

## CASE STUDY 4: Sarah

**Sarah** has worked really hard with her team on their **mixed ability teaching** techniques at Key Stage 4. They are now paying dividends. She attributes her success to six key factors, in addition to the fact that she sits students boy/girl from the start of Year 10.

**1. Be open about target grades from the start** Emphasise students ability to achieve good grades by using the Pupil Tracker as well as examples of success stories of past students, for example “Jo had the same SAT scores you have when he started KS 4 and he achieved an A so it should be possible for you too.” Talk in terms of targets e.g. *“If you are aiming for a C you need to ..... If you are aiming for an A\* ....* “Reassure and review those students who are on target after specific periodic assessments. Give each answer a GCSE grade so that students can see their strengths but also give written comments so that students can identify areas for improvement. Focus your marking on exam questions and reduce the amount of time you spend looking at other work.

**2. Teach students how to do different types of exam questions.** Model how you would answer and do it with them. Only then give them the model answer. Show the step-by-step planning that was involved to give them the confidence that they can tackle similar questions. Make sure these types of question are carefully plotted across the course so that they cover every eventuality. It is important to celebrate their success at their level. You might read out answers to the whole class; *let's hear an answer from Amrit. Let's see if this achieved a D Grade. Wow it's actually got a B!*

**3. Focus your teaching on specific students' targets.** Don't be afraid to allow D/E boundary students to focus on the basics, missing out what they don't need to know. Use a stepped approach in your mixed ability classes, directing the more able to quickly move to higher order tasks whilst you are supporting lower attainers to complete simpler tasks.

**4. Give summaries at the end of each topic** of the key information needed to achieve different grades, making sure that these are interactive and make pupils use the information to complete them. Don't just give out notes, but also don't spend valuable time in class note making.

**5. Use the differentiated text books** that are available and try to build up a stock of differentiated support sheets, some with charts half completed, others with key information left out.

**6. Make students responsible for remembering** specific pieces of information expecting the more able to recall more complex ideas whereas the lower attaining need to focus on just three simple ideas. Constantly recap and reinforce making it memorable by using mnemonics and acronyms.