

September 2023

Dear parent/carers,

We wanted to provide you with a brief insight into teaching and learning at Great Academy Ashton – in essence, the typical lesson that your child will experience every lesson every day.

Our staff work hard to ensure they remain at the cutting edge of high-quality teaching techniques that support our students in their educational journey.

Strong Start & 'Do Now'

A strong start creates a calm learning environment to ensure students are ready to learn.

The 'Do Now' encourages students to answer and then self-assess their responses to questions based on previously learned topics. We know that retrieval practice supports students in being able to fluently recall their learning, which supports them in long term success. Additionally, the 'Do Now' allows teachers to address misconceptions swiftly to ensure students have an accurate understanding of the topic.

Excellent Instruction and Explanation

A brief explanation of how the learning intentions link to previous knowledge means that students can attach the new learning onto something in their long-term memory, encouraging students to develop schema (repeated actions that help students develop their ability to figure out how things work).

Teachers, using their subject knowledge, present new content to students in small steps with checking for understanding techniques after each step.

Effective Modelling and Practice

Students are guided in how to apply knowledge, understanding and skills. Through modelling and use of examples, students are guided and assisted in their practice, until the teacher gains a high success rate. The students are then ready to begin working independently with accuracy.

Reflect and Finish Now

At the end of the lesson, it is important that every student feels successful – they need to leave our classrooms knowing they have learnt something! But the teacher needs to know this about their students too. The task cleverly allows the teacher to assess very quickly how much of the knowledge students have understood and been able to apply independently. This information then informs the teacher's future planning.

A calm and purposeful dismissal from the lesson maintains a calm learning environment and transition to the next lesson.

Responsive to continual assessment

Throughout every lesson, teachers utilise a range of techniques to swiftly identify any misconceptions in order to adapt their delivery and ensure students can deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills.

How can you help your child succeed?

- Join us at Parents' Evenings – children do better in school when parents support their academic efforts. Attending Parents' Evenings is a great way to get to know your child's teachers and how they are progressing.
- Support homework expectations - during the high school years, homework gets more intense and grades become critical for college plans. Homework supports in consolidating the learning at school and creates 'good habits' that will help your child through life. Encourage your child to ask for help when it's needed – our staff are here to help.
- Take attendance seriously – having to catch up with missed learning can feel stressful for your child, but additionally, students with attendance below 95% usually perform at least 1.5 grades lower than their peers.
- Talk about school – when children know their parents are interested in their academic lives, they tend to take school more seriously.

Save the Date(s):

Date:	Activity:
05.10.2023	Open Evening
19.10.2023	Year 11 Lift Off Evening – how parents/carers can support their child to meet their full potential in their GCSEs
07.12.2023	Year 11 Parents' Evening
08.02.2024	Year 8 Parents' Evening
07.03.2024	Year 9 Parents' Evening
20.06.2024	Year 7 Parents' Evening
11.07.2024	Year 10 Parents' Evening
15.07.2024	Celebration Evening

Thank you for taking the time to read about teaching and learning at GAA – should you have any questions please feel free to email us at: cat@gaa.org.uk

Yours faithfully,

The curriculum, assessment and T&L team.