

Thinking Schools Academy Trust

“Transforming Life Chances”



New Horizons Primary School

## **Policy: Teaching and Learning**

The policy will reflect the Trust Vision of “Transforming Life Chances”. We aspire to enhance the learning of the pupils in a manner that will equip them for life outside of school. Teachers are among the most powerful influences in learning and will ultimately impact the pupil’s relationship to their learning in all areas of life, influencing how they engage with new ideas and attitudes.

**Children first:** To provide a stimulating learning environment for all where learners feel safe to explore knowledge and understanding. We believe that children learn best when they are motivated, clear about expectations in their work and behaviour, feel valued, secure and confident, are challenged and receive constructive feedback about their performance.

**Aspire:** To be the best they can be. We believe that all staff and pupils can aspire for personal and professional prowess.

**Challenge:** To actively shape the minds, attitudes and habits of young people through a framework of cognitive education that enables them to become the master of their own destiny. We believe that pupils require an accurate reflection of what they are good at and need to develop personal insight and manage uncertainty confidently. Developing skilled, independent, reflective learners is part of our Vision.

**Achieve:** For all stakeholders to demonstrate the highest levels of thinking and habits. We want our pupils to be questioning in nature, achieving the highest levels of independent and interdependent prowess.

Our ‘Thinking School’ approach is consistent with the aims below and helps to ensure that:

- a) Pupils in TSAT are supported to think for themselves, through the development of a thorough understanding of purposeful thinking tools that they can use to aid and monitor their own progress.
- b) Staff in TSAT are encouraged to think accurately and reflectively about their practice and understand a range of thinking tools that can be used to support student motivation and progress.

*All new teaching staff undertake a bespoke programme on joining the Trust and this ensures their understanding of the ethos and expertise in integrating the tools to best effect. Further documentation relating to the successful implementation of our tools in each specific learning context is available from each school.*

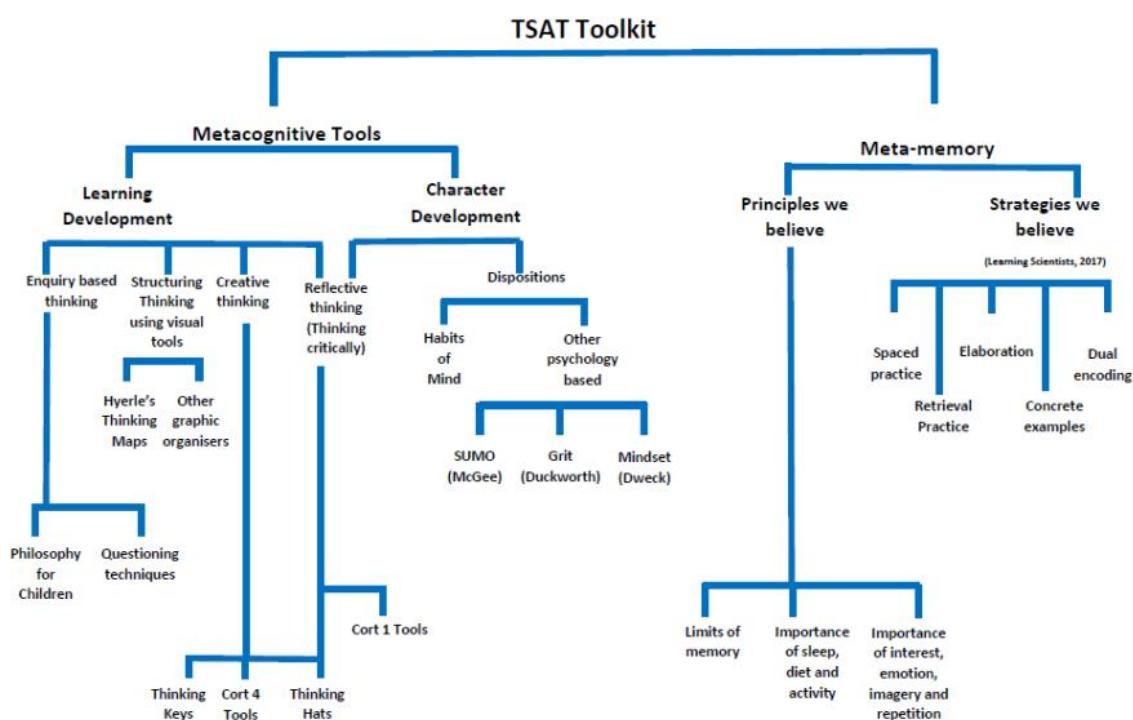
*It is an expectation that all staff members ensure their understanding of the Thinking philosophy and their fluency in using the Thinking School approaches, therefore enabling them to implement appropriately and purposefully in all aspects of their practice to support maximum student progress.*

Central to our Teaching and Learning policy are the *Core principles that underpin great teaching and learning in our Trust*. These should form the basis of our lesson planning.

**The 7 principles of highly effective teaching and learning: the fundamental facets of what we do whilst also providing a way to keep the self-improvement of teachers manageable and sustainable at all levels.**

- **Subject knowledge** – what do they need to know at that age group.
- **Explanations** – connecting to what they know, telling the story, providing metaphors and analogies, providing examples, being aware of cognitive load, doing it themselves.
- **Questioning and responding** – sequences of questions, differentiated, probing, thinking time, retrieval practice, active engagement of all students.
- **Feedback to feed forward** – accurate identification of current status and steps forward.
- **Modelling** – content, mindset and dispositions.
- **Metacognition** – tools and self-regulatory methods.
- **Memory** – encoding and retrieval practice.

We use metacognitive tools and meta-memory to support and meet these principles so the principles sit above the rest of the Tree Map



## **Aims**

Our aim is to have a common framework for learning which breeds consistency but allows for creativity and thinking. The outcome of which is enthusiasm, engagement and excitement with the content and skills required to succeed, in every classroom.

### ***To make learning ‘visible’ in lessons:***

- To ensure standards of teaching are high through internal and external judgements.
- Pupils will be fully aware of the purpose of their learning.
- Pupils will be active and resilient participants in their learning.
- Pupils will look for the ‘big picture’ and seek patterns in the information presented to them.
- Pupils will make links across the curriculum and beyond the classroom.
- Pupils will apply their learning in unfamiliar situations with confidence.
- Pupils will use ICT positively, knowledgeably and proportionately.
- Staff have strong subject knowledge and use this to engage, enthuse and excite their students. Their lessons will include a balance between surface and deep level learning.
- Staff ensure that all pupils make excellent progress and achieve above age related expectations.

### ***To make thinking ‘visible’ in lessons:***

- Pupils will be encouraged to develop the necessary interpersonal skills to communicate effectively with others.
- Pupils will be able to find and process information independently using a variety of appropriate and purposefully selected Thinking Tools.
- Pupils will be able to exercise criticality when exploring different sources of information. Pupils will develop high-order thinking skills which will allow them evaluate and create effectively.
- Pupils will develop successful dispositions to ensure knowledge and understanding is accurately, consistently and purposefully applied - The Habits of Mind are valued by teachers as a way to cultivate an environment where students develop dispositions which will support them inside the classroom and beyond.
- Staff will teach students to think about their thinking to provide them with the skills required for the new curriculum and for life-long learning.
- Staff will promote students' persistence and resilience in overcoming challenges.

### ***To make progress ‘visible’ in lessons:***

- Pupils will be able to work effectively as individuals or part of a team to solve important problems.
- Pupils will develop self-confidence, self-motivation and self-regulation towards their learning.
- Clear learning objectives and success criteria are used to ensure all students know how they can make progress.
- Staff will tailor provision to meet the needs of every pupil so that all can access our shared aims. They have high expectations and a belief that all pupils can achieve their potential.
- Staff will continually seek to research, innovate and improve the learning experience of all pupils.

- Staff feedback regularly to students to recognise and celebrate achievements, whilst challenging them in a constructive manner to strive for improvement and learn from their mistakes.
- Teachers use questioning to evaluate student understanding and progression.
- Staff regularly reflect on learning and students' depth of knowledge and understanding.
- Staff within departments use a consistent approach to assessment to ensure accuracy of data and intervention.

At New Horizons Primary School, our aim is to develop a common language to identify what we mean when we talk about quality teaching and learning. We believe that the features identified below are fundamental for the children in our school to give them the best possible life chances.

***Promoting positive behaviour for learning:***

- Show an interest in thoughts and feelings of pupils. Give reassurance and model respect. Insist that important things are done and explain why things are important.
- Give praise and feedback and point out links between people, places and things.
- Join in with the activity that pupils are doing when appropriate, hand over decisions and remain positive.
- Good teachers show enthusiasm and persistent motivation. They continually reflect on their practice and pedagogy, school and wider research, practice of colleagues, cpd and personal feedback; displaying an inner drive to improve.
- Foster a supportive and nurturing classroom where children have secure boundaries and routines. Growth mindset is actively promoted, and children believe that with practise and quality feedback they can improve and value mistakes as learning opportunities.
- Actively promote our four R's, represented by our learning heroes (Resilience, Resourcefulness, Reciprocity and Reflectiveness). In addition, being a Responsible citizen.

***Teaching traits:***

- Effective teachers set high expectations for every learner. Their challenge and feedback is consistently rigorous.
- They are well organised, well planned and prepared. Their classroom and working walls are well ordered, tidy and purposeful. Adults are well directed and prepared. As a result, every minute of teaching time is maximised and high expectations for presentation and work outcomes are promoted.
- They are a clear communicator, communicating effectively with children, parents, colleagues and a wider network including outside agencies.
- Effective teachers show children that they are not the 'font of all knowledge'. They value co-operative learning and opportunities for children to creatively apply and innovate knowledge. They plan for flow activities and a 'guide on the side' approach where they can maximise the feedback they offer to pupils.











Effective teachers have the confidence to notice when learning needs to be adapted, change their pace and can demonstrate flexibility to maximise quality learning time. Typically, teachers are proactive rather than reactive; lessons have been cohesively planned and they have a good understanding of class data, whole school focus groups and individual targets. Effective teachers are reflective teachers. They will take time at the end of a busy school day to think about what has been taught, retained and how they need to adapt their planning and teaching tomorrow to build on today's successes.

**Feedback:**

All teachers follow the schools' marking policy; where it is intended that most of the feedback is delivered within lessons so instant impact can be made. Marking feeds into the learning intentions, success criteria, literacy toolkits and individual daily expectations such as handwriting, presentation and spelling.

**Flipchart planning:**

We ask for all planning to be produced on Flipcharts. Flipcharts would usually contain the following pages (which capture the seven principles), shorter lessons may not capture every slide. Displaying the icons supports the dual-processing strategy and icons should also be displayed. Referring to the icons and using the elaboration strategy to involve children in their meta-cognition processes will further support lesson retention.

Big picture- real world link	
Learning intention/success criteria	
Stimulate recall of prior memory	
Explain new learning and introduce key vocabulary	
Hinge question	
Model	
Practise, key questioning, feedback	
Metacognitive tool and metamemory technique	
Mini assessment	
Summarise and generalise- what was the point?	

Teachers should use their professional judgement to decide the length of the above elements and the strategies that best suit the learning, children, skills and knowledge. Slides can be delivered in any order and are not expected to be taught in the order displayed in the above chart.

### ***Learning Intentions:***

Designing high quality learning intentions or success criteria is an important element in planning a good lesson and any successful lesson will be driven by these intentions. Lesson intentions should be shared with pupils in each lesson unless the hook of the lesson is to guess the learning intention. A learning intention sticker or printed intention should be stuck into children's books for each lesson. It is essential that lesson intentions are:

- Made visual
- In pupil friendly language
- *Explained fully* to pupils
- Referred to regularly throughout the lesson
- Reviewed in the plenary (though self-assessment, peer assessment or teacher).

### ***Co-operative learning:***

'The more the student becomes the teacher and the more the teacher becomes the learner, than the more successful are the outcomes' (Hattie 2009)

Research shows us that children learn best by sharing what they have learnt with peers and teaching learnt skills to someone else. We promote that everyone is a learner within the class, including the teacher. We celebrate that different people can be different experts at different times, this includes children and adults. Co-operation and the ability to recognise and take on board other's strengths is a life-skill. We promote co-operative learning in many ways, including:

- Turn to your partner
- Think-pair-share
- Snowballing
- Jigsaw activities
- Numbered heads
- Thinking maps and tools
- Flow activities such as Tarsia, Learning grids, Top Trumps, Blockbusters, Open ended problems
- Revision clocks, roll and retrieve, challenge grid
- No hands up, all whisper answer, popcorn ideas, 1,2,3 show me
- Peer tutoring and mentoring

### ***Retrieval practice:***

Retrieval practice is an integral part of teaching and learning at New Horizons. In all subjects, children are given regular opportunities to recall what they already know. This may take place through a variety of different strategies e.g. blockbusters, low stakes quizzes, recalling information from a knowledge bank and 'last year, last month, last week'. The purpose of this is to strengthen the link between concepts and ideas that have previously been taught. By doing this regularly it enables information to be retrieved more effectively as the brain links both previously learnt and new concepts together. This practice strengthens memory and aids progress in the school.

**Monitoring the impact of quality teaching and learning:**

A monitoring cycle is shared with all teachers. All teachers monitor the impact and progress of their subjects. It is expected that monitoring feedback is swiftly acted upon. Monitoring includes drop-ins, agreed observations, peer mentoring, coaching and mentoring, support plans, book looks, pupil progress meetings, staff, parent and pupil voice, data analysis and moderation.