

Teaching and Learning Policy



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Dulwich Hamlet Junior School: Teaching and Learning Policy

Outstanding learning, within a glittering curriculum, where everyone matters.

Respect, Integrity, Resilience and Enjoyment

The Teaching and Learning policy is at the heart of what we do – it sets out how we, as a school, achieve the highest standards for all of the children, carrying out a consistent, high quality approach to learning, where no-one is left behind and the potential of all is realised.

This policy is rooted in our shared understanding of what the purpose of education is and what makes excellent teaching and learning.

Our curriculum intent is to:

- Create functional literacy and numeracy, equipping children with the ability to access the next stage of their life.
- Give children an agreed body of knowledge for the subjects that are taught in the curriculum, building coherently through the key stage.
- Foster curiosity, wonder and excitement for learning.
- Provide all children with agreed cultural capital across the whole curriculum
- Create thoughtful citizens, capable of contributing to society: the local community, Britain and the wider world.
- Instil self-esteem and confidence.
- Give children the capacity to learn how to learn.
- Teach effective work habits for life-long productivity.
- Create emotionally intelligent children who value others and have effective team-working and problem-solving skills.

To this end, the teaching and learning at DHJS strives to give all children the basic skills to access and drive forward their own education, develop the non-subject life-skills that are needed to succeed in life and impart powerful subject knowledge (facts, concepts and procedural knowledge) that is needed to continue that subject and make progress in it.

Curriculum Implementation at DHJS:

Teachers have secure subject knowledge across the curriculum and keep up to date with current pedagogy through a rigorous process of CPD and appraisal. Peer observations and coaching groups are used to help disseminate expertise. Through a mixture of in-class [Afl](#) and daily assessment of independent work, teachers know the children in their class well and what the next steps for each individual are. Teachers also check children's understanding after giving enough time to 'forget' taught content, thus ensuring the effectiveness of teaching for long term understanding.

At DHJS we believe in mixed ability teaching which uses [mastery](#) and accessible tasks (including [low threshold-high ceiling](#)) to support and extend all children. We differentiate through questioning, explanation of concepts, radial layout, concrete and pictorial resources and scaffolding to ensure that the pitch is accurate for all children. Although differentiation of task may sometimes be appropriate, a ceiling should not be placed upon what individual children are asked to achieve. We do not generally, therefore, give children pre-determined differentiated worksheets/questions.

We recognise the work of Sweller (1988) on [Cognitive Load Theory \(CLT\)](#) and apply the principles in the classroom. In the classroom this will be seen as [explicit instruction](#) of new material, along with small movements in teaching which build small increments of progress until something close to mastery emerges. Teachers and leaders, therefore, identify appropriate small steps in all curriculum areas, allowing pupils to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts. In addition, our teachers strive to build in challenges to enhance learning. Following the work of Bjork (1994) we recognise that whilst '[desirable difficulties](#)' may slow down learning in the short run, pupils' long term understanding and retention is improved.

In maths, pupils are taught [conceptual and procedural variation](#) alongside a focus on making links and high degrees of fluency to deepen understanding.

Children who are seen to have misconceptions are identified on a daily basis and are provided with 'catch-up' interventions where appropriate. These may be with the class teacher or another adult, and may be on a one-off basis or form part of an on-going group to ensure that no child is left behind.

Reasonable adjustments are made for children with an additional need and outside agency advice is sought and implemented where necessary. Children who have an identified specific need (eg: dyslexia) may receive support from specialist in-school providers.

Through this approach, it is our aim that children develop independence and resilience, becoming able to judge the level of challenge that is right for them individually and maximise the progress of their learning.

During lessons at DHJS teachers will choose, based on their professional judgement, a combination of the following to teach effectively:

- Creative, purposeful and contextual lessons
- Clear didactic instruction and teaching that does not require the children to 'guess what's in the teacher's head'. Instead, questions are asked to make every child think, alongside high level, individually targeted questioning
- Pace that enhances learning and maintains positive engagement
- Focused talk between children
- A range of active engagement strategies eg: paired talk, shared working, using communal spaces to allow movement in a range of subjects etc
- Use of high quality [concrete and pictorial supports](#)
- Teacher modelling and clarity for learners as to what excellence looks like
- Teachers guide children from teacher modelling, to guided practice, to independent practice, aiming for around 80% success rate.
- Consistently high expectations of behaviour and attitude to learning, with rewards and sanctions that follow the school's behaviour policy
- Verbal feedback from adults and peers
- High quality, 'glittering' outcomes that showcase learning
- Sufficient time allowed for children to reflect on and edit their learning and to identify their next steps
- Daily and monthly review of previously taught content

These elements combine in individual lessons and with individual teachers to create consistent, quality first teaching.

We measure impact by:

- Regular teacher assessment supported by high quality standardised tests, internal and external moderation of books and termly pupil progress meetings
- Our progress and attainment scores in end of KS2 tests
- Raising the progress and attainment of our disadvantaged pupils above that of their national non-disadvantaged peers
- Tracking of progress data across and within year groups, including of different groups
- Quality of work in books across the whole curriculum
- Yearly/biannually (subject dependent) curriculum health checks to ensure the effectiveness of the vertical curriculum
- Communication within and between teams that enables previously taught skills and knowledge to be subsequently built upon to maximum effect.
- Providing many, exceptional opportunities for children to demonstrate their mastery of the wider curriculum eg: annual art exhibition, Year 6 production, termly music concerts, weekly sporting fixtures with local schools, national maths competitions, year group project and presentations
- Giving children a wide variety of leadership opportunities eg: school council, house captains, sports and music mentoring, eco-council representation, pupil librarians which showcases their teamwork, problem solving and understanding of responsibility.

Learning behaviour:

During learning these behaviours will be seen:

- Children are actively engaged in and encouraged to reflect on their own learning. This will be evident in the use of AfL and feedback strategies that develop their [metacognitive strategies](#) (see feedback policy for details on what specific feedback is used and when).
- Children and adults demonstrate mutual respect and positivity.
- Children take pride in their work and how it is presented, following the school presentation policy.
- Children are able to talk about what they are learning, where the learning has come from and how they will move forward in the future.
- Children are encouraged by the adults to take risks and develop [critical faculties](#) through their increasing understanding of metacognition.
- Mastery of concepts across the curriculum leads to increased confidence and the ability to apply learning independently in different contexts.
- Focused and targeted questioning enables the teacher to individualise learning, maximise progress and leads to the development of [critical thinking skills](#) in the children.
- Children assess their own and each other's work, using success criteria and high quality models to give feedback on successes and areas for development. They have the resilience to effectively discuss areas for improvement. They edit in green pen, taking into account feedback given to them by their peers and by the adults with whom they work.
- Children embed their learning and develop their confidence, self-esteem and life-skills through the diverse range of extra-curricular activities on offer before, during and after school.

The Learning Environment:

At DHJS we believe that teachers should have the autonomy to organise their learning environment in a way that best enables them, as individuals, to deliver consistent, quality first teaching and learning. Within this will be seen:

- Attractive, well-organised, well-resourced and tidy classrooms. Children are taught to tidy up after themselves and look after the resources in the classroom.
- The learning environment is quiet and purposeful when children are involved in independent work and at other times there is a volume appropriate to the task being undertaken.
- Displays which are reflective of the current curriculum being taught, including a combination of evolving working walls (literacy and numeracy) and longer term celebratory displays, showcasing the best work of all children. Teachers take care to ensure that displays are current, relevant and do not become overly cluttered.
- Clear and prominent aspirational vocabulary which supports and extends learning across the curriculum.

- Resources, both concrete and pictorial, are used across the curriculum to support the learning of all the children.
- Seating reflects the school pedagogy, enabling effective instruction and allowing for flexible groupings during independent and collaborative learning. Seating should be changed between and within lessons as necessary to support the needs of all learners. Adults respond flexibly within lessons, working with individuals and small groups, based on excellent AfL and assessment from previous learning.

These elements combine in individual lessons and with individual teachers to create consistent, quality first teaching.

Teaching and learning is monitored by the Core Leadership Team, appraisers and subject co-ordinators during formal lesson observations, learning walks and regular book scrutinies (involving all teachers for literacy and maths) as well as thorough careful analysis of data to track groups and individuals.

Glossary:

AfL – Assessment for Learning. Teachers use a variety of techniques to find out where the children are in their understanding and through feedback and planning adapt teaching accordingly.

Mastery – Mastering [a subject] means pupils of all ages acquiring a deep, long-term, secure and adaptable understanding of the subject. The phrase ‘teaching for mastery’ describes the elements of classroom practice and school organisation that combine to give pupils the best chances of mastering [the subject]. Achieving mastery means acquiring a solid enough understanding of the content that’s been taught to enable pupils to move on to more advanced material. *(Adapted from NCETM What is Mastery? <https://www.ncetm.org.uk/professional-development/school-leaders/>)*

Metacognitive – Thinking about learning. The aim of using metacognitive strategies is to make children more self-aware about their learning. It might include skills in planning, editing, self-assessment, memorising and recalling taught content.

Critical faculties – A child’s ability to successfully assess what is accurate and true.

Critical Thinking Skills – We are referring to critical thinking skills in terms of a child’s ability to observe, analyse, interpret, evaluate, explain, infer as well as the ability to solve problems and make decisions.

Low Threshold High Ceiling (LTHC) - A task which has been designed to be accessible for all learners by having an easy access point but to allow for deep investigation which will stretch the most independent learners.

Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) - As teachers we attempt to decrease the Extraneous (unhelpful) cognitive load of tasks during learning and refocus the learners' attention towards germane (schema-related) cognitive load.

Explicit Instruction – in this mode of instruction, key information and ideas are given early in the teaching unit and then are explored in depth by pupils allowing for the content to be embedded into their understanding.

Desirable Difficulties – This theory attempts to highlight a misunderstanding that if pupils find a task easy, then they have achieved fluency. In fact, to sustain and retain learning, pupils must use their understanding in more challenging situations. This idea leads us to include desirable difficulties in our learning sequences and curriculum design e.g. spaced learning and practice, interleaving of content over blocking, using quizzes and varying practice contexts.

Conceptual and Procedural Variation – These concepts together form Variation Theory. The idea that learners must perceive ideas in different ways in order to fully understand them. Conceptual variation refers to different ways of conceiving an idea. For example, in maths, using a number line and a part, whole model to show subtraction. Procedural Variation refers to a variety of required processes. For example, in maths, there may be different ways to reach the same answer. Using variation theory in the classroom effectively leads teachers and pupils to define what something is not as well as what it is, to reason and to build more complete understanding of a topic.

Concrete resources - These are models and objects which children are able to physically manipulate when learning. For example: in maths, we use Base 10 equipment.

Pictorial Resources – These are models that are drawn or shown on the whiteboard. They may very accurately represent the real world or be conceptual metaphors which allow children to build understanding e.g. models of how chemicals behave in solids, liquids and gas.