



United Learning
The best in everyone™



**Teaching and Learning
The United Way**



“ To go fast, go alone; to go far, go together,,

During the last ten years our teaching and learning strategy has evolved into a framework which aims to be tight enough to provide coherence and clarity but flexible enough to work in different schools, subjects and year groups.

We have sought to capture and share the excellent practice in our schools, as well as introduce expertise and guidance from outside the Group.

This brings key guidance on teaching and learning into a single document.

The story so far...

Teaching and Learning at United Learning

2018

In 2018 we committed to the **Rosenshine Principles** of instruction, introducing these as the 'characteristics of effective teaching'. Since then...

We have promoted the **TLAC techniques** as the specific things that teachers do to deliver these principles e.g. Rosenshine says 'ask questions' and TLAC proposes 'cold calling' (and other techniques).

We have settled upon **I Teach, We Check, You Practise** as the teaching cycle we see in lessons.

We have launched the **United Curriculum** so that all pupils acquire **powerful knowledge**.

We see each school striking a balance between the following elements of CPD:

Whole school: Typically based on core lesson routines and techniques that all teachers deploy e.g. entry and exit routines as well as cold calling, mini-whiteboards, turn and talk, the blue zone etc.

Subject: Regular department meetings to plan lessons, supported by United Curriculum & Subject Advisers

Individual: Instructional coaching so that more teachers receive regular and concrete feedback e.g. 'see it, name it, do it'.

We have also promoted (a) **reading, writing & spoken language**; (b) purposeful **circulation** so that teachers provide additional support for key pupils e.g. PP/SEND; (c) using books as a window into pupils' daily diet and the quality and quantity of independent practice.

The Rosenshine Principles of Instruction

In 2018 we committed to these principles as the characteristics of effective teaching’.

They are not a checklist for every lesson, but a set of principles that have provided us with a common understanding and a shared language.

Teaching and Learning – The United Way



1. Begin lessons with a short review of prior learning:

Daily review can strengthen prior learning and supports fluent recall.

2. Present new material in small steps:

Present small amounts of new material and assist students as they work with this.

3. Ask questions:

Questions help students practise new information and connect new material to their prior learning.

4. Provide models:

Providing students with models and worked examples can help students learn to solve problems faster.

5. Guide student practice:

Successful teachers spend time guiding students’ practice of new material.

6. Check for student understanding:

Checking for understanding at each point can help reduce errors and misconceptions.

7. Obtain a high success rate:

A high success rate builds confidence and reinforces learning.

8. Provide scaffolds for difficult tasks:

Temporary supports and scaffolds to assist pupils with difficult tasks.

9. Require and monitor independent practice:

Extensive, successful, independent practice helps new learning to stick.

10. Engage students in weekly and monthly review:

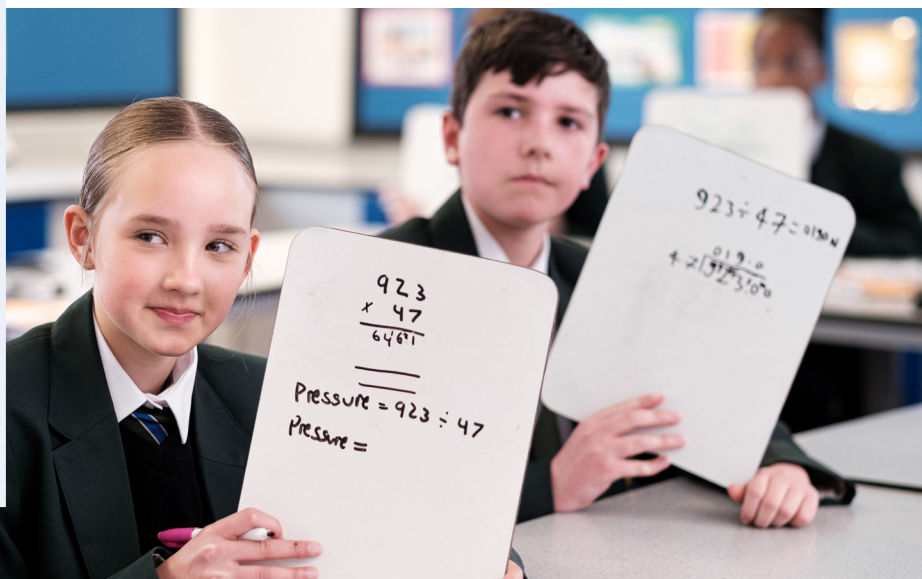
Regular recall builds durable and flexible knowledge.

Teach Like a Champion by Doug Lemov (TLAC)

For several years our schools have used Doug Lemov's Teach Like a Champion techniques. Lemov describes his work as 'data-driven', providing concrete, specific, actionable advice to teachers.

'These are techniques ... because techniques are actions, the more you practice, the better you get'.

Like the Rosenshine principles, the TLAC techniques are not a checklist for every lesson. Lemov shares his work as a 'recipe book' rather than an 'instruction manual'. The following TLAC techniques are especially common in schools:



- **Tracking, not watching:**
Circulate with intent, prioritising key students.
- **Excavate Error:**
Seek out and explore misconceptions, creating an environment where it's safe to make mistakes.
- **Show Me:**
Students actively demonstrate their understanding e.g. through mini whiteboards.
- **Cold Call:**
Call on students regardless of whether they've raised their hands.
- **No Opt Out:**
Students who won't try, or can't answer, practise getting it right.
- **Right is Right:**
Hold out for answers that are 'all the way right.'

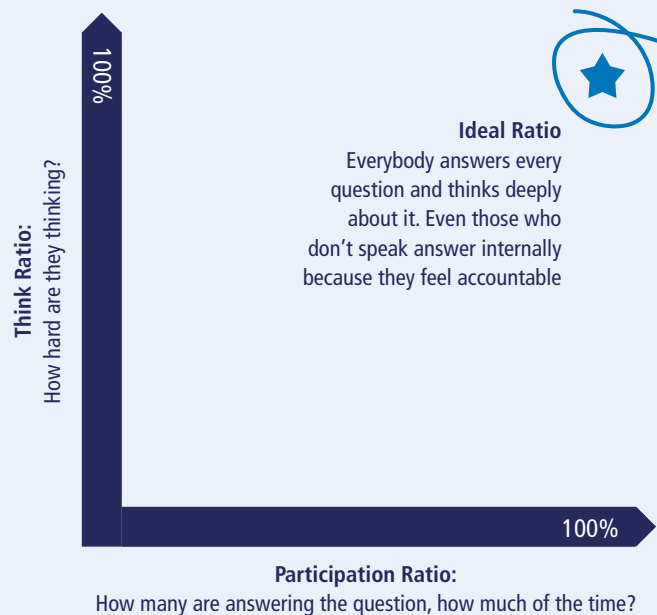
- **Stretch It:**
Reward correct answers with harder questions.
- **Brighten Lines**
Crisp and visible beginning and end of activities.
- **Everybody Writes:**
Students commit their thinking to writing before they discuss with others.
- **Habits of Discussion:**
Establish ground rules for classroom talk e.g. look at each other and use names.
- **Turn & Talk:**
Ask a clear question that students grapple with; students can report back what their partner said.

Ratio

Underpinning the TLAC techniques is the idea of ratio i.e. all students thinking hard and producing work that is a product of their own thinking. Lemov encourages us to consider:

- **Participation ratio:**
What proportion of the class are participating?
- **Think ratio:**
How demanding is the thinking required of pupils?

Our aim is for tasks which combine a high participation ratio and a high think ratio.



Cognitive science

We believe that the Rosenshine Principles and the TLAC techniques are rooted in a sound understanding of how we learn.

Here are some principles of cognitive science that we find most useful:

Cognitive load theory:

Based on the working memory 'bottle neck' model i.e. our working memory can only hold 5–7 items whereas our long term memory is limitless. Implications:

- We can reduce load on working memory by presenting new information in small steps, providing plenty of practice, modelling, scaffolding etc.
- Retrieval practice can serve as a link between long term memory and working memory i.e. through frequent recall we strengthen our long term memory and offset the forgetting curve.

The forgetting curve:

As soon as we learn something we begin forgetting it, almost immediately. We reduce the amount and rate of forgetting by spacing out practice over time.

Deliberate practice:

Championed by Anders Ericsson, deliberate practice 'is a highly structured activity, the explicit goal of which is to improve performance. Specific tasks are invented to overcome weaknesses, and performance is carefully monitored to provide cues for ways to improve it further' (Ericsson et al., 1993, p. 368). This has implications for pupils and teachers, and many of our schools use deliberate practice as part of their CPD programme to give teachers a chance to rehearse classroom routines before deploying them with their pupils.

CPD: Balancing the whole school, the subject and the individual

We believe each of the following elements of CPD are essential, and we encourage schools to strike the right balance between the three:

■ Whole school CPD:

Creating a shared understanding of effective teaching in our school, supported by a small number of core techniques/routines that all teachers deploy e.g. entry/exit routines as well as cold calling, mini-whiteboards, turn and talk, the blue zone etc.

■ Subject CPD:

Regular department meetings to plan lessons (at least every fortnight), supported by United Curriculum and Subject Advisers.

■ Individual CPD:

Instructional coaching so that more teachers receive regular and concrete feedback based on the 'see it, name it, do it' model.

Leaders may consider:

What is the current balance between these three elements in your school?

How do you see this balance changing over time?

Instructional coaching – “see it, name it, do it”

Instructional coaching is when one teacher works with another teacher to help them take small, personalised steps to improve their practice. Instructional coaching conversations are about developing teachers, not judging them. Instructional coaches help their teachers to get better by doing three things on a regular basis:

- Identifying an area for improvement, usually based on a short observation (see it).
- Feeding back where the coach and teacher agree on an action step linked to the school's teaching and learning priorities for the teacher to practise (name it).
- Providing teachers with opportunities to rehearse, get feedback, and make a habit of their improvement (do it).

Steplab: A Beginner's Guide to Instructional Coaching
<https://steplab.co/resources/papers/BP6w3bcs/A-Beginners-Guide-to-Instructional-Coaching>

United lesson: Cycle(s) of I Teach, We Check, You Practise

Effective lessons will typically follow a cycle of “I Teach, We Check, You Practise”. This is a responsive learning cycle which transfers knowledge and agency from teacher to pupil. In some lessons there will be more than one cycle of “I Teach, We Check, You Practise.”

We believe the “You Practise” phase is the most important – the purpose of the cycle is to reach this stage as efficiently as possible.

I Teach

Teacher explains and models key concepts to pupils

In this phase of the lesson, the teacher explains and models key concepts to pupils. The expectation of pupils at this stage is typically 'hands free, tracking me'. This phase of the cycle may include reading together, or other subject specific stimulus (e.g. a visual showing the formation of a waterfall in Geography).

The I Teach phase can be supported by core techniques such as:

- Visualisers
- Dual coding
- Reading strategies
- Careful introduction of new vocabulary
- Chunking key information
- Explicit links to prior knowledge

We Check

Teacher assesses the understanding of all pupils

In this phase the teacher assesses the understanding of all pupils rather than using the voluntary responses of the few as a proxy for the understanding of the many. This phase is supported by core techniques such as:

- Tracking, not Watching
- Excavate Error
- Show Me
- Cold Call
- No Opt Out
- Right is Right
- Stretch It
- Everybody Writes
- Habits of Discussion
- Turn and Talk

You Practise

Pupils produce work that's a product of their own thinking; teacher circulates to provide additional support and feedback; work is reviewed

In this final phase of the cycle, pupils produce work that's a product of their own thinking. The teacher circulates to provide additional support and feedback, and to select work for review e.g. through live marking or whole class feedback. This phase is supported by core techniques such as:

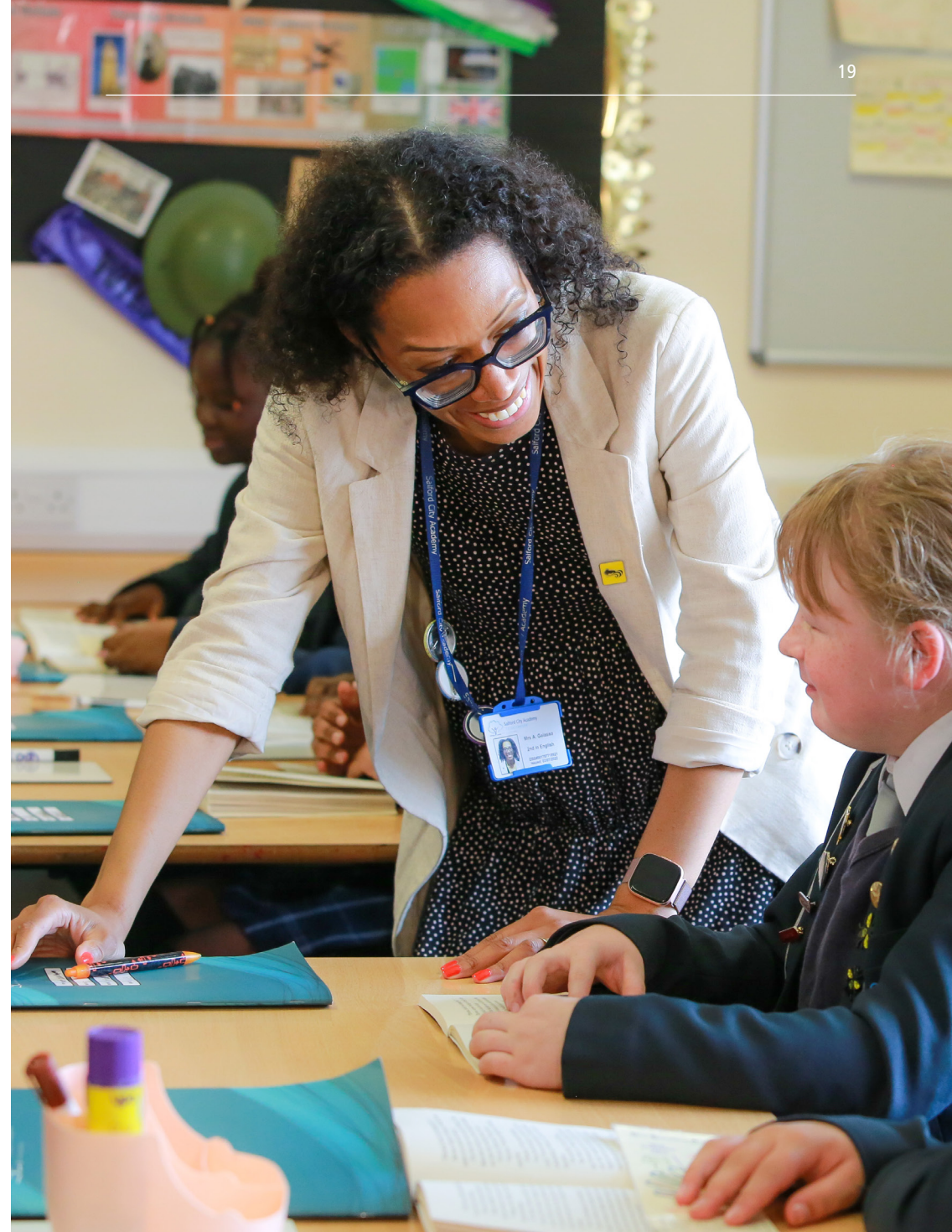
- Clear learning outcomes and success criteria to meet the objective(s) of the lesson.
- The Blue Zone i.e. clearly defined whole-school expectations for the independent practice phase of the lesson.
- Show Call where the teacher shows a pupil's work to the class, marking against the success criteria, followed by self-assessment or redrafting.

The books provide a record of the ongoing daily diet of independent practice in the classroom, enabling powerful comparisons between key groups of pupils.

Teachers not presenters: responsive teaching

Our shared curriculum resources are intended to put teachers in the driving seat. We don't want teachers to feel like they are teaching someone else's lesson; and we don't want pupils to feel like they are sitting through a slideshow. Doug Lemov reminds us that teaching is about knowing the difference between "I taught it" and "they learned it." Similarly, Dylan Wiliam reminds us that feedback should be more work for the recipient than the donor.

Just as we want a cricketer to know not just how to play a cover drive but when; we want teachers to know not just how to use mini whiteboards, but why, when and what to do with the information gathered. We can call this 'responsive teaching' and it's at the heart of the Rosenshine principles: "More effective teachers asked more questions; involved more students; probed more in depth; spent more time explaining, clarifying and checking for understanding."

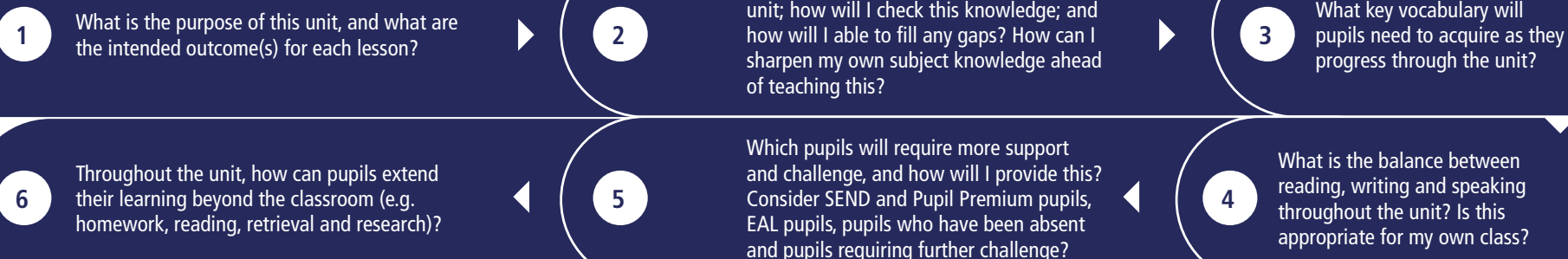


Planning prompts

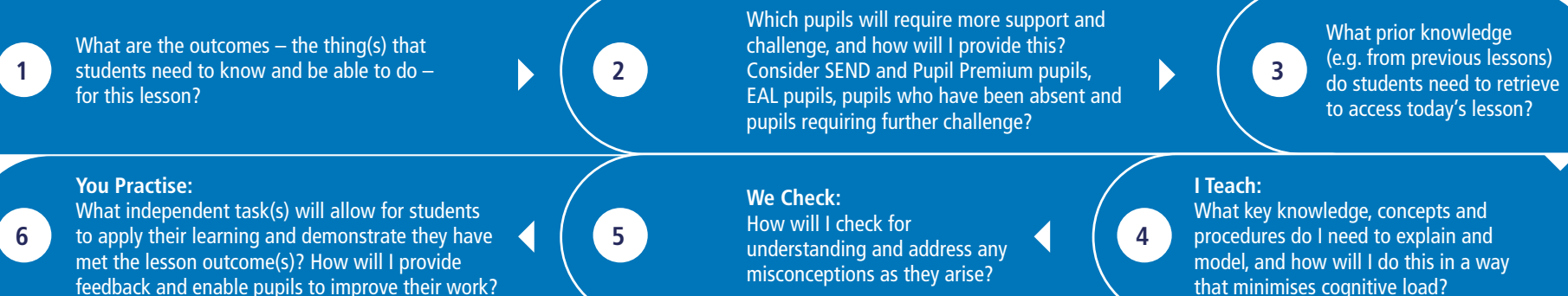
The following provide prompts to support teachers in preparing for units and planning lessons.



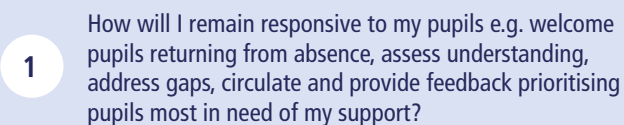
Before a Unit



Before a Lesson



During a Lesson



Literacy for learning: embedding reading, vocabulary and writing

Reading

- Do teachers have access to students' reading data and do they use this information to adapt teaching and support students' reading needs?
- Are teachers modelling fluent reading and using comprehension strategies effectively?

Vocabulary

- Are subject-specific and academic vocabulary explicitly taught in lessons?
- Do teachers use consistent strategies to explore and consolidate vocabulary?
- Are links made between vocabulary across disciplines?

- Do students show increasing confidence in using new vocabulary in speech and writing?

Writing

- Are students using formative writing strategies to explore and refine their thinking?
- Are teachers modelling the construction of extended writing?
- Is sentence-level crafting embedded in lessons to improve clarity and precision?

Oracy: A talk-rich classroom culture

- Have clear ground rules for communication been established? Are these on display and referred to during oracy tasks?
- Do teachers signpost oracy tasks, setting clear expectations for how students will engage with the context and purpose of the talk?
- Do lessons contain regular opportunities for oracy e.g. cold calling, turn & talk, call & response, reading aloud etc?
- Are students provided with a range of stimuli and scaffolds to shape their input to the context and purpose of the task?

- Do teachers share success criteria and model best practice, demonstrating how their talk meets the success criteria?
- Is clear and productive feedback provided for groups and individuals that goes beyond praise to support deeper understanding and progression in oracy skills?

In-class support, especially for SEND and PP pupils, and pupils who are often absent

SEND and PP pupils have the most to gain from effective teaching. This might include:

- Seating plans as strategic documents which inform teachers of individual learning barriers and how to overcome them, including persistent absence and how to support returning pupils.
- Staff are eager to understand and meet individual students' needs.
- Exam Access Arrangements are used consistently in lessons and examinations to ensure equity.
- Planning explicitly takes into consideration students' cognitive and verbal load.
- Success routes are used to support key pupils, alongside additional adults (TAs/LSAs etc.)
- Real-time checks and live feedback are crucial for our disadvantaged students e.g. is the date and title spelt correctly?
- Appropriate scaffolding is both pre-planned and responsive, and reduced over time to raise resilience, independence and stamina.
- Praise and encouragement is used purposefully and effectively to build confidence and resilience.

Quality assurance “open doors and open books”

- Quality Assurance starts with an open door culture in which adults walking into classrooms is one of the most normal things that can happen in a school (and is barely registered by teachers or pupils!)
- Pupils' work provides a window into the daily diet, enabling us to see:
 - **Curriculum coverage:** Are all groups and classes progressing at the same rate?
 - **Quality and quantity:** How much work do pupils typically produce? Is this work 'the product of their own thinking?' Do pupils spell key words correctly?
 - **Progression model:** Do the books show pupils developing greater fluency and mastery over time e.g. using subject-specific language with confidence and precision; combining knowledge and ideas from different units?
- **Groups:** What do we notice when comparing the books of top sets and lower sets; PP and non-PP; SEND and non-SEND, high attenders and low attenders?
- Senior leaders provide line management of HoDs and regular low-stakes lesson visits.
- Regional Directors and Subject Advisers provide additional layer of support and review.
- Annual surveys provide insight into the experience of pupils, parents and staff.

KS3 assessment

- KS3 assessment should be driven by the curriculum, not the KS4 exam specification.
- Formative assessment is embedded in the responsive teaching model.
- Formal assessment should be done sparingly, ideally no more than twice a year, and should primarily be used to understand pupils' progress through the curriculum and to identify gaps to inform teaching and learning.
- Our common assessments reveal how pupils are doing in relation to their peers, both in school and beyond (with Smartgrade providing national cohort rankings).
- We use KS3 to give pupils the opportunity to produce work that goes beyond the constraints of written exams, e.g. extended essays, independent projects, presentations.

Implementation

There's a lot going on in schools, so more than a few priorities often means no priorities. The EEF's guide to implementation is a useful reminder of the importance of delivery.

A School's Guide to Implementation
educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/implementation



School teaching and learning policy

We often think of teaching and learning policies as a list of pedagogical priorities. Instead, what if we viewed teaching and learning through the lens of our teachers?

“Provide intensive support for our new and trainee teachers, and coaching for a growing number of teachers, so that all teaching is effective.”

What if this was the whole school priority for the first half term of each year?



The journey ahead



United Lesson:

Continue to promote the teaching cycle(s) of I Teach, We Check, You Practise; with core routines/techniques under each element.



Teachers, not Presenters:

Responsive teaching where teachers assess pupils' understanding and adapt their teaching accordingly.



Continuous improvement:

Support our teachers through a balance of the three elements of CPD: (a) whole school (b) subject/dept (c) individual (through instructional coaching).



Achievement for all:

So that all pupils – especially disadvantaged and SEND – receive 5 years of effective teaching in productive lessons where they work harder for longer and achieve well.

Links to other key documents

[Rosenshine Principles of Instruction](#)

[Framework for Inclusion](#)

[Disadvantaged Book Review](#)

[EEF Implementation Guide](#)



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