

Learning and Teaching Policy

Academic year 2026–27

Our vision for teaching

At Arab Unity School (AUS), we believe that great teaching unlocks great moments that shape thinking, ignite curiosity and create great minds. High-quality teaching is the most significant school-based influence on how well students learn and achieve. Our ambition is for every student, in every phase and every subject, to experience teaching that is purposeful, challenging, inclusive and responsive to their needs, and to develop as High Performers, Global Citizens and Progressive Thinkers.

The AUS Great Teaching Model

The Great Teaching Model (GTM) is our shared framework for effective classroom practice. It is built on educational research and gives staff a common language, while still relying on teachers' professional judgement. It is a framework for great practice, not a script. It has seven elements.

Element	What it looks like in the classroom
Retrieval Practice	Short, low-stakes opportunities to recall earlier learning, strengthening memory and showing teachers what needs revisiting.
Learning Intention and Steps to Success	Students know what they are learning and what success looks like, and return to it throughout the lesson.
Explicit Teaching	New knowledge and skills are explained clearly in manageable steps, with regular checks that students are following.
Modelling – “I Do”	Teachers make expert thinking visible through demonstrations, worked examples and think-alouds.
Scaffolding and Guided Practice – “We Do”	Students apply new learning with structured support, through questioning, discussion and collaboration. High challenge with high support.
Independent Practice – “You Do”	Students apply learning with increasing independence, showing what they can now do without direct help.
Checking for Understanding	Used throughout every lesson, so that teachers clarify, reteach, add support or increase challenge as needed.

Flexible, not formulaic

Not every lesson contains all seven elements, and they are not a fixed sequence. Teachers select and combine them to suit the students and the learning. Practice is also developmentally appropriate: in the Early Years, for example, great teaching is realised through purposeful play, interaction and structured adult support. Our aim is consistency of principles, not conformity of delivery.

Planning, curriculum and challenge

Planning begins with the curriculum; the standards students are expected to reach and what they already know. Knowledge and skills are sequenced so that learning builds over time. Every student is challenged. Higher-attaining and Gifted and Talented students experience greater depth and complexity rather than simply more work, and challenge is never reduced for students who need support.

Inclusive and adaptive teaching

Every student is valued and supported to achieve ambitious outcomes. Teachers adapt their explanations, questioning, vocabulary, grouping, resources and support to meet different needs, beginning with high-quality teaching for the whole class. Teachers work with the Inclusion Team to remove barriers for Students of Determination, aiming for greater access, progress and independence. Students learning English as an additional language receive deliberate language development alongside challenging content. The progress of Emirati students and other priority groups is carefully monitored and supported.

Learning skills and student independence

We want students to become confident, independent learners who know how well they are doing and what to do next. Students are taught to concentrate, collaborate, communicate, research, think critically, solve problems and connect their learning to the world beyond school. Technology is used where it genuinely improves learning.

Assessment and feedback

Assessment is continuous and exists to improve teaching and learning. Teachers combine day-to-day checking in lessons with formal assessment to understand attainment and progress and to decide what happens next. Students learn to assess their own and each other's work. Feedback may be verbal, written, whole-class, live or peer-based. What matters is that it is timely, understood and used by students to improve, not that there is a large quantity of written marking. Further detail is set out in our Assessment and Marking and Feedback policies.

A positive learning environment and the UAE context

Classrooms are safe, respectful, inclusive and ambitious, with routines that maximise learning time. Where meaningful, learning connects to UAE culture, heritage, identity and national priorities, alongside wider global contexts, helping students become socially responsible, tolerant and respectful members of the UAE's diverse community.

How we know teaching is working

Our approach is aligned to the UAE School Inspection Framework and the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB), in particular the link between the quality of teaching, students' learning skills and the progress they make. Leaders never rely on a single lesson or source of evidence. They look at lesson observations, learning walks, scrutiny of students' work, student voice and assessment information, and ask not only what teachers are doing but what difference it makes to students' knowledge, understanding and independence. What we find leads to support, coaching and professional development for staff, and informs school improvement planning.

Professional learning

Great teaching requires continual learning. AUS provides sustained professional development around the Great Teaching Model, including coaching, collaborative planning, peer observation and opportunities to share strong practice.

Working in partnership

Teachers, leaders, support staff, students and parents each have a part to play. Teachers maintain high expectations and know their students well, and support staff help students access learning without becoming over-dependent on adult help. Students are expected to attend regularly, engage positively, embrace challenges and act on feedback. Parents and carers are valued partners, and AUS communicates clearly about progress, the curriculum and how families can support learning at home.

Review

The policy is reviewed annually by the Executive Leadership Group. Its success is judged by one central question: are our students learning more, thinking more deeply and becoming increasingly capable of succeeding independently because of the quality of teaching they receive?