Innovation, Aspiration and Excellence

Learning and Teaching Policy

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Contents

1. Aims and Principles: Approaches to pedagogy and expectations

At Houlton School, we aim to build a partnership between parent/carer(s), pupils and teachers that puts learning first. One of our five aims is to be 'Excellent in our provision of transformational learning experiences' and day to day pedagogy and practice will be a key element of securing this. Our teachers are passionate about learning and are experts in their subjects. This policy is the method through which we deliver our curriculum and its implementation is the responsibility of all the members of our academy community.

> **The aim of learning is to generate a persistent change in knowledge (Kirschner *et al*., 2006).**
>
> **Thinking is the process that leads to such a change, a process governed by our working memory. We attend to information in our environment (or in our minds) and in attempting to make sense of it, we alter the very fabric of our memory (Cowan, 2010).**

Learning and Teaching are central to life at Houlton School. The quality of teaching has the greatest impact on pupils' learning and the standards that they attain. This is, therefore, a key policy for our school. We acknowledge the importance of on-going research into how people think and learn in what we do and value the strengths of individual children, teachers and support staff. As such, our teaching is adjusted and flexible so as to respond to the developing needs of learners in the classroom, by varying instruction accordingly, so that we are 'excellent in our expectations for, and from, every pupil'.

Our teaching is driven by our values of innovation, aspiration and excellence. The protocols, routines and development of good learning habits are embedded across our academy and we assume that all teachers will remain consistent in the way they are applied in the classroom. The mantra is an important part of the teaching and sets the tone for the learning that follows.

Effective teaching at Houlton starts with 'Quality First Teaching'.

2. Quality First Teaching[1]

Research demonstrates that the key to success with all learners is 'Quality First Teaching', the key characteristics of which are:

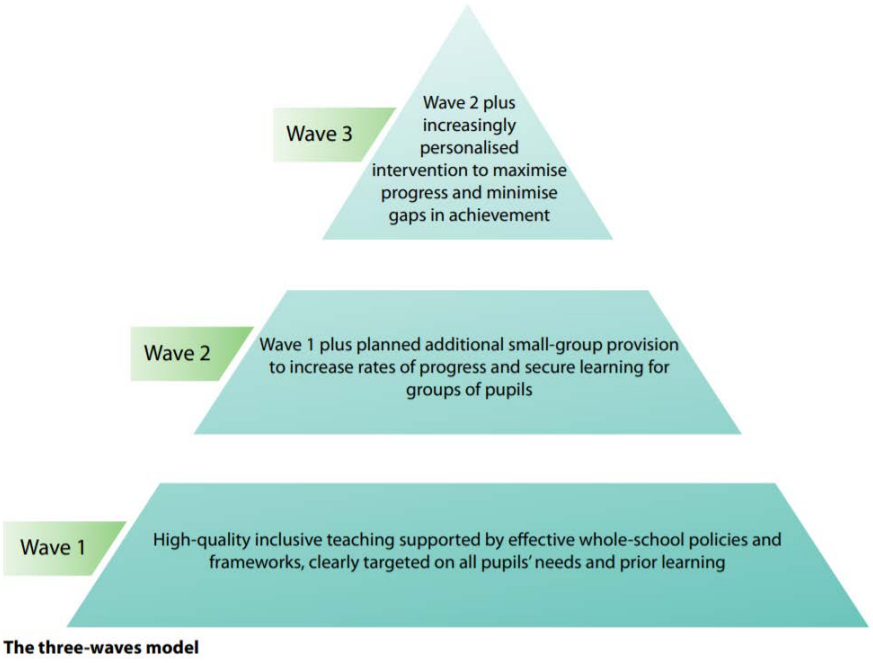
- Highly focused lesson design with sharp academic objectives;
- Clear links to purpose, the 'bigger picture' and strategically sequenced learning;
- High demands of pupil involvement and engagement with their learning;

[1] Excellence for All: Quality First Teaching and the Waves Model of planning and intervention (2009)

- High levels of interaction for all pupils;
- Appropriate use of teacher questioning, modelling and explaining;
- An emphasis on learning through dialogue, with regular opportunities for pupils to talk both individually and in groups;
- An expectation that pupils will accept responsibility for their own learning and work independently; and
- Regular use of encouragement and authentic praise to engage and motivate pupils.

Quality First Teaching defines the minimal expectation of Houlton's offer for all children: the effective inclusion of all pupils in high-quality, every day, personalised learning. The application of the 'waves' model forms part of the Houlton 'Learning and Teaching Non-negotiables'.

Waves model for planning and intervention



The three-waves model

3. The Big Question

'The Big Question' is used to define the academic purpose of all learning at Houlton School. The concept is based on research on the efficacy of 'fertile questioning'[2] as a framework for learning. Its principles are that each lesson (or sequence of lessons) should seek to answer an intellectually curious enquiry within the subject discipline. This avoids lessons that focus on 'what we will learn today', solely framed by learning objectives; instead 'the Big Question'

[2] https://natlib.govt.nz/schools/teaching-and-learning-resources/teaching-tools-resource-guides/fertile-questions and https://yoramharpaz.com/pubs/en_learning/teaching-learning.pdf

promotes an enquiry-based, problem-solving approach so that pupils are regularly challenged to apply the knowledge and skills they learn.

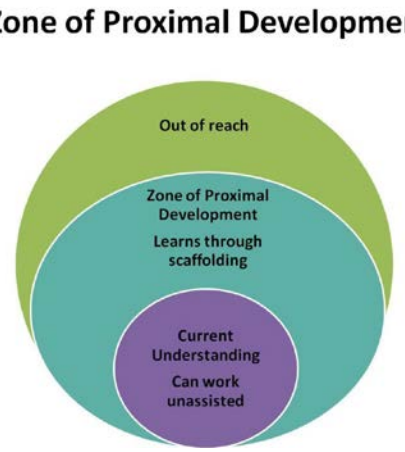
In order to avoid learning objectives simply being reframed as (not so big) questions, the following principles should be considered when planning an individual lesson, or sequence of lessons. Not all 'big questions' would address all of the principles, but all big questions would likely interact with these ideas in some way in order to make clear the academic purpose:

How 'big' are the questions I am using to frame my learning?

- **Open** — Big Questions may not have one, definitive answer but rather several different (and possibly competing) answers.
- **Undermining** — Big Questions may cast doubt on individual assumptions or 'common sense' (e.g. I look out of the window, and the ground appears flat; therefore, the world is flat).
- **Rich** — Big Questions may require research and grappling with a range information/ideas rather than a straightforward skill or single item of knowledge.
- **Connected** — they are relevant to the learners and the world in which they live, and particular disciplines and fields.
- **Charged** — Big Questions are often effective when they have a controversial/ethical dimension with emotional, social and/or political implications.
- **Challenging** – Big Questions should **always** have the highest aspirations for what pupils can achieve, with appropriate interventions, scaffolding and interleaving used to support all pupils in being able to answer them so that all pupils have the opportunity to enter the zone of proximal development, without the learning being 'out of reach'.
- **Varied** in terms **of metacognition**[3], **interleaving**[4] and **regular recall**.

[3] https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Metacognition/Summary_of_recommendations_poster.pdf (2017)

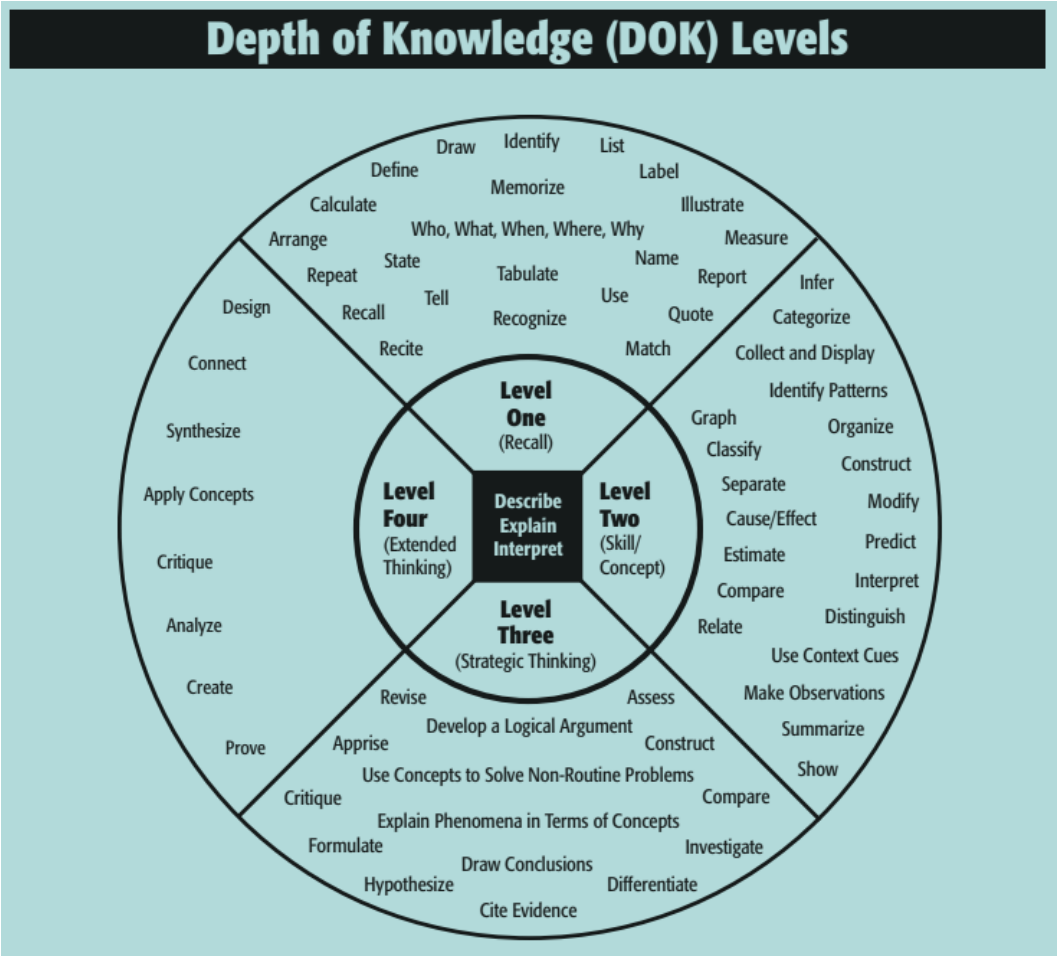
[4] https://researchschool.org.uk/bradford/news/interleaving-more-than-just-mixing-things-up/ (2019)



An example of a question that is not 'big' might be to take a traditional learning objective, for example, 'To understand refraction' and simply change this to 'What is refraction?'. This subtle change does not increase the depth of the enquiry. A bigger, more inspiring question, which may be applied to a single lesson or series of lessons might be 'How and why are rainbows formed?', which would be a bigger question that requires the application of knowledge, subject-specific skills and understanding to be able to answer it fully (an understanding of refraction would be part of the answer, but not the full answer).

Using Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK)[5] levels will support teachers with framing learning using appropriately aspirational question stems in order to promote transformation learning experiences and attention to detail.

[5] https://www.windham-schools.org/docs/DOK%20Wheel%20Slide%20for%20Teachers-0.pdf



4. Schemes of Learning – how learning is organised and sequenced

The curriculum will be organised into Long (Key Stage/Academic Year) and medium-term plans that reflect the National Curriculum programmes of study/relevant qualification specification (see Curriculum Policy). Teachers will then be responsible for designing lessons (short term plans) that meet the needs of individual classes and pupils in their care.

5. Learning Environment

Classrooms and learning spaces should be neat, orderly and organised in order to demonstrate this expectation to pupils. Displays should contain a balance between established Learning and Teaching aids and recent, relevant celebration of current pupils' work.

6. Houlton iStudy Daily Habits (see Appendix 2)

Regular reference should be made to the pillars of the iStudy daily learning habits to promote pupils' independent study skills and the habit of regularly revisiting key knowledge/memorability.

7. Houlton School's 15 Learning and Teaching Non-negotiables

Our vision for consistently **compelling learning experiences** for all pupils at Houlton is achieved through the commitment and quality of the teachers and support staff at our academy; we will work in close partnership with parent/carer(s) in a caring and open manner.

All teachers at Houlton School will be committed to:

1) planning high quality, **compelling learning experiences** for every lesson and sharing the planned learning (and their role within it) with any additional adults;
2) subscribing to our ethos of **'meet and greet/end and send'** – ensuring pupils are greeted at the door with a smile and check of their uniform before directing them towards a **'bell task'** to be completed whilst pupils arrive/during the register. During the course of the lesson check their equipment. Make sure they leave the room in a calm, orderly fashion and are ready to leave when the bell sounds;
3) **completing registers on SIMS within five minutes** of the start of the lesson to ensure pupils are safe;
4) **sharing the 'Big Question'** every lesson so that pupils are able to understand the context of the learning within the intended programme of study;
5) actively **checking individual pupil progress** throughout the lesson using AfL strategies and probing questioning for learning as part of a dialogic feedback cycle;
6) actively **differentiating tasks to ensure challenge** and progress for all;
7) maintaining an **up-to-date list of interventions for all pupils (waves model)** and a seating plan using *Edulink.* Planning for SEND and high-needs children should consider the Trust's SEND policy.
8) using a **range of pedagogical approaches** to help maximise pupil participation in the lesson;
9) ensuring **pupils can verbalise their next learning steps** and their progress towards their end of year target grades;
10) encourage **positive behaviour for learning** through rigorous use of the rewards and consequences system for supporting pupil conduct;
11) using **evaluation of** learning and **progress to plan** and teach responsively, ensuring these plans' efficacy is evaluated regularly;
12) plan and **set challenging homework** using *Edulink* so that parent/carer(s) are engaged and empowered to support their child;
13) use the **Diagnosed Therapy Testing (DTT) model** for feedback, including **Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT)**. This will lead to a dialogic feedback approach, and where written, high quality 'green-pen

feedback' should be evident in books/folders, focused on the closure of learning gaps/progress towards pupils' targets (see Assessment Policy for further detail);

14) schemes of learning will include **interleaving and memorability** through revisiting content at regular intervals to ensure that knowledge, skills and concepts are securely encoded in the minds of pupils so that they are able to recall what they have learned and apply it in examinations, but also in their everyday lives. This will be supported by regular, explicit references to the iStudy habits (Appendix 2) and cycle of independent learning (Appendix 1); and
15) **support pupils' literacy and numeracy** by applying the whole school codes (Appendix 3) when providing feedback on written responses and making explicit when mathematical enquiry skills are being used. This includes modelling standard English in our explication within lessons and having the same expectation of pupils in their responses.

8. Monitoring practice

Effective Learning and Teaching results from collaboration and support. Whilst learning should be tailored to individuals, pupils can expect a consistency of experience at Houlton School. This will be monitored through:

- regular learning visits from middle and senior leaders;
- formal review though Challenge Partner, Trust and internal reviews;
- the support of our School Improvement Partner (SIP) and the trust;
- progress data against targets;
- regular work scrutiny;
- communication with children, parent/carer(s) and the rest of the school community;
- Faculty/Subject review programme;
- staff Professional Learning reviews and appraisal; and
- reviewing practices and having a shared language.

9. Baseline testing – on entry and mid-year/phase

Baseline testing on entry will take a combination of published KS2 data (Aspire FFT20 and FFT5) and GL Assessment Testing. The combination of this will set ambitious academic targets for pupils' progress.

10. Tracking system and pupil level data handling

Tracking data from each term's cycle (Autumn/Spring/Summer) will be monitored by subject leaders and the SLT to identify, highlight and disseminate good practice, and to address underperformance promptly. This includes the monitoring of the performance of key groups of pupils. See the Assessment Policy.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1: Cycle of Independent Learning

Appendix 2 – iStudy

Houlton *iStudy* Daily Habits

	i **Identify the gaps**	**S** **Set measurable goals and targets**	**t** **Try new methods**	**u** **Undertake extended work**	**d** **Do review**	**y** **Yes to test!**
Monday	Look at your last HW task score and identify three things you could do to get more marks.	Set one measurable target to challenge yourself above and beyond what you have been set for HW.	Use a mnemonic or Loci method to help you remember something.	Ask another pupil or a teacher to give you a one minute speed teach of a question you find hard.	Re – write your notes from your lesson in less than half a side. Pick out only the key points.	Team teach: Tell a friend what you know and get them to ask you questions on what they don't understand.
Tuesday	Review the EBI's from the last piece of work you got back and see if you can write yourself one more EBI to complete.	Make a weekly plan where you allocate an appropriate amount of time for each subject. Don't forget to put in things you do for fun!	Find an online resource that you have not used before.	Find out a new fact on your subject and write it in the back of your folder under 'new knowledge'.	Spend 30 minutes reading through what you have done in class.	Practice writing stamina in test conditions. Aim for as many words as you can in 15 minutes on a topic of your choice.
Wednesday	Check your class work against the persons sitting next to you, have you got enough detail / missed anything?	Identify one thing you can't do. Note it in your planner and find three things that will help you tackle this.	Use either mind mapping or chunking to revise a lesson you have done this week.	Read a newspaper or journal. Pull out one thing that could help you in one of your subjects.	Re read your HW answers before you hand it in. Add three points in a different colour to make it better.	Practice planning an answer before you write it for a question that is worth 6 marks or more.
Thursday	Ask at least one question either on something you don't understand or something you want to know more about to a teacher or a study buddy.	Aim to get 2 consecutive Excellence Slips for outstanding pieces of work.	Summarise one section from your lesson using pictures or symbols and not words.	Visit the library and find three things that will help support your learning this week.	Go back over a HW task and identify where you missed out information.	Redo any test that is below your target and keep going until you get it to where you want It to be. Do this with notes if you are struggling then without notes.
Friday	Add in three pieces of missing knowledge or detail to your notes.	Work in silence for at least 45 minutes and then summarise in 100 words or less what you have done in that time.	Make a song / rhyme or game with your friends to help you learn one new thing this week.	Use the internet to find out what someone else thinks about the topic you are studying. Why do they think that? Do you agree?	Flick revise every time you open your book.	Revise smart. Identify the bits you got wrong and review these parts only.

Appendix 3 - Literacy and Numeracy Codes

Common Literacy Codes

Sp	Spelling – please look up correct spelling and copy out x3
WW	Wrong version of word (homophones, e.g. practice/practise, effect/affect, there/their/they're)
P	Punctuation
Gr	Grammar
//	Insert paragraph here
WoW	Up-level your vocabulary to a better, or more precise, synonym
E	Insert supporting evidence and/or quotation from a source to support

Common Numeracy Codes

LUC	Line up calculations carefully
U	Include the correct units (e.g. 5cm not just 5)
Ax	Use axes correctly (must have the same sized space between every number and be labelled)
R	Round to an appropriate degree of accuracy (if in doubt, two decimal places or three significant figures)
UF	Use functions (+, -, x, ÷) correctly (including the order of operations: Brackets, Indices, Division, Multiplication, Addition and Subtraction – BIDMAS)
SW	Remember to show working clearly