

Why work at TTA?

Culture

As a school, we do not give out “if-then” rewards to students (“if you do something, *then* you will receive a reward”). We believe that tying an action to a reward decreases a student’s intrinsic motivation as they come to expect rewards for meeting our baseline expectations of them.

We therefore do not have “achievement points” or raffles or prizes for attendance. Instead, each week, every teacher in the school chooses one student – without telling them - who has done something utterly fantastic that week and writes a “recognition” for them which is read out by the principal in assembly. This way, we recognise and applaud our students’ successes without lowering our expectations of them.

Teaching and Learning

Our general Teaching and Learning policy is centred on Rosenshine’s Principles of Instruction and Lemov’s Teach Like a Champion strategies; as such, you can expect to see teachers using high leverage techniques like ‘Cold Call’ and ‘No Opt Out’, or explicitly modelling difficult concepts before students begin to practise independently. Beyond those broad principles each department has complete autonomy over their teaching and learning policy and practices, codified in a handbook that is collaboratively written by each subject team and overseen by the head of department. For example, some departments have decided that marking is not the most effective way to give feedback to students and use whole class methods instead. Teachers develop their practice across the year by selecting an area of pedagogy that they would like to strengthen, and attending a series of practical workshops delivered by a staff expert in that field.

Autonomy

As above, we highly value our professional autonomy. One manifestation of that is in professional development, where teachers have full agency over their development goals. If there is an opportunity for teachers to have autonomy and make decisions about their work then that opportunity is always taken.

Community staff room

There is a real community feel about the staff body and we have a number of weekly “after hours” groups that meet including HIIT, Yoga and the Staff Choir. Staff are close-knit and incredibly supportive of one another: they are proud to work hard for our students. We had a 100% response to our annual staff survey and 100% of staff said that they were proud to work at TTA.

Feedback

We believe that feedback is a gift and all teachers give each other feedback regularly: all staff are encouraged to observe one another informally on a regular basis. This means, for example, that trainee teachers at the beginning of the year might be observing the vice principal for Teaching and Learning and would still be expected to give feedback.

Kaizen

The principle of Kaizen – continuous improvement – drives everything that we do and all staff members, including office and site staff, are constantly pushing to improve. Part of the philosophy is honesty and openness, and we are fully transparent about the areas we still need to improve on.

Extra-curricular

On top of a broad range of extra-curricular activities – from science club to ‘Let’s Get Cooking!’ - we are proud to host a charity called GROW on our site. GROW’s fundamental belief is that children should be educated in how to look after themselves and the natural world around them. From learning the basics of apiary to breathing and mediation, our KS3 students benefit from an additional curriculum that supplements the academic backbone of their school-life.

SLT

Our Senior Leadership Team are highly visible at all times and all members, including the principal, do duty before school, after school and in break and lunch. SLT visit all classes regularly to support teachers in any way they can and SLT regularly cover lessons on top of their teaching load.