Amadeus Primary Academies Trust

Principles of Teaching & Learning

Rationale

Developments in our understanding of how children learn, research into effective feedback, independent learning and mastery have helped us as a Trust to develop a deeper understanding of effective teaching and learning in our classrooms which meets the expectations of the revised National Curriculum. Our shared values are based on knowledge and understanding gained through collaborative working, training and reflective practice.

We believe as an educational Trust and a learning community, that our key responsibility is high quality teaching and learning in every classroom every day. Embedded and sustained improvement is dependent on this. Our expectation therefore is that all pupils are provided with quality learning experiences that lead to consistently high levels of achievement and engagement in order to become confident, articulate, independent learners.

Aims

By promoting a consistent and coherent approach to teaching and learning across the Trust, we aim:

- ✓ to provide high standards of teaching and learning in every year group and every class;
- ✓ to enable teachers and support staff to teach as effectively as possible;
- ✓ to understand the National Curriculum's age related expectations for each year group;
- ✓ to understand each child's attainment, progress and gaps in learning;
- ✓ to enable children to learn efficiently and effectively;
- ✓ to foster a love of learning;
- ✓ to give children the skills, knowledge and understanding they require to become motivated, independent, resilient learners;
- ✓ to provide an inclusive education for all children;
- ✓ to appreciate British values and Christian beliefs;
- ✓ to respect different cultures and beliefs;
- ✓ to provide a safe and happy learning environment;
- ✓ to raise expectations for all pupils, to enable them to fulfil their full potential;
- ✓ to develop high levels of emotional intelligence to promote cooperation and collaboration in learning;
- ✓ to promote high standards of behaviour through clear expectations and by the example of the adults;
- ✓ to develop a clear sense of personal responsibility as a member of the school community and the Trust.

Teaching and learning in each school needs to be adaptable and focussed on the needs of each group of pupils in each lesson. This policy outlines the key elements which are crucial to raising standards in teaching and learning, setting out a structure for lessons based on best practice and research linked to how we learn effectively.

Deeper Learning and Mastery

Many of our children acquire high levels of fluency in key skills in the primary curriculum but find it more difficult to use and apply them in more complex and challenging settings. The revised National Curriculum emphasises the importance of gaining depth in learning as children move towards mastery.

Most children working at age appropriate expectations will either need:

a) **Acquisition** - structured teaching and modelling leading towards fluency in a new skill,
b) **Fluency** - practising fluency to gain confidence and independence to be able to tackle more challenging learning, or
c) **Greater Depth** - being stretched to use and apply their learning in a variety of challenging contexts towards achieving mastery.

There will be some children who can't access the learning at the age appropriate expectation because they have key skills and understanding missing. It is crucial that we provide them with opportunities to acquire fluency and deeper learning in these to underpin secure future learning, rather than too much support just to complete the expected work.

Finally, in some classes we do have children who have acquired mastery in a particular subject and can demonstrate depth and transferability in their understanding. We need to provide them with high level challenging work which will really develop their learning further.

In every lesson, there will be an age appropriate key learning objective. Teachers must decide an appropriate fluency task and a challenge at greater depth, moving children into the appropriate groupings to meet their needs in terms of structured teaching and scaffolding, practising fluency or tackling a challenge at greater depth.
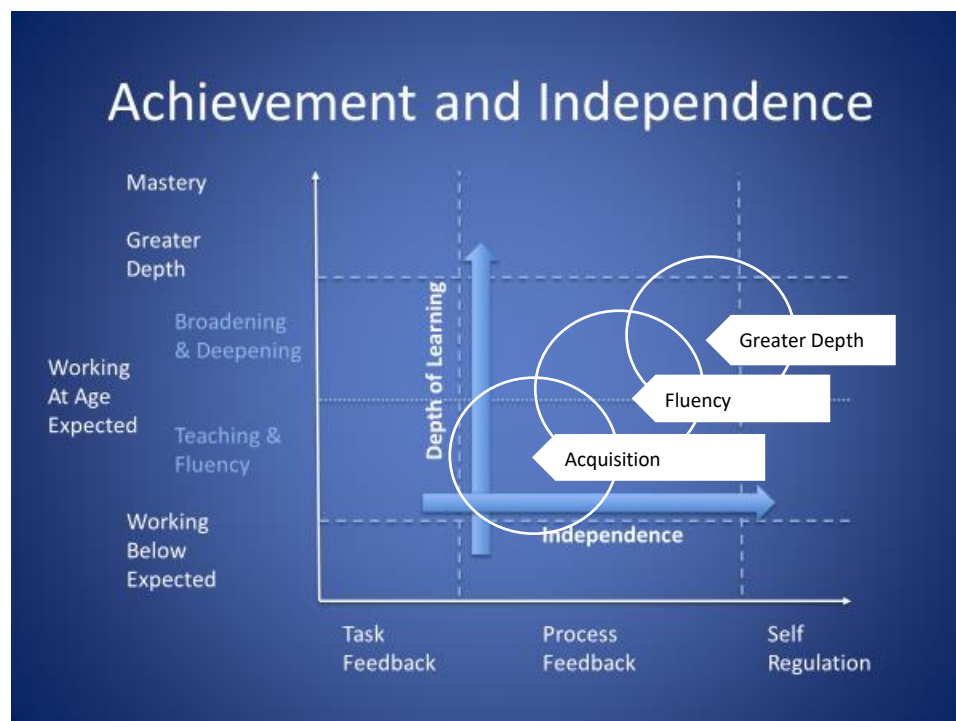
Once direct teaching has been utilised to model new knowledge it is essential that children are provided with opportunity to practice and embed their skills. By practicing skills three times in a range of contexts, children are enabled to make connections between skills and knowledge and to move this from working memory to long term memory. By ensuring secure understanding children are then able more readily to utilise skills together and to move towards greater depth.

Teaching approaches must be adaptable and flexible to move children on as soon as they are ready, or bring them back to structured teaching if they are not managing the fluency, or practising the fluency if they are unable to manage the work at greater depth. Learning should always encourage children to move towards greater depth of learning and independence.

Assessment for Learning and gaps

The key principles of effective learning must be underpinned by rigorous Assessment for Learning (AfL). This will include using both formative and summative assessments to identify what children don't know, or what they can't use and apply in a variety of contexts, in order to plan the appropriate next steps in learning. Based on the principles of Hattie's Visible Learning, teachers must be clear for each group of children, what are their gaps and what are their non-negotiables i.e. those things that the children should be able to sort out themselves. These are more than the Year Group non-negotiables because more able pupils should have a higher expectation and once new learning is embedded, it becomes a non-negotiable. This encourages greater resilience, independence and responsibility in learners.
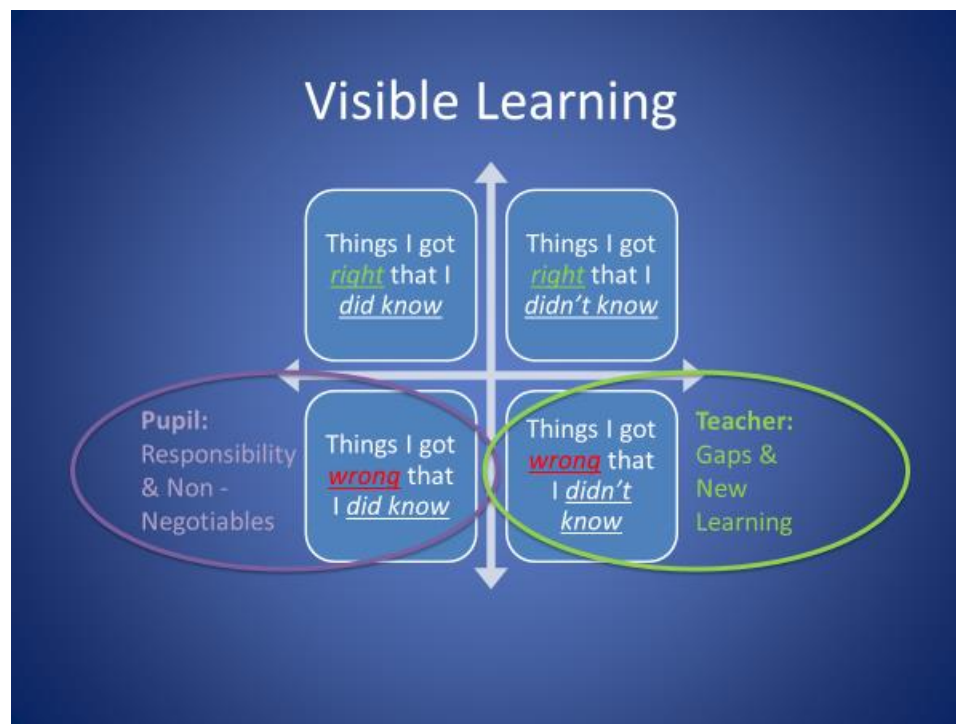
Assessment includes Effective questioning which challenges children to deepen their thinking, encouraging reflection and greater independence. It helps find out what children know, understand and can do in order to target teaching more effectively. Teachers should plan effective questions which go beyond simple recall to include:

✓ A range of answers for discussion

- ✓ Turning the question into a statement
- ✓ Finding opposites or patterns to describe a conclusion
- ✓ Giving the answer and asking how it was arrived at
- ✓ Asking the question from an opposing view

Feedback and Marking

Effective Feedback and Marking is embedded in high quality everyday practice. It forms a key part of teacher assessment and enables children to understand their strengths and weaknesses. Marking and oral feedback explain what the next steps should be by building on previous learning and enhancing learners' confidence as they become more independent. Teacher's should understand the differences between and progression in Task Feedback, Process Feedback and Self-Regulation based on Hattie's model of Effective Feedback. This should be underpinned by an understanding that feedback is used at the beginning of a series of lessons (Feed Up), during the learning (Feed Back) and at the end to review and set next steps (Feed Forward)

Giving feedback includes:

- ✓ **Marking** which should be simple, clear, and relate to the success criteria. It should reinforce learning expectations and identify next steps to develop children's thinking further. Pupils must be given regular time to address issues raised in marking.
- ✓ **Conferencing** by making time to talk to children and teaching them to be reflective about the learning objective and about their work and responses.
- ✓ **Self-assessment and peer-marking** so that children can identify by themselves what they need to do to improve their work and discuss it with an adult or partner to develop greater independence.

Success Criteria & Independence

High quality teaching and learning supports and encourages children to develop both depth of understanding and independence in their learning. Teachers must be aware of the appropriate challenge and the degree of independence that is appropriate for each group of children in each lesson and be willing to change or adapt the tasks and groupings as the learning progresses.

Effective success criteria link directly to the learning objective but provide learners with greater clarity about what the specific expectations are that will improve their work and enable them to be more independent.

Effective success criteria:

- ✓ Describe the key elements or features of a successful outcome
- ✓ Break down a learning objective
- ✓ Should be based on next steps learning & gaps
- ✓ Should be understood by children
- ✓ Should describe quality not just low level features
- ✓ Should be 2 or 3 things that make it quality for that child or group

Success Criteria are not "Steps to Success" which describe what to do. Steps to success are a key part of scaffolding and teacher modelling, particularly for less confident learners, however they undermine independence and adaptability when moving to greater depth and mastery in learning.

Success criteria are not generic lists describing all the features of a piece of work, they are the key things you want learners to use to improve their work. Clear success criteria can allow children to produce the same high quality work across the curriculum.

Children can also use success criteria to self-assess their work or to peer-assess their partner's work and teachers should always refer to them in direct teaching, on learning walls and in feedback.

Learning Environment and Learning Walls

Our classrooms should provide an organised and focussed learning environment which provides stimulus and supports learning. Challenge makes learning engaging and interest is enhanced by ensuring learning is purposeful.

Interest and engagement can be enhanced through a variety of appropriate stimuli and support, such as interesting objects or artefacts, scenarios, drama, visits and visitors, IT, games and cross curricular themes. Relating tasks to real life or towards a particular audience can also augment this.

Effective Learning walls create a learning rich environment and support children by reminding them of recent learning, teaching points, methods and non-negotiables. When used well, teachers refer to previous learning and children use them independently as prompts to support their progress and independence.