



### Welcome

Welcome to our penultimate Teaching and Learning Newsletter of the year. I do hope that you are finding them useful and, as always, please do contact me here at school if you have any questions or points that you would like to raise with me. The focus of this Newsletter is on supporting boys' achievement and I am grateful to Rachel Dell for writing the article below to help guide our thinking on this issue.

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**Assistant Headteacher**

### Supporting our Boys

There has been a worrying trend over the last 15 years that girls are outperforming boys. At GCSE, 2016 saw an 8.9% gap between the achievement of girls and boys, a pattern repeated in further and higher education also. Gary Wilson (please see website below) has been working on raising boys' achievement for many years and has identified a number of barriers to boys' achievement including a lack of independence prior to starting school, difficulties in structuring written work and a lack of opportunities for reflection.

Peer pressure is often cited as one of the biggest reasons for boys orientating away from education and as such Wilson argues that it is vital for boys to be able to achieve away from the 'prying eyes of their peers'. This could be in the form of helping younger students at school, or siblings at home with home learning, reading or organising their own projects for example. By giving boys a positive focus for their natural leadership ability, it can be a means of allowing boys to succeed and challenge gender stereotyping. A common misconception is that boys love competition: In fact, boys who win, love competition. It seems more accurate to say that boys love challenge, an idea which is being embodied across the school with changes to students' working practice such as flipped and independent learning. This also creates an opportunity for perhaps the biggest motivator: Rewards. We like to receive praise, yet on average boys will hear more negative comments compared to words of encouragement. Wilson argues that setting short-term goals that are recognised and rewarded, are a successful strategy for raising boys' engagement with work and subsequent achievement. Some further practical ideas for supporting your son include:

- Be active in their education
- Develop their independence – don't do everything for them
- Get good male role models

You can visit his website for more information

<https://www.garywilsonraisingboysachievement.com/>

## From Your Year Leader

I can't believe that we have already made it to the summer term. It is no time to relax however, as the expectations and level of work that Year 9 students are completing, will now start to increase, as subjects begin to lay the final foundations to students learning, before they start their GCSE courses in September - and, in some cases, start teaching GCSE content now.

The past half term has been another hugely successful one for Year 9. From outstanding sporting performances, breath taking performances in Battle of the Bands and some amazing work produced across all subjects, it has been a term of real highs.

This Teaching and Learning newsletter concerns strategies to close the gap between girls attainment and that of boys. Although the ideas below apply particularly to boys they do, of course, apply to all students too.

### **Support home learning expectations**

Home learning will continue to get more intense as Year 10 approaches. Amid all these changes, many students are learning how to balance academic demands with extracurricular activities, social lives, and jobs.

### **Exercise**

There are plenty of studies that link exercise to improved performance. One recent study showed children who carried out regular exercise, not only did better academically at 11, but also at 13, and in their exams at 16. Encourage your child to walk, cycle or scoot to school, take part in an extra-curricular sports club or just to join in with a sports team outside of school to have fun.

### **Send them to school ready to learn**

A nutritious breakfast fuels up students and gets them ready for the day. In general, students who eat breakfast have more energy and do better in school. You can help boost your child's attention span, concentration, and memory by providing breakfast foods that are rich in whole grains, fibre, and protein, as well as low in added sugar.

### **Sleep**

Students also need the right amount of sleep — about 8 to 9½ hours each night — to be alert and ready to learn all day. But packed school days, home learning, extracurricular activities, sports and friends — mean that it's common for children to not get enough sleep. Lack of sleep is linked to decreased attentiveness, decreased short-term memory, inconsistent performance, and delayed response time.

### **Develop organisation skills**

Learning and mastering the skills of getting organised, staying focused, and seeing work through to the end will help in just about everything your child will do. Parents and carers can help by suggesting ways to keep class work and home learning information together in folders or notebooks, perhaps organised by subject or day of the week. Creating a calendar will help recognise upcoming deadlines, plan homework, family and social time accordingly.

### **Take attendance seriously**

Children should take a sick day if they have a fever, have vomited, or have diarrhoea. Otherwise, it's important that they arrive at school on time every day, because having to catch up with class work and home learning can be stressful and interfere with learning. Research tells us that 90% of children with absence rates below 85%, fail to achieve five or more good grades at GCSE; and around one third achieve no GCSEs at all.

Luke Kemish - Year Leader

## PE



In this half term, all of years 7, 8 and 9 will be moving over into summer activities. This will mean that the teaching focus will move towards Athletics, Rounders and Tennis. The areas that will be taught within these sports will be the rules and regulations and key skills/ techniques that enable the students to be able to complete the activity. Once confidence is gained in the key skills they will be challenged to perform more advanced skills and perform them within a competitive situation. Within the competitive they will be discussing and developing knowledge of tactics and how to implement these within the game.

To run alongside the curriculum changes we will also be changing our after school extra-curricular programme. The clubs after school will match the curriculum changes, meaning that there will be an Athletics, Softball and Rounders club with the tennis courts open to use Monday through to Friday.

These clubs are open for all to attend, and the timetable will be going up on the website and around school soon.

## Drama



This half term the texts and themes across KS3 have been carefully selected to engage boys, nurture a love for the subject and close the attainment gap.

Students will be asked to research their chosen theme and/or to learn their lines for their scripted performance for their home learning tasks.

Brecht: 'The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui'

Students will be introduced to the style of Epic Theatre and apply them to Brecht's Play, The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui. We will learn about how the theatre both educates and entertains at the same time, using Brecht's technique of *verfremdungseffekt*. The main assessment period will be 10-20th May,

## Art



All students have had the opportunity of using clay this term. They have produced a tile based on the letters in their name. The boys have responded well to this task and really enjoy working with clay. We are now studying African art and will be designing and making a card and paper Mache mask next term. Students have been set their home learning project which is called 'Art for Social Change' and they have been asked to research the work of Banksy and Shepard Fairey. Students will be expressing their own views of these Artist's work and will be designing their own response. Prizes will be awarded!

## Music



Students will either be studying war music and a range of styles associated with the topic including fanfares, marches and war songs, or will be writing and recording their own pop songs in small groups.

To help engage and support boys in the above topics, the majority of classroom time will be learning by doing and working with others to concrete knowledge and embed ideas. The practical work will involve working on drum kits and percussion, keyboards, as well as music technology to record and edit compositions.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Topic Title</b>	<b>Main Assessment Activity</b>
Textiles	Fashion and People	Design and making of final product
Graphics	Bespoke Steam Punk Clock	Design and making of final product
Food and Nutrition	Teen Meals	Putting a meal together in a healthy way
Graphics	Architecture – Beach Hut Project	Interior design and manufacture of beach hut
Maths	Foundation tier Equations, Scatter graphs, rounding and 2D representations of 3D shapes.  <i>Higher tier</i> <i>Basic probability, scatter graphs, standard form and 2D representations of 3D shapes.</i>	End of Unit Assessment
RE	Matters of Life and Death	End of Unit Assessment
English	19th Century Prose	READING and WRITING  Unit assessment – AQA style - Paper 2 section A and Paper 1 section B
Geography	Geography of crime and health	Examination based on this and previous topics
PSHE	Continuing with emotional and mental health. Looking at citizenship and issues about being part of a wider society	
History	<i>Conflict, 1894-1918</i>	<i>Write an account of how the British tried to break the stalemate on the Western Front</i>
Science	Electricity and Magnetism Genetics and Evolution	<i>Written tests completed in class for all topics listed using past KS3 science questions.</i>
MFL	French and German – My rights and responsibilities	Reading and writing – teacher assessed

## Additional Home Learning Activities

If the Home Learning does not take the full time allocated, students should try one of the activities below

Improve the quality of their written work by:

- Completing all Graft/feedback activities
- Adding to/developing core information by researching it and writing it into their books
- Correct spelling errors and punctuation

Consolidate/learn a topic by:

- Creating a spider diagram/mind map of key information
- Summarising key information into a single paragraph
- Creating a key word list with definitions
- Creating some revision/cue cards
- Writing some questions with answers to capture key information
- Writing an extended answer on the topic being studied
- Turn the key information into a model or drawing

Take the learning further by:

- Researching a related person, event, idea on the internet (e.g. BBC Bitesize) or in the library that is relevant to your topic
- Watching a documentary/programme on Youtube or other platforms
- Listening to a podcast/audio download or using the new GCSE Pod
- Talking to a class friend/family member about the topic to discuss key ideas

# The problem with our Monkey Brain



During the week in which 'Living a Health Life' was the theme, all students from Years 7 to 11 were introduced to ways in which they can look after their nervous systems. They learned the neuroscience behind making impulsive decisions, their emotions, anxiety and how these can impact on learning and the enjoyment of healthy positive relationships. Most importantly they were given a toolkit that can be used to 'Tame the Monkey Brain.' Tutors will be working with students to put some of these techniques into practice and, for years 10 and 11, to use specific ones that help them address exam anxiety

Located in the temporal lobe of the brain, **the amygdala** helps trigger the fight-or-flight response.

Buzzle.com

### The Impact of the Monkey Brain

- ▶ Impossible to slow down and enjoy the present.
- ▶ Negativity affects our mood—making us unhappy, angry, restless, and anxious.
- ▶ It hampers our ability to concentrate.
- ▶ It has a negative impact on our behaviour
- ▶ It interferes with our ability to have positive interactions with others.

### Know that you can tame it

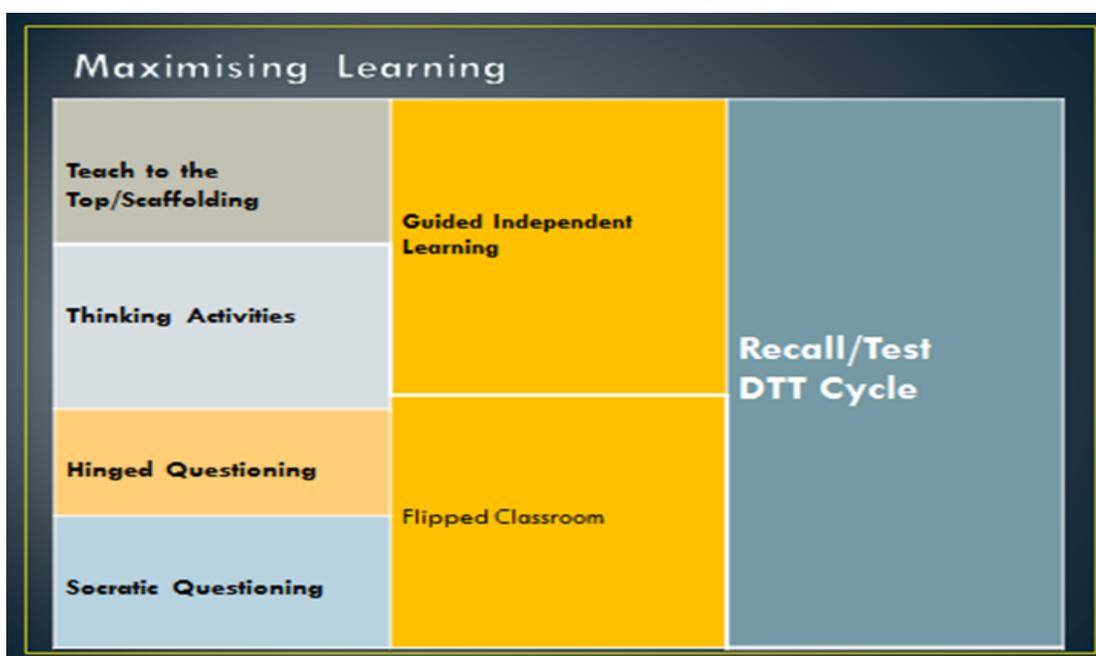
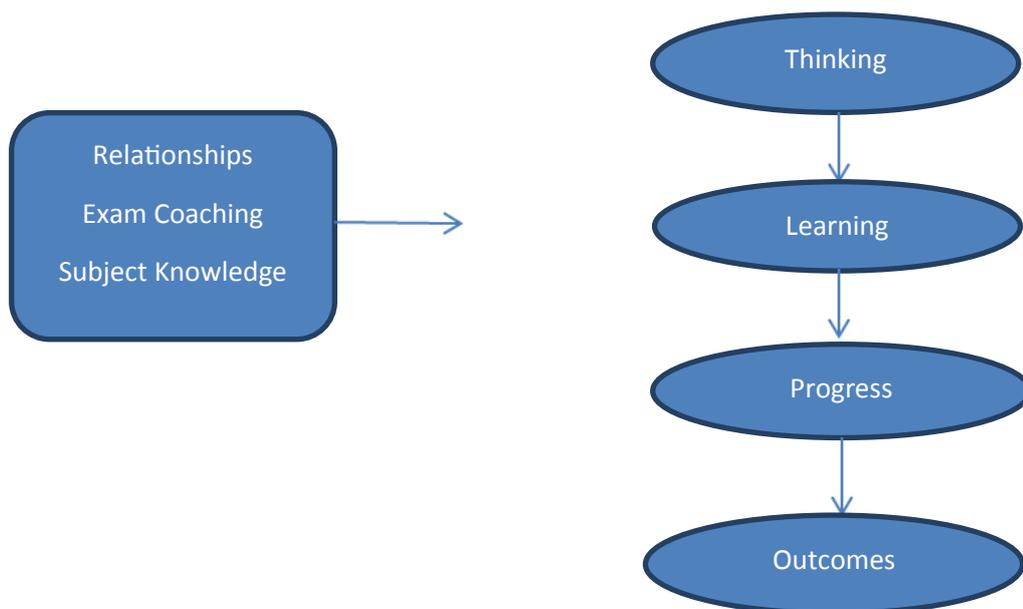
### How to tame your Monkey Mind

- Talk to Your Monkey Mind
- Establish a Journaling Practice
- Meditate
- Practice the A-B-C Technique
- Stop Assigning Meaning
- Recite a Mantra
- Play a Game of Fives
- Engage Your Mind
- Try Piko-Piko Breathing

## Teaching and Learning



From September 2017, staff have been taking part in a 2 year plan that involves receiving training in and implementing strategies across all key stages to encourage highly effective independent learning in students. The aim is to encourage a love of learning whilst equipping students with a toolkit to maximise their learning and improve their personal outcomes. It is based on the Psychology of Learning where laying down neural pathways is essential so that students can 'master rather than acquire' knowledge and improve their recall.



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