

Honywood- Teaching and Learning

Overview of Teaching and Learning at Honwood

At Honwood we are committed to the continued development of teaching and learning. Our classrooms are the beating hearts of the organisation, bringing our curriculum and core values to life. As the world and society evolves, so too do the needs and expectations of our young people, and teachers must always be ready and willing to adjust to this. So at Honwood we are on a continual journey to develop our pedagogical practice in response to the changes and challenges of the 21st century. No better can then be exemplified than over this last year. So many changes occurred so quickly and we adjusted to this at Honwood by taking '*Learning to thrive in uncharted times*' as our whole school staff learning focus. We seek to embrace the context within which we are operating and focus on opportunity and solutions rather than self-imposed limitations. This is a mindset we encourage strongly within our school curriculum and in our classrooms.

Teaching and Learning at Honwood is always developing and we base our practice around the most recent and relevant research and theory. Each year we have a key anchor text around which we base our CPD; in 2020-21 this was Tom Sherrington's book, '*Rosenshines Principles in Action*'. This provides a springboard to develop thinking amongst our teaching staff which is something we strongly encourage in order to empower our staff to be confident making decisions about the pedagogical approaches which are best suited for their classes at any specific study point. Our aims as a leadership team are not to direct teachers in a 'top-down' fashion or expect a 'one size fits all' model to teaching and learning, rather we want to motivate teachers and encourage deeper thinking by placing ownership and trust in them as educational professionals, so that the decisions they make around teaching and learning in their classrooms are the best and most appropriate for the youngsters they teach.

Establishing the conditions, building the knowledge structure and exploring possibilities.

At Honwood we strive to find a balance between effective instructional teaching approaches in order to effectively build and secure new knowledge across the curriculum, with the opportunity to explore possibilities and apply new skills, concepts and knowledge within a different context such as problem based learning, enquiry or debate. In order to establish the best climate for this to occur, subject teams ensure learning has clear purpose and is sequenced appropriately within curriculum plans, effectively 'Establishing the Conditions'.

Establishing the conditions:

Teachers set a clear 'need to know' and stimulus for learning to take root. This can be in the form of a big open-ended or 'fertile' question such as '*Can humans ever tame the forces of*

nature?' This open ended geographical enquiry could be accompanied with a range of articles, short clips or pictures relating to natural disasters which then generates a discussion and questions from learners around which learning can then be framed or centred. It is clear that when an individual has an emotional connection to material or stimulus then they will find connection and meaning through it and this leads to high levels of engagement and intrinsic motivation. This might be the start of developing what we might call 'awe and wonder'. Once these conditions and expectations are set, learners are ready and receptive to being guided through the process of study towards mastery of knowledge acquisition and application of skills.

Building the Knowledge Structure:

The next step in the journey is to build the knowledge structure. This is where teachers will often adopt what Tom Sherrington terms a 'Mode A' teaching style. This can be seen through deliberate practice in learning sessions as retrieval activities, carefully sequenced conceptual knowledge acquisition and high level modelling by teachers to set a challenging and high level of expectation for all learners. Questioning is a key tool used by teachers to help scaffold this challenge so that learners are all appropriately stretched and challenged, but also supported to fulfil their potential in sessions. Teachers structure questions in order to promote deeper, more profound levels of thinking where relevant and will re-frame questions for learners to be more reflective and develop understanding themselves. Learners are then provided with opportunities to practice newly acquired knowledge, concepts and skills and 'responsive teaching' takes place in order to assess learners both formatively and then summatively which will inform their next steps. Learners will regularly be given opportunities to reflect on their learning and to then improve or re-draft work based upon feedback given. This enables learners to 'close the gaps' in their learning and therefore to continually move forwards.

Exploring the Possibilities:

Depending upon the curriculum aims and intent, once the knowledge structure has been built, teachers may then plan for learners to 'explore the possibilities'. This provides opportunities for learners to apply their knowledge and skills within a different context, scenario or perhaps problem based activity. Pedagogical approaches which support this type of learning are known as a 'Mode B' teaching. This could be an open ended task such as learners in History using their knowledge of the Versailles Treaty which they will have developed in the 'Building the Knowledge structure' phase, to then create their own version, and justify their choices and decisions. A much deeper level of thinking is required to access this and a thorough knowledge base is required beforehand. By thinking through such a problem, learners will be able to think more critically, evaluatively and synthetically leading to a much better grasp and mastery of the topic overall. This approach often inspires awe and wonder within the subject and helps to develop the strong emotional connection to the learning taking place.

Empowering learners through developing thinking and preparing them for 21st Century challenges.

A strong emphasis on teaching and learning at Honywood is developing learners' thinking and not simply their ability to memorise facts and answer exam questions by rote learning . We don't want learners to be passive; we want them instead to actively discover information and to understand what it is like to think as a scientist, historian, geographer, linguist or artist. As teachers we don't want to just tell learners information and what to do, we want them to discover information, to feel empowered to find out the answers to the questions they have. We want learners to understand how to learn effectively and to then develop the crucial 21st century skills of understanding and evaluating the validity and reliability of contemporary knowledge claims. With so much easily accessible information readily available to them across the various media platforms, learners need to be able to substantiate and assess knowledge validity. In order to embrace both the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, we provide every learner with a loan device (ipad). These devices act as a digital tool for personal organisation such as timetables, calendars, diaries, but also as a powerful learning tool. These do not replace books and pens, but enhance learners' ability to 'explore the possibilities' more effectively through research, subject specific learning apps, revision tools and of course learning platforms such as Google Classroom in order to share resources, upload learning and receive feedback. With this being the usual way of working, learners were able to transition seamlessly to a remote learning session as needed through covid lockdowns with the addition of access to live learning sessions virtually. As a result of working in a remote setting, we have honed our skills further and are subsequently able to provide a range of pre recorded sessions and activities which learners can continue to access for revision and to support with independent study.

Evaluating and developing the quality of teaching and learning at Honywood

Overview of evaluating and developing T&L

At Honywood we are always open to developing our teaching and learning and have been positive and constructive over the lessons learnt through lockdown using this technology. The ipads feature strongly within our curriculum and teaching and learning at Honywood, but are not our primary function. It is quite possible to observe a learning session and not see an ipad used at all. We place our trust in the professional and decisional capital of our teachers to form their own decisions around what pedagogy to apply within their classrooms and this is constantly developed and improved through our own internal evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning within all subjects.

Evaluation of teaching and learning occurs at 3 scales;

- Subject Leaders- Ownership of the quality and development of T&L in Subject Teams

- Leadership Team- QA and supporting Subject Leaders with evaluating the quality of T&L in Subject Teams
- External Challenge Partners- QA and supporting LT and SLs in evaluating the quality of T&L across the school

Empowering Middle Leaders

Middle Leaders are the operational backbone of the organisation and developing and supporting this group of staff has been crucial in developing T&L. We talk about 'ownership' a lot at Honywood and have developed our middle leaders to lead their teams in this manner, sometimes adopting a 'decentralized' command approach. This ensures all members of all teams across the school are valued and they are trusted. As one of our core values, trust is within every aspect of staff learning. Each year there is a theme for staff learning around which training is framed collectively as a whole school. In addition to this, Middle Leaders are trusted to take further ownership in creating a more bespoke plan for CPD which is pertinent to the needs of the individuals within their team. This focus forms part of the Thursday CPD programme and Subject Leaders will choose from one of three strands.

- Curriculum development
- Teaching and learning
- Developing subject excellence.

Our subject leaders regularly conduct learning walks to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching in their teams, providing them timely feedback to teachers which is then used by individuals and teams to drive forward teaching and learning. Subject leaders identify areas for development which are then addressed within subject based training on the Thursday Staff Learning programme. Subject leaders develop their teams by focusing on 1 of the 3 possible strands for Thursday workshops as listed above.

Subject leaders are subscribed to professional associations within their subject area and this is used to continually develop the subject knowledge of teachers in order to be able to plan and deliver their subject at the highest level. Where subject leaders feel more bespoke, individual support is needed for individual teachers in their teams then they can utilise SLE support from across the Saffron Academy Trust or teachers may take part in a coaching programme which is run by specialist T&L coaches in the school. Another approach we take to continually evaluate and develop teaching and learning at Honywood is the use of IRIS Connect software. This platform allows us to film learning sessions, first for self-reflection and secondly shared with relevant colleagues such as a T&L coach to analyse the session and identify areas for development.

Action Research- Think Tanks

T&L Think Tanks meet every two weeks and conduct action research around a specific whole school T&L priority.

The focus for 2021-22 will be 'Raising Expectations' and the 4 Think Tanks are;

- Inspire Curiosity, awe and wonder (Establishing the Conditions)
- Introducing new material (Building the knowledge structure)
- Developing responsive teaching methods to master knowledge (Building the knowledge structure)
- Develop Critical-thinking and self-regulation (Exploring the possibilities)

Think Tanks are led by Middle Leaders and members of the T&L Coaching Team and involve a mixture of academic reading, action research and collaborative coaching. Teachers will trial ideas and use IRIS Connect to film parts of sessions which the Think Tanks can then view and critique together in order to develop best practice. Coaching is built into the framework of how the Think Tanks operate. During the Spring and Summer terms, Think Tanks provide a whole school training session to showcase findings and to suggest some useful strategies for all teaching staff. This is also filmed and shared on our staff learning website for all teachers to access and use at any point to contribute towards their CPD.

Teaching and Learning Performance Review Targets

During the annual appraisal process, teachers are all expected to have taken part in a number of CPD opportunities to develop their practice around teaching and learning. We offer this through a 'CPD Pick & Mix' menu. Examples include being part of a coaching trio observing and analysing each other's teaching and then developing a key target from this, or perhaps using IRIS connect to film a session and critique it, then again setting targets to improve in the next observation. So Teaching and Learning targets are central to our annual performance review process and there are two mid year points at which progress towards these targets are evidenced and evaluated.

Coaching Programme

At Honywood we have a team of designated coaches who have received training through the Saffron Academy Trust. These coaches receive regular top-up training to keep their knowledge sharp and up to date. All NQTs are designated a coach and wider staff are all able to ask for coaching if they would like it. Coaches utilise IRIS connect to support with T&L specific coaching and are currently working towards a more instructional coaching model.

Honywood Staff Learning Website

The Honywood Staff Learning website is a key resource and digital handbook for teachers to develop their craft. We use it to share information via the Think Tanks, alongside all aspects of action research, theory, digital learning support and also a platform for Early Careers Teachers to use. Included on the website are video clips from IRIS Connect to support classroom craft, blogs from observations across the school which are then shared in the staff bulletin, and links to our Honywood Learning Podcast.

The Honywood Learning Podcast was put together in order to create a more accessible way for teachers to hear what is going on in classrooms across the school and to share best practice. We publish episodes on iTunes and Spotify and staff are able to log in and listen to them on their own devices. This is to stimulate thinking amongst our teachers and to maintain a consistent dialogue around T&L at Honywood.

In some instances, specific CPD sessions will incorporate the staff Learning Website directly, however the emphasis remains on staff to take ownership of their own CPD. We encourage a reflective culture and expect all teaching staff to display humility in developing their T&L craft. The website is a resource teachers can log into and use as and when they need to, either to support themselves, their teams or other colleagues.

