



CASTLE MEAD
ACADEMY

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the academy. The Local Governing Body will review the policy, unless there are significant changes in the interim period.

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Revision History:

Version:	Date:	Author:	Summary of Changes:

Ethos:

At Castle Mead Academy we equip our scholars (and staff) to be lifelong learners, as part of a global community. We strive for scholars to get lost in the flow of their learning, as they master new skills and learn rich knowledge. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help scholars to lead happy and rewarding lives in the future.

Rationale:

At Castle Mead Academy, we build a partnership between parents/carers, scholars and teachers that puts learning first. Our teachers are passionate about learning and are experts in their subjects. It 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).

Teaching and Learning is central to life at Castle Mead Academy. The quality of teaching has the greatest impact on our scholars' learning and the standards that they attain. This is therefore, a key policy for our school. We acknowledge the importance of on-going research in to how people think and learn in what we do and value the strengths of individual scholars, 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.

The more we know, the better we can think, and the better we think, the more we can know.

Our teaching is driven by our values. The protocols, routines and development of good learning habits are embedded across our academy and this policy assumes that all teachers will remain consistent in the way they are applied in the classroom. This is an important part of the teaching and sets the tone for the learning that follows. Expert lesson delivery, underpinned by the Castle Mead 'Invigorating Instruction' (outlined below), framework, will be shaped by teachers' subject expertise and deep knowledge of the curriculum narrative.

Teachers should make full use of our rewards system to ensure that scholars who consistently display excellent learning habits are recognised. It is expected that all lessons at Castle Mead Academy will consistently follow our routines and lesson protocols. It is a focus of The Castle Way that should form the basis for any discussion with scholars who fail to display good learning habits and who, as a result, are not reaching their potential.

At Castle Mead we aim for all of our teaching to be highly effective all of the time. We aim the Professional Learning for all staff at achieving this.

Our Aims:

- To establish a strong culture of learning through an agreed set of practices and a shared language
- To develop teacher autonomy through providing a framework upon which lessons are planned in order to maximise scholar progress
- To provide common criteria against which great teaching and learning practice can be celebrated and developed, and where practice falls short, intervention is implemented to challenge and improve performance
- To ensure a common high quality of experience for all scholars to help maximise each individual's potential, whilst supporting creativity and flair within teaching and learning
- To help spread and share all great teaching and learning practice, making effective use of published research and literature

Key Principles:

At Castle Mead Academy we rely on research to show us the key principles of learning:

Learning:

- Learning is a persistent change in knowledge
- Some things are easier to learn than others
- What we attend to is what we learn
- We can only attend to a few things at once
- What we know determines what we can learn
- We attend to things we value
- We learn by gradually elaborating on what we know
- Understanding arises through connection
- Fluency arises through consolidation

Teachers:

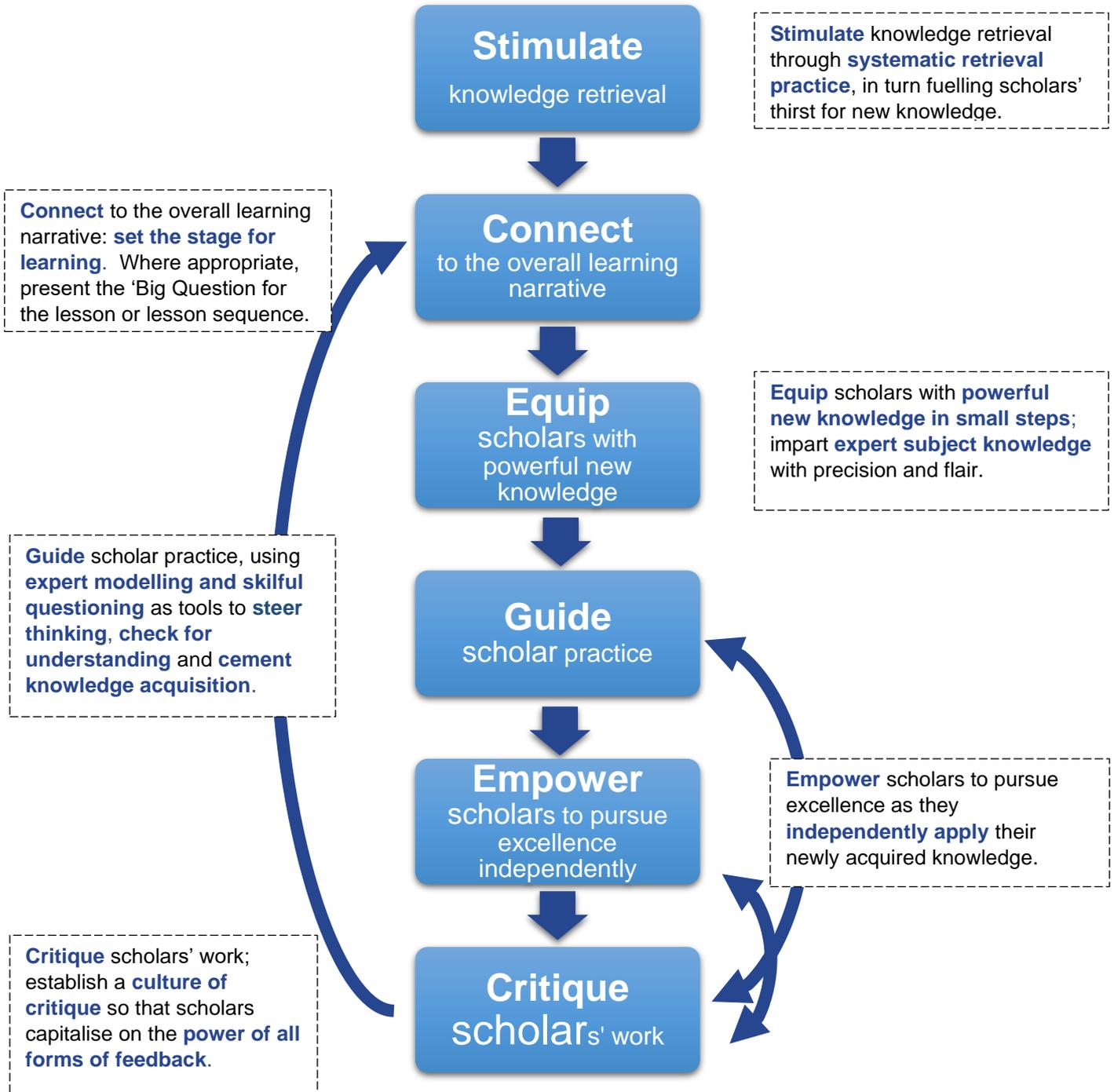
We believe our scholars learn best when:

- Teachers begin lessons begin with a short review of previous learning, as daily review can strengthen previous learning and can lead to fluent retrieval
- Teachers tailor lessons according to scholars' existing knowledge and skill; they present new material in small steps with scholar practice after each step. Teachers should only present small amounts of new material at any time, and then assist scholars as they practice this material. Instructions and explanations given should be detailed when teaching new content
- Teachers ask a large number of questions and check the responses of all scholars, as questions help scholars practice new information and connect new material to their prior learning
- Teachers think aloud and provide a model of worked-out problems. Thinking aloud simplifies complex information by presenting it both orally and visually, and providing scholars with models and worked examples can help them learn to solve problems faster
- Teachers check for scholar understanding by asking scholars to explain what they have learned, as checking for scholar understanding at each point can help scholars learn the material with fewer errors. Systematic formative feedback and corrections are provided, so as scholars know next steps in their learning
- Teachers ensure scholars obtain a high success rate during classroom instruction
- Teachers cut out inessential information, as scholars do not learn effectively when their attention is directed to inessential information
- Teachers provide scholars with temporary supports and scaffolds to assist them when they learn difficult tasks.
- Teachers guide scholar practice, as successful teachers spend more time guiding scholars' practice of new material. They then set and monitor independent practice, as scholars need extensive, successful, independent practice in order for skills and knowledge to become automatic
- Teachers engage scholars in weekly and tri-annual review, so as scholars develop well-connected and automatic knowledge

Based on the above principles pertaining to learning and teaching, we have developed the Castle Mead 'Invigorating Instruction' framework, composed of six elements. This is not a lesson by lesson checklist and these elements may be implemented over a series of lessons, as appropriate. Expert lesson delivery, underpinned by this framework, will be shaped by teachers' subject expertise and deep knowledge of the curriculum narrative. It is important to note, however, that every lesson should begin with retrieval practice and teachers must always articulate a clear sense of purpose.

Invigorating Instruction

Lessons characterised by rigour, depth, drive and clarity of purpose



Learning Environment:

Filtering through information incurs a cost on our limited mental resources and performance (Willingham, 2017). Therefore, it is important where possible, to eliminate redundant information and distractions in the environment. These include social distractions (e.g. peers or other adults), environmental distractions (e.g. display boards or clocks), activity distractions (e.g. irrelevant images or tasks), or internal distractions (e.g. performance anxiety, mind wandering).

We believe our scholars learn best when the Learning Environment is organised so as scholars have the opportunity to:

- Work individually, in pairs, and as a class
- Work in a calm, orderly and stimulating environment
- Make decisions
- Solve problems
- Be creative
- Develop social skills
- Develop independence and use initiative

Learning will take place in a stimulating learning environment that:

- Is welcoming, happy and caring, as well as being both challenging and supportive
- Celebrates success and supports scholars to realise their full potential
- Encourages mutual respect
- Is well organised, safe, tidy with well-presented displays
- Has resources that are attractive and accessible
- Has an agreed code of expectations, with rigorous routines.

Celebrating Achievement:

Is a part of each lesson, and seen through:

- Verbal or written task-specific praise by teachers, peers, Principal and parents
- Displays of work
- Opportunities to perform or share; encouraging self-esteem
- Castle Mead Rewards
- Sharing success with the community.

Homework:

The majority of homework focuses on retrieval practice. Scholars may be asked to self-quiz in preparation for lesson quizzes/tests, respond to multiple-choice questions, or complete problems or questions to consolidate material learned previously. Consequences for poor or incomplete homework are detailed in the Behaviour Policy. One afternoon a week, scholars will have opportunity to work independently on their homework during 'prep' time, in their form groups.

Responsibilities:

Teaching staff:

- Ensure scholars work in a calm and purposeful environment (making use of routines as seen in microscripts), where expectations are high
- Plan lessons which are academically rigorous, with pace and structure and using high-quality resources
- Ensure there is a clear focus given through a 'big question', which sets the stage for learning
- Ensure scholars are presented with opportunities to be inquisitive and master knowledge
- Question scholars using 'cold-calling' as the default method, to ensure all scholars participate fully
- Allow scholars to read aloud in lessons, as part of our 'no opt out' culture
- Provide opportunities for scholars to produce extended writing in many lessons
- Model live, provide worked examples and exemplar to show scholars what excellence looks like
- Provide powerful feedback to scholars, in line with the Academy's Feedback and Assessment Policy
- Use low-stakes quizzes frequently to assess knowledge
- Teach scholars to practise retrieving knowledge from memory
- Continue to widen their subject knowledge and developments in education
- Communicate with parents and keep them informed of scholars' progress

Scholars:

We believe a good learner is someone who:

- Shares ideas, tries their best and doesn't give up if it's hard
- Respects other scholars, all staff and visitors and is considerate and thoughtful
- Respects the school environment and equipment
- Shows active listening and allows other people to talk and share their ideas
- Is positive and eager to make use of all opportunities
- Knows their next steps and how to improve in their work
- Asks questions to get to the meaning of learning
- Is punctual and organised with appropriate equipment
- Has pride in their work, their class and Castle Mead Academy
- Takes responsibility for their learning

Parents:

We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their scholars and the academy in implementing academy policies. We would like parents to:

- Ensure their scholars have the best attendance record possible and are punctual everyday
- Have a positive attitude towards school and learning, supporting the ethos and working with the academy
- Share responsibility for their scholars' learning, be realistic and support the academy's expectations with regard to behaviour and attitude
- Attend parents' evenings and other such events
- Support the scholars in terms of homework
- Encourage independence in their scholars
- Communicate with staff any concerns about their scholars and if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a scholar's learning or behaviour at school
- Respect other members of the school community
- Make sure that their scholar is equipped for school with the correct uniform and P.E. kit

- Support the school's expectations with regard to behaviour and attitude

Monitoring and evaluation:

The aims and objectives outlined in this policy are evident in the day to day working of the academy. This will be monitored through:

- Classroom observation
- The progress of the Academy Improvement Plan
- External inspection
- Culture of Critique quality assurance activities
- Progress data
- Communication with scholars, parents and the rest of the school community
- Staff professional reviews in line with the Appraisal policy.