Supervision Policy and Procedure 3. Assessment Policy 4. Marking and Feedback Policy 5. Inclusion Policy 6. Curriculum Policy 7. Student Code of Conduct 8. Teach Like a GEM Handbook 9. Digital Learning Policy 10. Alternative Pathways Policy

Rationale:

At Cambridge International School, Dubai (CIS) we **Collaborate** with passion, **Innovate** with purpose and **Succeed** with excellence. It is our commitment, drive and purpose to provide our students, with the best possible teaching and learning opportunities, every single day. We believe that it is our role as educators, to facilitate our students' learning, through high-quality positive interactions that provide a platform for the holistic development of students: academically, socially, and emotionally.

For the purpose of this policy, learning is understood as a lasting change in knowledge, understanding or capability that can be retrieved and applied over time. Teaching is the deliberate creation of conditions, explanations, models, practice and feedback that enable this learning to occur. These definitions provide a shared foundation for the expectations set out throughout the policy.

This policy has been designed in line with the 'Teach Like a GEM' playbook, grounded in cognitive science, educational research and best, international, pedagogical practice.

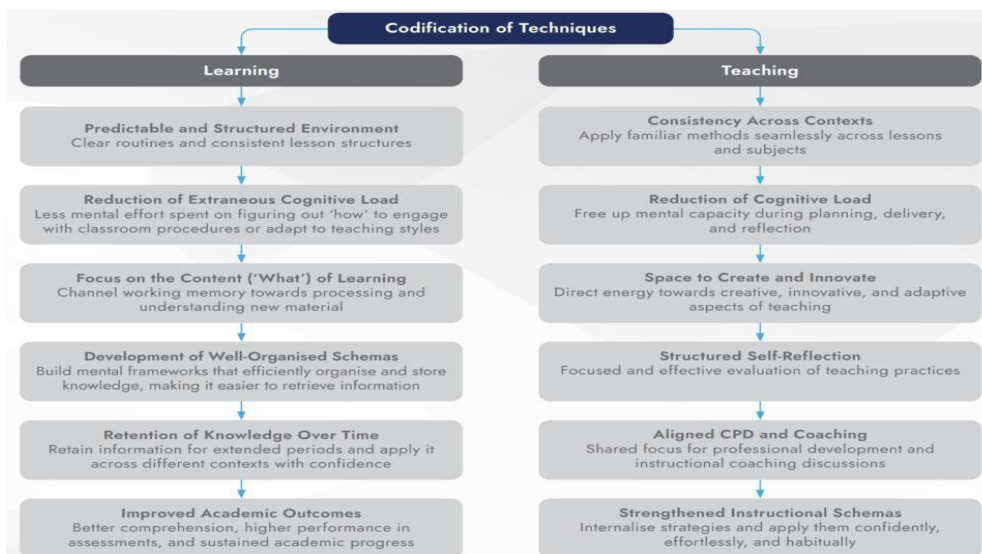
Aims:

- To ensure high quality teaching that enables the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding which will underpin all future learning.
- To ensure consistency and continuity across the school.
- To ensure all learners achieve the highest academic standards, meeting and exceeding UAE and international standards.
- To establish fully inclusive classrooms with support and challenge for all learners including those with special educational needs, disabilities, EAL Learners and Emirati students.
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum which provides opportunity for all learners to make progress through enjoyment and challenge.
- To promote a wide range of enrichment experiences which enable children to make connections between all forms of learning.
- To integrate Emirati culture and Islamic values into learning experiences.

We insist that our school is warm, welcoming, clean, bright, well-organised, and an enabling environment, conducive to learning. Classroom procedures are to be routinised and consistently applied in line with our 'Be a GEM' framework. Staff are to uphold the highest possible behaviour for learning expectations of all students.

‘Teach Like a GEM’:

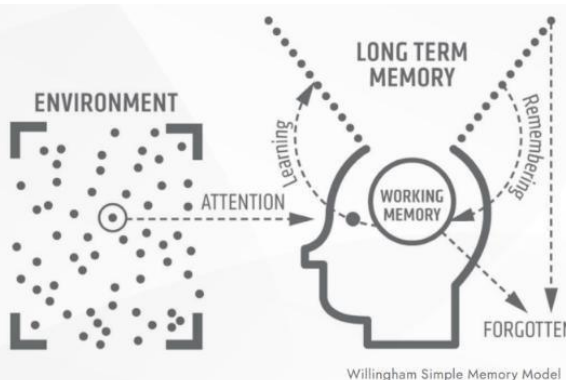
The ‘Teach Like a GEM’ playbook is implemented with maximum fidelity across the whole school with a focus on codifying techniques to support and manage the extraneous load of both students and teachers. The rationale for this and process is outlined below:



The design of the playbook which guides our pedagogical approach in the school is based on the following guiding research:

Teach Like a GEM emphasises the artful, intuitive aspects of teaching alongside the evidence-based, scientific nature of learning processes. It is based on **Doug Lemov's Teach Like a Champion**, **Barak Rosenshine's 10 Principles of Instruction**, **Retrieval Practice**, **Cognitive Science**, and **Cognitive Load Theory**. These frameworks emphasise explicit instruction, active student engagement, and effective management of cognitive load to optimise learning.

At GEMS Education, world-class teaching requires all staff to understand the **mechanisms of the mind**—how we think, learn, and remember.



As captured in the **Simple Memory Model**, learning begins when **information** from the **environment** enters **working memory**, but only if we are paying **attention**. Working memory is the bottleneck of our thinking, limiting how much we can process at any one time.

For information to be retained, it must be encoded into long-term memory through focused attention, meaningful engagement, and deliberate practice. In this sense, **learning** is best understood as a change in **long-term memory**.

Remembering plays a crucial role. When we retrieve information, we bring it back into working memory, re-engage with it, strengthen connections, and build deeper understanding. Without strong encoding or regular opportunities for remembering, knowledge is easily forgotten.

Curriculum Implementation

The GEMS Curriculum defines the what of learning, setting out the knowledge, skills, and understanding that all GEMS students are entitled to learn, including what is taught, why it is taught, and how learning is sequenced over time.

Teach Like a GEM defines the how of learning, providing the instructional framework through which the GEMS Curriculum is implemented consistently and effectively in classrooms.

Curriculum implementation prioritises sequencing and coherence, enabling students to build knowledge cumulatively and make meaningful connections across lessons.

Teaching is structured to make learning stick, using explicit instruction, modelling, guided and independent practice, and opportunities for retrieval and application.

Assessment is used formatively to check understanding, identify misconceptions, and inform next steps, ensuring that teaching responds to what students know and can do.

Instruction is adapted to meet the needs of all learners, including multilingual learners, Students of Determination, and high prior attainers, while maintaining high expectations for all.

Leaders and teachers are familiar with the curriculum plans and syllabus for the subjects they line manage and teach.

Teachers use the curriculum plans and the knowledge micro-maps to ensure they understand how fluency composites of learning are sequenced in relation to the wider curriculum.

When planning lessons, teachers use knowledge micro-maps to ensure they are planning lessons in a way that sequentially supports students to know and remember more and make the links between new learning and prior/future learning explicit.

The 'Teach Like a GEM' playbook identifies 18 techniques that we encourage our teachers to utilise through the codification of language and deployment of the strategies to support our learners. These 18 techniques are broken down into 3 categories:

- 6 'GEMS Essentials' which must be present in all lessons
- 8 'GEMS Talk' which promote communication, collaboration, and provide assessment for learning opportunities
- 4 'GEMS Culture' which supports with behaviour for learning, which is complimentary of the 'Be a GEM' framework which is also deployed in the school.

An overview of the 18 techniques and their categorisation can be seen below:



Retrieval Practice:

It is the expectation that all lessons at CIS start with a 'Do Now' activity. This activity must be carefully designed to promote opportunities to:

- Retrieve- information from the long-term to the short-term memory to strengthen memory traces and activate existing schemas.
- Re-Engage- information by explaining it, applying it and manipulating it to expose gaps or misconceptions.
- Re-Encode- information back into the long-term memory, stronger than before.

Teachers must also use this opportunity to address any misconceptions that may arise.

Learning Outcomes and To Know Statements:

Every lesson at CIS Dubai is designed around a carefully planned Learning Outcome and related To Know statements. The Learning Outcome is a measurable statement of what learners are expected to achieve or demonstrate by the end of the lesson and is linked to the relevant English National Curriculum objective. The To Know statements identify the essential substantive and procedural knowledge learners need in order to achieve that outcome. Both are shared at the start of the lesson and revisited at purposeful points to maintain focus, check progress and support reflection.

Scaffolding and Modelling:

Learners are supported through the 'I Do, We Do, You Do' model, which provides a gradual release of responsibility from teacher modelling, to guided practice with the teacher, and finally to independent practice and application. Scaffolding and modelling may take a variety of forms and, where appropriate, students may also model strategies or processes for one another.

Assessment: *(See separate Assessment and Marking and Feedback Policy)*

Our assessment procedures allow us to give students and parents clear guidance about the standard of their work and precise ways in which students can improve, develop and achieve. Student progress and attainment is closely monitored throughout the year. Assessment, marking and feedback improve learning and raise standards by:

- Sharing learning outcomes with the students so that they are able to monitor their own learning towards these goals.
- Providing students with constructive feedback that enables them to identify what they need to do next *(Marking and Feedback Policy)*.
- Involving students in their own self-assessment and peer-assessing so that they are aware of what they know, understand and can do *(Marking and Feedback Policy)*
- Using assessment information within the lesson (AFL) and over time to inform learning to suit the needs of the students.

Lessons are characterised by a number of 'Affirmative Checking' opportunities to provide the teacher with information and data, for how best to adapt their lesson and respond accordingly. Informal strategies such as: 'Cold Call', 'Show Me', 'Everybody Writes' are employed routinely. Technology is also utilised in this process through quick quizzes to identify: whole class misconceptions, which students need their learning extending or which students might require further support. All lessons finish with an 'Exit Ticket' which assesses each student's level of understanding of the learning outcome to guide future practice and instruction.

In Primary and from Year 7 to Year 10, students complete pre- and post-diagnostic assessments on CENTURY Tech for English, Mathematics and Science. Pre-diagnostic assessments provide teachers with information about each student's attainment in relation to the curriculum objectives being assessed, enabling them to adjust planning and personalise learning. Post-diagnostic assessments provide timely evidence of progress from each student's starting point and identify concepts that may require further teaching or support.

Marking and Feedback: *(See separate Marking and Feedback Policy)*

At CIS Dubai, our approach to feedback is that it is most impactful when delivered 'in the moment', to support, re-direct or extend learning. Our marking and feedback policy has been designed, utilising the latest educational research and best practice guidance. CIS Dubai adopts a 4 quarters approach to marking and feedback which provides a balance of: bespoke 1-1 feedback for each student, whole class misconceptions being addressed, peer and self-assessment. Teachers are expected to circulate their classroom throughout a lesson, intervening where necessary. Peer and self-assessment opportunities are provided regularly to boost metacognition, using rubrics where necessary.

Adaptive Teaching

Teachers at CIS are expected to make adaptations to their teaching, during a lesson, to ensure it provides all learners with the opportunity to meet and exceed expectations. Learning will be effectively planned prior to the lesson, as well as necessary adjustments being made to teaching and learning throughout the lesson. Teachers have high expectations for every pupil in their care. Within the practice of effective adaptive teaching, all learners experience the same high expectations set out by the teacher, with differing layers of support, to help them make good progress and achieve well over time. Teachers effectively use assessment for learning strategies and affirmative checking throughout their teaching to: adapt, contextualise, support and extend the learning for individuals or groups of students, as well as addressing misconceptions to ensure consistent progress is made.

Differentiation:

Teaching and learning at CIS Dubai functions to provide highly effective learning opportunities to students from a range of backgrounds and abilities. Assessment information is to be used to inform planning and learning for all. All lessons are modified to meet the needs of the class with clear pathways for support or challenge. Teachers at CIS Dubai plan lessons with ambitious goals and support/scaffold and stretch/challenge students appropriately based upon formative and summative data and assessment for learning opportunities deployed in a lesson. Strategies such as 'Right is Right' and 'Stretch It' are utilised in lessons and a culture of excellence in everything that we do, is promoted.

Modification: *(See Inclusion Policy)*

We offer modification of a curriculum for children with special educational needs. This refers to the process of making intentional and individualised adjustments to the educational content, materials, methods, and assessments to better meet the unique learning requirements of students who have diverse learning abilities, disabilities, or exceptionalities. These modifications aim to provide an equitable and inclusive educational experience that allows these students to access and engage with the curriculum effectively, achieve learning goals, and maximise their educational potential. When planning work for students of determination (SoD), we give due regard to information and targets, contained in the students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Diverse Learners (English Language Learners, Exceptional Learners and Emirate students) also have termly targets and Individual Learning Plans that drive personalised learning throughout the year. It is the expectation that all staff provide quality first teaching opportunities to every student in their class, through careful planning, appropriate resourcing and strategies to foster inclusion within the classroom, including through collaboration and the learning environment itself.

Challenge:

Students at CIS Dubai are effectively challenged in all lessons. Teachers use relevant data about their students to plan effectively to challenge. It is expected that teachers plan for this prior to the lesson but also adapt to the needs of their students during the lesson. A variety of data contributes to the planning of challenge both before and within a lesson. CAT4 data is used to identify 'Exceptional Learners' (ExL) who must have bespoke challenge activities planned for them in each lesson in line with their ExL plans. Teachers must also be cognisant that groupings within a lesson are flexible and must be vigilant to identify students who are capable of accessing more challenging work.

Reading Across the Curriculum:

At CIS Dubai, it is the responsibility of everyone to support the development of literacy for each student. In line with the 'Read Like a GEM' programme, students are offered support and access to improve their reading literacy levels in every lesson. Teachers develop subject specific vocabulary, provide opportunities to speak and listen, read a range of text and write for subject specific purposes. All teachers are expected to monitor spelling, grammar, vocabulary and handwriting and address this with students where necessary. When planning all teachers should consider the literacy demands of the lesson or lessons and take necessary steps to ensure these are taught alongside the subject specific content. Within lessons, teachers are aware of and utilise strategies from the 'Read Like a GEM' playbook, including but not limited to: modelling fluent reading, transaction costs, bridging, spot check, focal point, skimming and scanning. Subject readers are also present so that students have opportunities to 'Read Like A': Geographer, Scientist, Linguist, Historian and Mathematician.

Teaching and Learning in the Early Years:

The EYFS Framework identifies four guiding principles which we use to shape our practice in school:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and selfassured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Children develop and learn at different rates.

The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are important and interconnected. Three areas are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive.

The Prime Areas	The Specific Areas
• Communication and Language • Physical Development • Personal, Social and Emotional Development	• Literacy • Mathematics • Understanding the World • Expressive Arts and Design

The EYFS Framework identifies three characteristics of effective learning. Both our curriculum and pedagogical approach have been developed with these characteristics in mind:

- Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

We believe it is essential to have a balance between adult and child-led learning in the Early Years. This allows children to practise new skills and take ownership of their learning by applying

it in different situations. Carefully planned adult-led activities are important to ensure children learn specific skills and knowledge. During play, they can practise these skills and we can then see how much of this learning children have embedded.

Outdoor learning is a fundamental part of the Early Years and it has a positive impact on children's development. Being outdoors offers children the freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active. It also offers opportunities to do things in different ways and on different scales compared to indoors. Our outdoor environment provides a range of resources and activities for children to explore and we try to ensure each of the curriculum areas are incorporated into the outdoor environment each day. Both FS1 and FS2 have access to outdoor areas and they either have free-flow access or timetabled sessions inside and outside. Outdoors is both a teaching and learning environment, where there is a balance of child led and adult led learning

Early Years and Arabic Provision – FS-Y1

Aligned with Phase 1 of the KHDA policy and the "Loughat Al Daad" strategy, Arabic and Islamic provision is integrated daily for children aged 4 to 6. The Arabic and British Curriculum teachers work cohesively to delivery dual language learning that enhances students' language development and the love of the Arabic Language. Teachers adopt a variety of teaching models illustrated below whilst still adopting the Teach Like a GEM strategies.

Team Teaching Methods

Team Teaching (English & Arabic Together)	What it looks like: Both teachers lead the lesson and intentionally alternate languages for reinforcement—not word-for-word translation.
One Teach, One Support (English– Arabic Language Support)	What it looks like: One teacher leads instruction while the other supports comprehension and language production.
Parallel Teaching (Same Content, Different Languages)	What it looks like: Class is split into two groups; each teacher teaches the same lesson in a different language.
Station Teaching (English & Arabic Stations)	What it looks like: Students rotate through stations with clear language expectations.
Alternative Teaching (Targeted Arabic or English Support)	What it looks like: One teacher works with the majority while the other supports a small group.

Phonics:

Systematic synthetic Phonics is taught from FS1 upwards using the Floppy Phonics scheme. Children in FS1 to Year 2 are expected to be taught phonics four times a week. Phonics teaching is expected to be taught consistently following the programmes guidelines. Students are tracked weekly to ensure they are on track. All Year 1 students sit the Phonics Screening at the end of year 1 and this is re-taken by any student that has not passed in Year 2. All new joiners to Year 2 are screened at the start of the year to enable effective planning to meet their needs. Students with EAL access FlashAcademy intervention to support new to English, or those struggling with phonics, students.

Digital Technology: *(See Digital Learning Policy).*

Teachers use digital platforms and technologies as an integral part of lessons to enhance their learning experience where appropriate. Technology is effectively used in planning, teaching, learning, collaboration and assessment. Teaching activities and software are well chosen to support and extend learning and enable teachers to collect live assessment information to drive adaptive teaching. Research opportunities are provided to students where necessary, with guidance on how to best conduct research, with the integration of AI, provided.

Professional Development:

Teachers at CIS Dubai are supported in a variety of ways, providing learning for all staff specific groups or individual based on identified needs.

New staff access a bespoke induction week, prior to starting CIS, with informative presentations and workshops taking place, along with mandatory courses for safeguarding and health and safety. They are provided with a 'buddy' in school to support them and to help them settle in. All new staff access a 'Probation Support Plan' which is a programme designed to support with the induction for the new teacher, with a combination of peer observations, formal observations, target setting, and instructional coaching. Similar programmes are in place for existing staff members who may need support (Teacher Support Plan) or those that wish to improve their pedagogy and professional development (Teacher Level Up Plan).

Where quality-assurance evidence identifies that practice is not meeting expectations, leaders will provide a

staged programme of support in line with the Teacher Growth and Supervision Policy and Procedure. The programme will identify a limited number of precise targets, the evidence against which progress will be evaluated, the support available, the review period and the possible next steps. Support may include coaching, co-planning, modelling, team teaching, observation of effective practice and access to relevant professional development. Records will be maintained on the appropriate school platform.

All staff have access to the PD library, a specific section with a range of books linked to pedagogy, leadership and education. In addition to this, all teachers access 2 internal Professional Development (PD) afternoons per week, linked to school development priorities and areas that staff identify as requiring further support with. External PD is offered through GEMS, and we utilise opportunities for staff through NPQ's and the PDQ. Being part of the GEMS network allows for PD opportunities such as peer observations, learning walks, network meetings and group wide PD .

To support teachers with the implementation of the 'Teach Like a GEM' playbook, teachers receive instructional coaching, with the support of a trained coach. Bi-weekly 'drop-in' sessions take place which are recorded on 'StepLab'. Staff receive training in a 'Practice Clinic', following the 'See it, Name it, Do it' model to break each technique down into 'micro-steps' and receive instructional coaching to support and monitor the execution of the focused techniques. This is an ongoing, cyclical process to support individual teachers to continually refine their techniques and to further enhance their capabilities:

Performance management and appraisal takes place on BlueSky, an online platform. Teachers have targets linked to school development priorities but also targets set by them, that are personal to their own development. Evidence is uploaded and regular meeting points between the staff member and their line manager take place and are recorded.

Quality Assurance and Monitoring:

A rigorous quality-assurance cycle supports consistently high standards in teaching and learning. Evidence is gathered through peer review, middle- and senior-leader activity, formal observations, learning walks, work scrutiny, planning reviews and focused drop-ins. Formal observations take place three times each year, are evaluated against the UAE inspection framework and are recorded on BlueSky. Feedback from all quality-assurance activity identifies effective practice and clear next steps. Leaders triangulate evidence over time, avoid drawing conclusions from a single activity and use emerging patterns to plan coaching, professional development, curriculum support and further monitoring.

Quality-assurance activities have distinct purposes. Drop-ins, coaching visits and peer observations are developmental and are intended to identify effective practice, support reflection and agree manageable next steps. Formal lesson observations are evaluative and contribute to the school's appraisal and performance-management processes. Staff will be informed of the purpose, recording arrangements and follow-up expectations associated with each activity, and all feedback will be evidence-based, proportionate and aligned with agreed school and GEMS education framework