

# Teaching & Learning Policy

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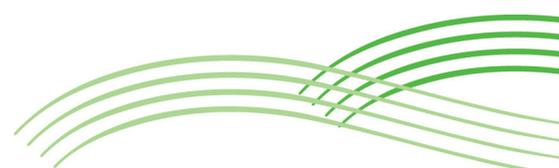
Version No.: 1

Date: Sept 2017

Next review: Annual

Ratified:

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## **Introduction:**

Learning and teaching is the core business of schools in The White Horse Federation. It is our aim to motivate all our students to have high aspirations, to want to do their personal best and to have the desire to be successful in and out of school. To prepare our students for a rapidly changing world, we need to create a stimulating and successful learning environment in order to nurture flexible, driven and creative learners.

This policy sets out the principles and expectations behind our approach, which is underpinned by the Teachers Standards, and in doing so provides new and existing staff with a clear vision of the school's expectations, providing an agreed focus for monitoring.

## **Key Features of our Mastery Approach**

The 2014 national curriculum has been designed to raise standards, with the aim that the large majority of pupils will achieve mastery of each subject. For schools and teachers the shift to a mastery approach will require a clearer focus on lesson design, teaching and use of resources and support for pupils. The key features of our mastery approach are influenced by the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics' (NCETM) features of the mastery approach:

### **Curriculum design**

A detailed, structured curriculum is mapped out across all phases, ensuring continuity and supporting transition. Fundamental skills and knowledge are secured first.

### **Teaching resources**

A coherent programme of high quality curriculum materials is used to support classroom teaching.

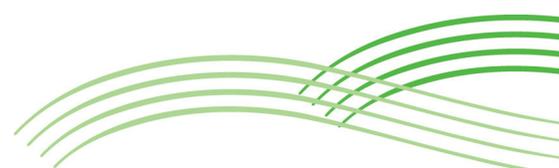
### **Lesson design**

Lessons are crafted with care and well-tested methods. Concepts and ideas are presented coherently and meaningfully relevant to pupils needs.

### **Differentiation**

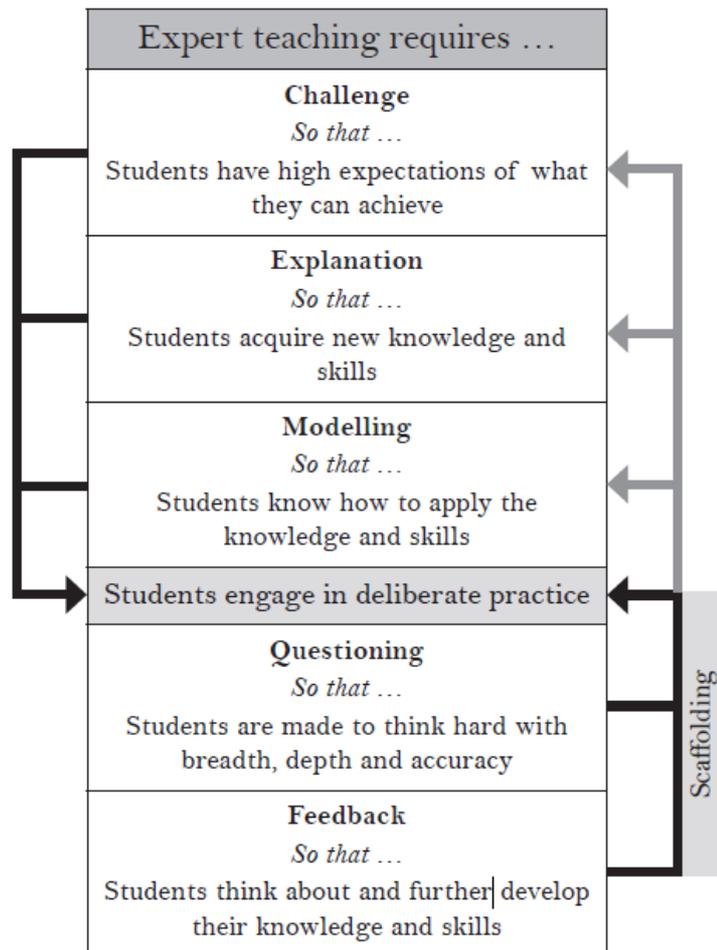
Taking a mastery approach, differentiation occurs in the support and intervention provided to different pupils, not in the topics taught, particularly at earlier stages. There is no differentiation in content taught, but the questioning and scaffolding individual pupils receive in class as they work through problems will differ, with higher attainers challenged through more demanding problems which deepen their knowledge of the same content. Pupils' difficulties and misconceptions are identified through immediate formative assessment and addressed with rapid intervention.

Fluency comes from deep knowledge and practice. Explicit learning is important in the journey towards fluency and embedding. All tasks are chosen and sequenced carefully. Both class work and homework provide this 'intelligent practice', which helps to develop deep and sustainable knowledge.



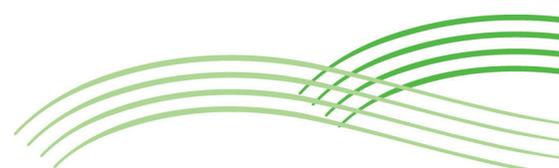
## Context:

Our approach is encapsulated by the following diagram, designed by Shaun Allison and Andy Tharby. Teachers are clear that their role is to teach in a precise way which makes it possible for all pupils to engage successfully with tasks at the expected level of challenge



### How is this achieved and what does it look like in the classroom?

These 6 principles are key to effective teaching but by its very nature, teaching is a creative profession so there is no prescribed formula for the way they are implemented in the classroom. When dealing with varied subjects it is about how these principles are best implemented to present subject and lesson specific concepts in the most effective way to students.



## CHALLENGE

With the mastery learning model, rather than prejudging potential outcomes and stifling expectations by setting a host of differentiated learning objectives based on prior attainment, have a single challenging learning objective and then think about what each individual student needs to achieve it.

- What do they struggle with?
- What switches them off?
- How much and what type of support do they respond well to?

All students may have different starting points but should aspire to the learning objective and a teacher is responsive in helping them to work towards it, for example:

- focused questioning;
- adult/ peer help with starting their sentences;
- some may need to do a draft;
- some will need apparatus to help
- some will reach the objective and need to be challenged further

It is about equity of opportunity, not all getting exactly the same to reach the objective. The aim is to keep students in the challenge zone.

## EXPLANATION

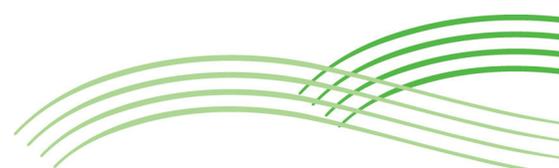
Three key principles should guide explanations:

1. Plan in to schemes of learning how to **link to and build on something already known**.
2. Allow for the **limitations of the working memory** when asking students to take on board new information, giving instructions, asking them to sort key bits of information etc.
3. Where possible try to make the **abstract concrete** – think about and plan, how to make abstract ideas make sense e.g. drawing diagrams; demonstrations in science; sharing and discussing images; taking the learning outside etc.

## MODELLING

Explain the key ideas, then model how to do it / what to do with it. This falls in to two main categories:

1. **Model the creation of products/procedures**. For example: write an essay, *show* them how to do it. Write it out on the board and discuss how/why you are doing each step as you go. Question them on what is being done. Explain, out loud, thought processes. If mistakes are made, point them out.
2. **Deconstruct expert examples and use worked examples** – have an excellent finished product and share it, discuss why it is good.



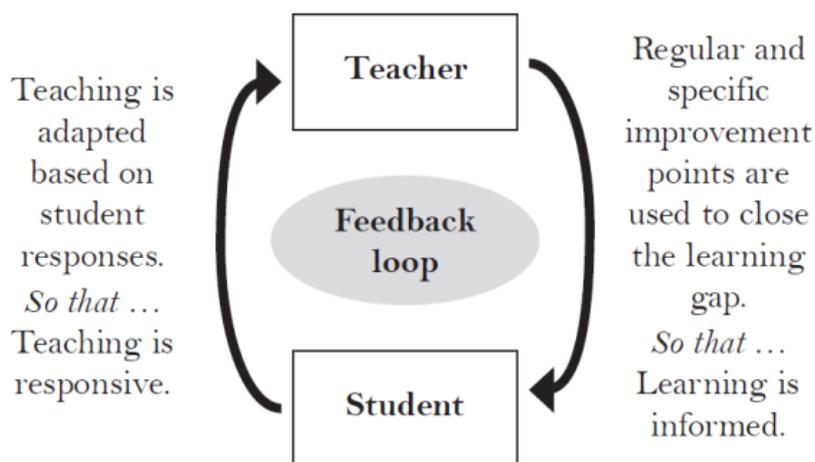
## **PRACTICE**

Plan in time, during the lesson and over a series of lessons, for students to practice using new knowledge and skills. Consider the type of practice and its purpose:

1. Practice for fluency and long-term retention – repeating things in order to master them; coming back to things in subsequent lessons etc.
2. Deliberate ‘intelligent’ practice at the outer reaches of ability – allowing students to make connections and see patterns. Practising at the outer reaches of ability means students will have to layer skills and use them with agility.

## **FEEDBACK**

Plan in how you will give feedback during/after lessons and – for this feedback to be meaningful -how you will allow students to respond this feedback. Feedback is a two way process and the teacher should use the students’ feedback to inform future planning.

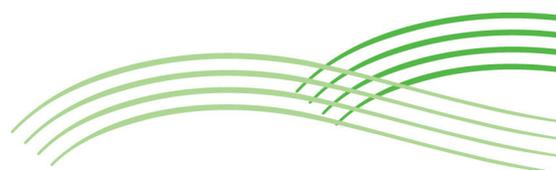


Moreover, it is our goal to nurture independent and agile learners who have the skills to be successful in an increasingly globalised and rapidly changing world. To achieve this, we must equip students to be critical and reflective learners in their own right by ‘learning how to learn’. Students need to be engaged in their own learning, be part of the creation of their ‘next steps’ and have the opportunity to assess their own work and that of their peers in a meaningful and useful manner.

## **QUESTIONING**

Some questions can be planned for but some should be responsive to what is happening in the lesson. When considering planned questions, they should be to:

1. Check for understanding – i.e. hinge questions that students should be able to answer at a certain point in the lesson, before they move on.
2. Provoke deeper thinking
3. Increase the ratio of participation and thinking of all students



## **THE ROLE OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

The school and classroom environment is key in underpinning and supporting the 6 key elements. Working walls and displays should evolve as the learning develops and be a point to provide:

- further explanation based on that used in the sessions
- additional challenge
- model examples
- probing questions/prompts to promote deeper thinking
- a backdrop that supports the hook/ stimulus for learning
- relevant resources

## **THE ROLE OF PARENTS/CARERS**

Parents/Carers have particular insights about the strengths, skills, interests, preferences, aspirations, anxieties and difficulties of their children. Accordingly, the importance of meaningful communications and co-operation between the school and the pupils' parents/carers cannot be overstated and is a key contribution to learning.

## **A 'VALUES BASED' ORGANISATION**

All of The White Horse Federation Schools are committed to a Values Based Education which is an approach to teaching that creates a strong learning environment that enhances academic attainment and develops students' social and relationship skills. Values are principles that drive behaviour. They influence actions and attitudes and become a framework for living. The wide range of values highlighted and encouraged in schools include resilience, responsibility and collaboration.

The learning environment is enhanced through the positive modelling of these values by staff throughout the school. It also provides social capacity to students, equipping them with social and relationship skills, intelligences and attitudes to succeed at school and throughout their lives.

