

Teaching and Learning Policy

2026 - 2027



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Introduction

This document serves as a blueprint for implementation of our shared vision of providing an inclusive, enriching, engaging and holistic education in all our schools and settings. Our mission is to create thriving and happy schools, where success is a shared experience for all our learners.

This policy is structured to align directly with the Waterton Curriculum Intent. It defines how our curriculum principles translate into consistent, ambitious and equitable classroom practice. It also outlines the professional support and expectations for teachers and subject leaders so that teaching is adaptive, responsive and rooted in strong subject knowledge.

Our Teaching and Learning Policy sets out the evidence informed, shared principles, expectations and practices that bring the Waterton Curriculum to life with oracy as the preferred pedagogy and golden thread.

Central to this policy is our commitment to equity. High-quality teaching is the most powerful lever for improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and sits at the heart of the trust's pupil premium strategy. Our approach ensures that teaching is designed to remove barriers, close gaps and provide rich opportunities so that every child can achieve well, regardless of their starting point or background. By aligning curriculum, pedagogy and targeted support, we secure a coherent offer that meets the needs of each school community in a child-centred way.

Rationale – The Why

The Waterton teaching and learning policy sets out a framework for leaders to apply in their unique contexts to ensure that a scientific, evidence informed approach to teaching and learning is applied consistently across Waterton schools. It provides a **shared language and framework** that supports clarity, equity and high expectations in every classroom.

Our Teaching and Learning Policy is rooted in **evidence-informed practice** and aligned with the expectations of the **2025 Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF)**. Research from the **Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)**, **Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction**, **WalkThrus**, **StepLab**, and the **Great Teaching Toolkit** identifies that excellent teaching combines sequenced learning, understanding of cognitive load theory, spacing effect, mastery learning, metacognition and self-regulated learning and the importance of quality assessment and feedback. This research underpins the three Waterton Teaching and Learning Principles:

- Design: Clear instructional design and modelling
- Engage: High levels of cognitive engagement
- Reflect: Structured opportunities for retrieval, reflection and feedback

Oracy sits as a golden thread and 'preferred pedagogy' through the teaching and learning policy —particularly for disadvantaged pupils—because it develops the language, confidence, and thinking skills they may have had fewer opportunities to acquire, enabling them to access the curriculum, articulate understanding, and participate fully and equitably in learning.

These teaching and learning principles must be foundational to curriculum implementation across all Waterton schools. Together, they create a **coherent, consistent model of teaching excellence** that secures deep and sustained learning over time.

We recognise that **what is vital for some is valuable all**. Our policy therefore prioritises inclusive and adaptive teaching that removes barriers to learning and enables pupils with **SEND** and those who are **disadvantaged** to thrive.

The Waterton Teaching and Learning Framework – The What

The Waterton Teaching and Learning principles (appendix 1) are organised around **three interdependent strands**:

1. **Design:** *Lessons and curriculum are **intentionally designed** to support progression and deep learning.*
 - Clear learning instructional goals
 - Sequencing and scaffolding
 - Curriculum coherence
 - Deliberate practice
2. **Engage:** *Teachers **activate and sustain pupils' attention and thinking** through skilful instruction and adaptive practice.*
 - Active participation
 - High quality explanations and modelling
 - Feedback and adaptive teaching
 - Routines and classroom climate
3. **Reflect:** Learning is **reviewed, consolidated, and improved** through purposeful reflection.
 - Checking for understanding
 - Metacognition and self-regulation
 - Feedback loops
 - Review and consolidation

Each school will translate the Waterton teaching and learning principles into a “*Teaching and Learning Strategy for Staff*”, describing what these principles look like in practice, for example “*NJA Habits of Excellence*” or the “*SKA way*” or “*KMA 4Cs*” including subject-specific pedagogical guidance.

Implementation – The How

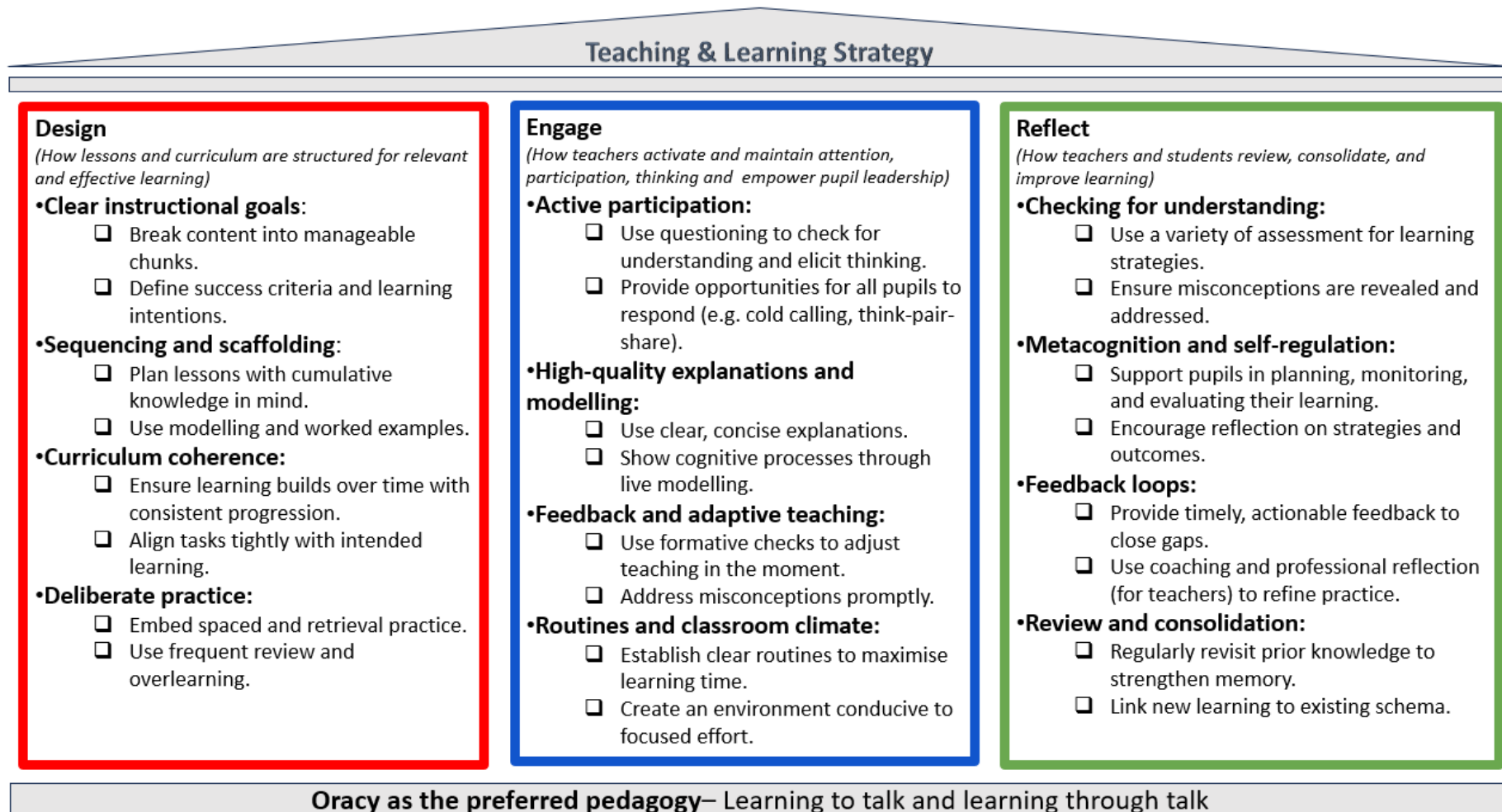
Every Waterton school will have their own approach to lesson structure aligned to the Waterton Principles. Each school will:

- Tailor the Waterton Teaching and Learning strategy to meet the unique needs of their pupils and context.

- Embed the *Design – Engage – Reflect* principles through their own school-level 'strategy on a page document'.
- Ensure that oracy is prioritised and implemented as the preferred pedagogy within each principle.
- Ensure inclusion and equity are central: *high expectations, adaptive teaching, and responsive intervention* are non-negotiable across all schools.
- Reflect: Ensure expectations for how formative and summative assessment practices inform teaching and curriculum design are clearly identified.
- Prioritise professional development that builds shared expertise in high-impact teaching.
- Use monitoring, coaching and collaborative review to secure fidelity and continuous improvement.
- Implementation will be supported through peer and subject-network collaboration to refine subject specific pedagogical practice.

Evaluation and Impact

The Waterton teaching and learning principles will underpin all evaluation and monitoring of teaching and learning for curriculum and senior leaders. Regular evaluation, reflective enquiry, and internal and external reviews will support leaders to drive sustained improvement in quality of teaching and pupil outcomes; closing the attainment gap for disadvantage and SEND pupils.



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