Teaching and Learning Policy

This policy should be read in line with Assessment for Learning Policy, Inclusion Policy, SEND statement and Behaviour Policy.

Date agreed by Governors:	March 2025
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Rationale

'Teaching and learning' are intricately linked and often mutually dependent, although not always. Learning occurs in all sorts of situations both in and out of school, formal and informal, spontaneous and planned, yet learning is not always preceded by teaching.

On the other hand, teaching exists with learning as its express intention. What teachers say and do defines teaching practices, but teaching itself only reaches fruition when those who are taught learn.

Learning is at the heart of John Ball and drives us forward to ensure that our teaching practices result in the most effective learning experiences and outcomes for our pupils across all areas of the curriculum. Our teaching and learning policy is at the centre of what we do. It defines what learning means to us and our community. It sets clear expectations for us all and provides a standard approach with which every John Ball pupil can expect to be taught by, and which is easily monitored, ensuring equal opportunity to all our pupils.

1. School Aims and Implementation

John Ball School aims to provide its children with the opportunities to develop towards their full potential academically, emotionally and socially by:

- Providing the highest standard of education to enable children to acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills relevant to their future lives.
- Promoting an ethos of care, mutual respect and support, where effort is valued and success celebrated.
- Enabling children to become active, responsible and caring members of a wider community.

The school works towards these aims by:

- Providing high quality teaching that we know results in high quality learning.
- Promoting effective learning strategies and that we know lead to high quality outcomes

- Ensuring classroom cultures are built upon effective and positive attitudes to learning and learners
- Valuing each other and ourselves
- Working in partnership with parents and our community

2. What is learning?

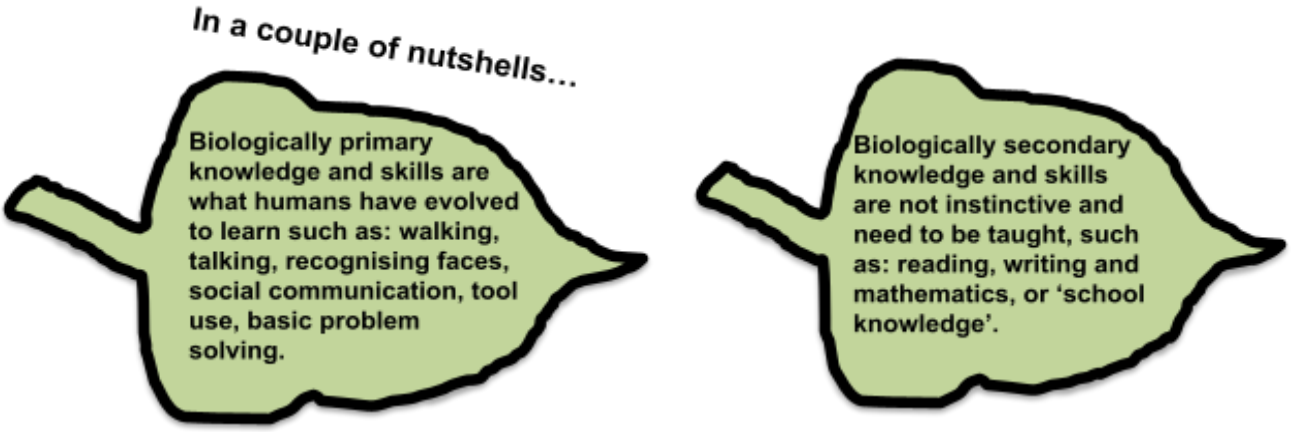
Types of knowledge and learning

Our definition of learning begins with understanding that broadly there are two different categories of knowledge and for the most part, children learn these in two different ways.

The majority of what a child learns is biologically primary knowledge. This is instinctive knowledge which humans are evolutionarily primed to learn. Children typically lead their own learning here, instinctively knowing when they are ready to learn. For example, children learn to walk and talk this way, to recognise faces and facial expressions, as well as many social norms adults take for granted.

For most children, this type of knowledge does not need to be explicitly taught. Rather, a child absorbs this type of knowledge through their environment and through family and general socialisation. They also learn general human problem-solving skills this way, and most often through play which is why play is so important for young children. Many aspects of early years education ensure that young children develop and embed this kind of knowledge so that they are emotionally and socially ready for the next stage in learning. School will also hone and refine this knowledge throughout a child's developmental journey because of the social environment it provides.

The other category of knowledge is biologically secondary knowledge which is not instinctive and not naturally learned unless explicitly taught. This type of knowledge is human cultural knowledge, passed along through generations. For example, without instruction young children do not learn to read, write or understand numbers or calculations. Because this type of learning is not instinctive, and humans are not evolutionarily primed to learn this, it requires teaching. The reason we have schools is largely to teach this kind of knowledge to the next generation (Sweller 1994).



3. Monitoring Teaching and Learning – Expectations in EYFS

At John Ball, we use different models of learning and teaching through play in order to support young children's early development. Neither play nor learning for younger children can be hurried as we know that all development, both social, emotional and academic, is built upon firm foundations. Development in these areas takes time to evolve into deeper learning and understanding.

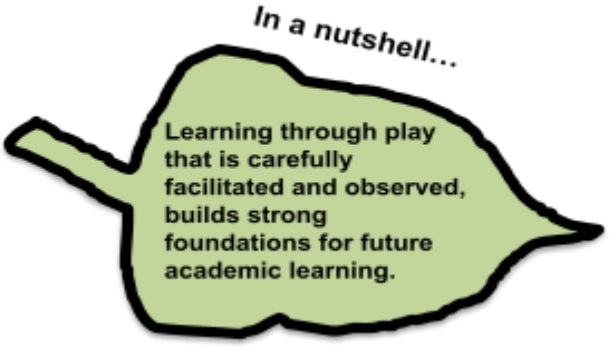
In EYFS, adults should observe individuals and groups carefully in order understand children's prior knowledge and skills, as well as their different dispositions. Adults in EYFS should engage with each child, developing a deep understanding of how they play and also what motivates their play. This is vital to ensure the EYFS team are providing excellent Early Years practice.

We believe that play in EYFS should be flexible, creative and at times, messy, driven by and under the control of the learners themselves. This supports young children in learning how to monitor and regulate their behaviour which will be invaluable throughout their lives. At the same time, adults should be analysing the children's choices within the setting in order to extend their learning. It is important we know the 'whole child' in order to be able to do this effectively.

In this way, the adults within the Early Years setting need to understand the importance of children's play and plan for experiences within the environment that support learning through play. Confident young 'players' become lifelong learners who are then capable of independent risk taking in order to solve problems and effective social interactions in their learning and everyday life.

It is important that adults working in EYFS have a good understanding of these characteristics of play:

- Attentiveness- watch and observe, imitate if required, and showing curiosity in what the child is doing in order to develop complexity in their play.
- Involvement- taking risks and being fully immersed in play individually or amongst peers.
- Emotional engagement- showing resilience in all forms of play in order to navigate successfully socially. Children can demonstrate a range of emotions whilst playing. Adults must 'tune into' this in order to understand how best to support the children.
- Imaginative potential- transforming ideas in the mind by making one thing stand for something else e.g. becoming a superhero and saving the world.
- Problem solving- children have choice and begin to develop their instinctive strategic thinking skills in order to overcome a challenge they might come across within the setting.
- Free flow activities are carefully planned to ensure they are meeting the required outcome for specific developmental milestones within the Early Years curriculum. Adults within the setting will respond to the play being observed and can provide extensions to the learning through the form of open questioning.



Formalised Learning in EYFS

In EYFS, children should be provided with opportunities to develop their early numeracy, literacy and science knowledge and skills through a variety of play based activities. In order to support their reading development, children should also take part in short daily phonics sessions on the carpet with other children and led by their

teacher, as well as counting and ordering numbers to support numeracy. Sharing and reading stories together should also be a daily occurrence.

In EYFS, we teach the Little Wandle programme of phonics. This programme aims to build children's speaking and listening skills, as well as prepare children for learning to read by developing their phonics knowledge and skills. This scheme sets out a detailed and systematic programme for the teaching of phonics to children, starting from Nursery age. The aim is for children to become fluent readers by the age of seven. (See Appendix 1, for details about phonics teaching in EYFS).

Children in EYFS will also participate in a daily guided session, which is focused on one of the Primary Areas of Learning. This can be cross-curricular based; for example: children may be conducting a science experiment on friction that incorporates maths in the form of measuring. These guided sessions are usually carried in small groups and adapted accordingly.

Relationships with parents and carers are an important focus in the Early Years. As a team we work hard to establish effective and caring relationships with our families. Our 'open door' approach allows parents to feel confident at communicating their child's needs and sharing vital information that will support us in understanding the developmental next steps for the children in our care.

4. The Novice and the Expert

Regarding the kind of academic knowledge and skills we teach in schools, there is a difference between the novice and the expert. Our aim is that over time, the beginner reaches a level of expertise in each area of learning, widening their knowledge and understanding, building on existing schema (mental frameworks), creating networks of knowledge and understanding on which future learning can be constructed.

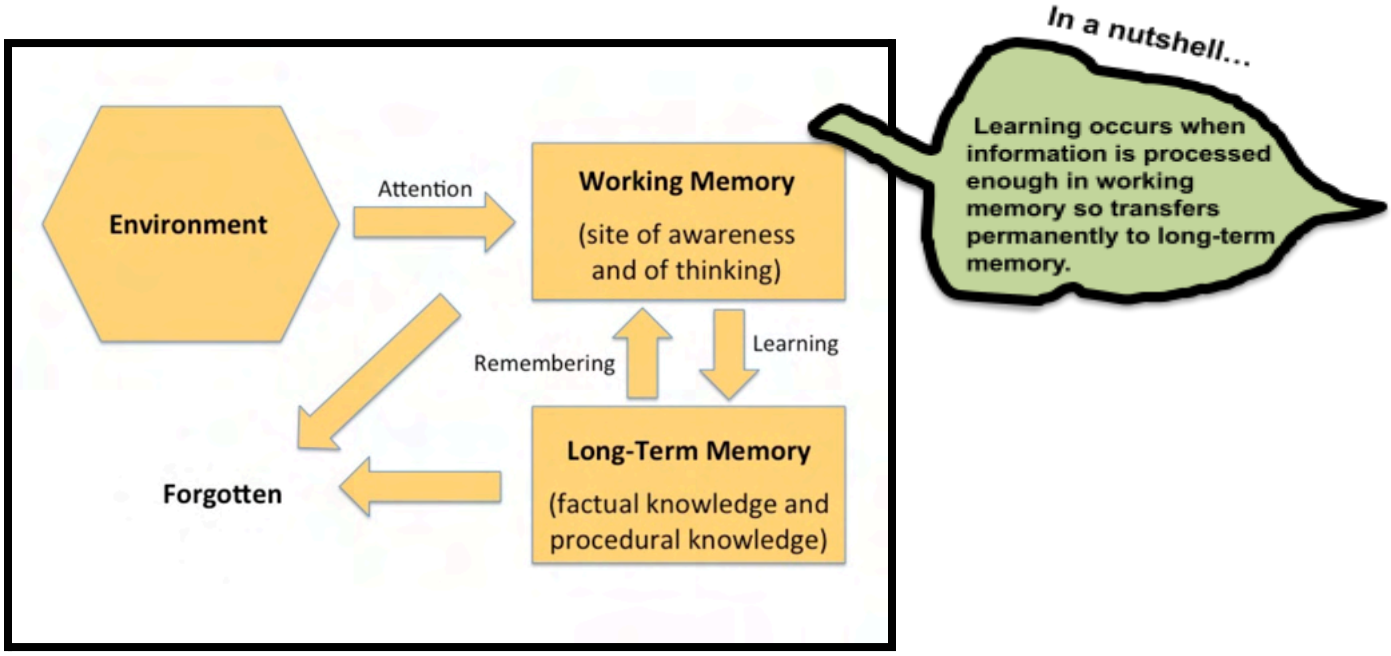
Although there may be more than one definition of learning, here **we define learning as a cognitive process, which results in a permanent change in long-term memory where new knowledge is connected to prior knowledge**. This process involves the mastery of concepts over time in the form of learning journeys. It is this idea of mastery that underpins our approach to teaching and learning so pupils build strong conceptual foundations, and the skills that derive from these, as well a lifelong love of learning itself because successful learning itself acts as a powerful motivator.

5. Memory and Cognitive Load

Teachers should be aware that there is a limit to how much information pupils can process at any one time – this is cognitive load. New information is processed in working memory. When it is processed enough here, it will transfer to long-term memory. However, transfer will only occur if information is retrieved (recalled and remembered) sufficiently, only then it will become embedded in long-term memory as permanent learning. This is why 'practice makes perfect' is so true! When information is permanently learned, it becomes 'automatic'. When pupils have more information that is automatic in a subject domain, this frees up their working memory to be able to apply what they know strategically and to problem solving. We see this clearly, for example, when children learn their times tables, this then speeds up their

working memory when processing multiplication problems because no capacity is taken up calculating tables.
(Sweller, 2008, 2010, 2019)

This is an outline model of the cognitive system:



(Willingham 2010)

Importantly, working memory is limited and more so in younger children. When working memory is overloaded, learners cannot process information sufficiently so it is unable to transfer to long-term memory. Because of this, **how new information is presented and taught needs careful consideration so as not to overload working memory.**

Working memory capacity is different for each individual, but the average adult can hold approximately 4 to 7 pieces of new information for around 2 minutes before it is lost. **Teachers need to consider how much information they are asking pupils to hold in mind.** Evidence suggests that in a typical class of 30 children aged 7 to 8 years, the working memory capacities of children can range from that of an average 4-year-old to that an average 11-year-old, which is quite close to adult levels. Researchers estimate that 10-15% of school age children are struggling with low working memory capacity. (Gathercole & Alloway 2007).

Teachers should be aware of the signs of low working memory in pupils and address this by simplifying instructions and explanations where necessary. (See Appendix 2, for a list of the signs of low working memory in pupils).

6. General Principles for Instruction

We expect teachers to understand, or invest time in understanding, the best ways to teach. One method that is often applicable is **Rosenshine's 17 Principles of Effective Instruction.** These 17 principles were collected from research in cognitive science and classroom practices of master teachers. Although these might not form the basis of every lesson, they are helpful general principles for teaching:

1. Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning.
2. Present new material in small steps with student practice after each step.
3. Limit the amount of material students receive at one time.
4. Give clear and detailed instructions and explanations.
5. Ask a large number of questions and check for understanding.
6. Provide a high level of active practice for all students.
7. Guide students as they begin to practice.
8. Think aloud and model steps.
9. Provide models of worked-out problems.
10. Ask students to explain what they have learned.
11. Check the responses of all students.
12. Provide systematic feedback and corrections.
13. Use more time to provide explanations.
14. Provide many examples.
15. Reteach material when necessary.
16. Prepare students for independent practice.
17. Monitor students when they begin independent practice.

(Rosenshine 2010)

(See Appendix 3. for links to videos and more information on each aspect)

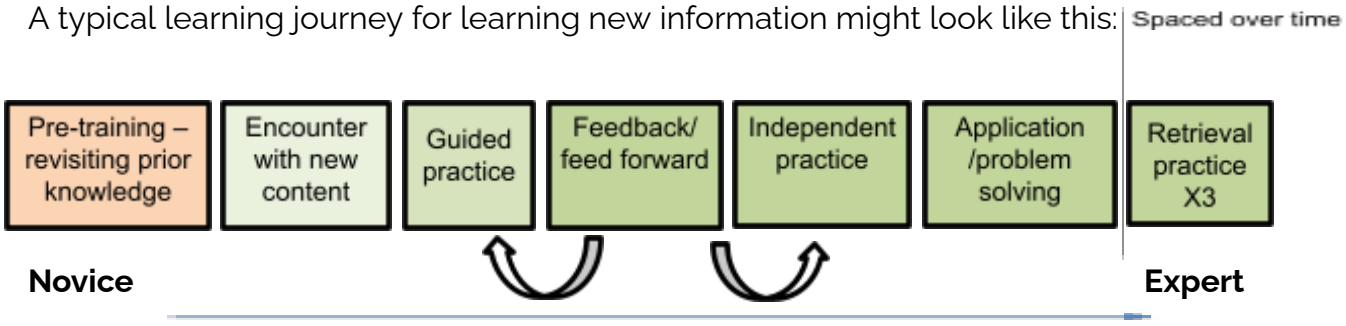
7. Learning Journeys – Approaches and Expectation

Teachers should be aware of their impact on pupils' learning in whatever they do as teachers and respond accordingly (John Hattie 2015).

It is important to hook children into learning, providing meaningful contexts, and connections to their lives which help pupils build their experiential, as well as semantic (factual) memories. In this way, termly topics should begin with 'inspiring moments,' which reflect the overarching themes and big ideas, but this should be followed by a structured learning journey for knowledge and understanding, which underpin the development of key skills. Learning should be interesting because it is taught effectively and with enthusiasm, not because of bells and whistles!

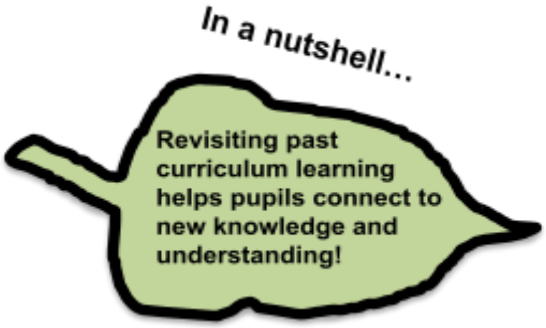
In order for learning to be successful, it needs to follow a progression that is deliberate and well planned for; this is a learning journey. For each new set of information, or curriculum content, there will be a learning journey that pupils follow, some faster than others, but a typical trajectory that underpins the way we teach at John Ball.

A typical learning journey for learning new information might look like this:



8. Section 1: Pre-training and connecting knowledge

During this stage in the learning journey, teachers revisit previous curriculum knowledge and understanding with pupils. This could be a whole lesson revising a previous unit, or a short period at the start of a lesson revisiting essential vocabulary and or concepts through short retrieval quizzes. This also offers the teacher an opportunity to assess pupils' prior knowledge and skills. It might be that through this, before moving on, further revision is required because there are gaps in knowledge for some or all pupils. **It is an expectation that pre-training is explicitly planned for by teachers and part of every new learning journey.**



9. Section 2: Introducing New Content

Memory is the residue of thought" – Daniel Willingham (2010)

Teachers should remember that what pupils think about is what they will learn.

Presenting new information to pupils can occur in a number of ways, such as direct instruction or demonstration, discussion, video clips or reading; however, how that information is presented to the inexperienced learner is important. Teachers should be aware of and need to pay attention to cognitive load.

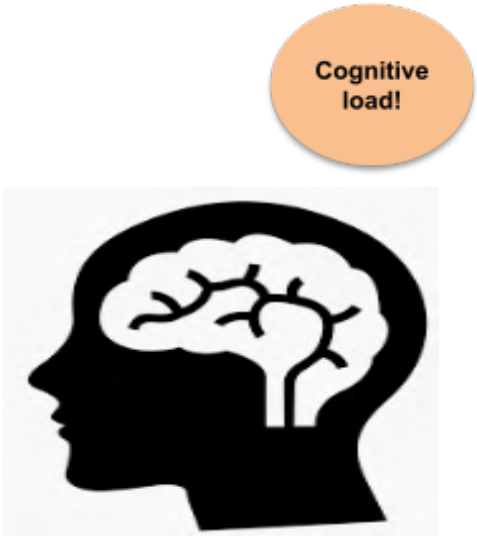
In simple terms, this means understanding that young learners have limits to the amount of new information they can process at any one time. Inexperienced learners can become 'overloaded' easily. PowerPoint and whiteboard presentations that are overly busy or colourful, with unnecessary motifs, animations or large amounts of text can impede pupils' processing of the information to be learned. For example, reading explanations to pupils that are also written on the board overloads learners as mental processing is split between reading and listening (the split attention effect).

In this way, presentations should not include visible 'teacher's script' (reminders to teachers of what to say or do). This will distract pupils and create extraneous cognitive load. Instead, planning notes should be put on the first slide of a presentation for colleagues and, or as notes off screen indicated by an arrow tab. **Less text on screen and more memorable visual images is a better approach.**

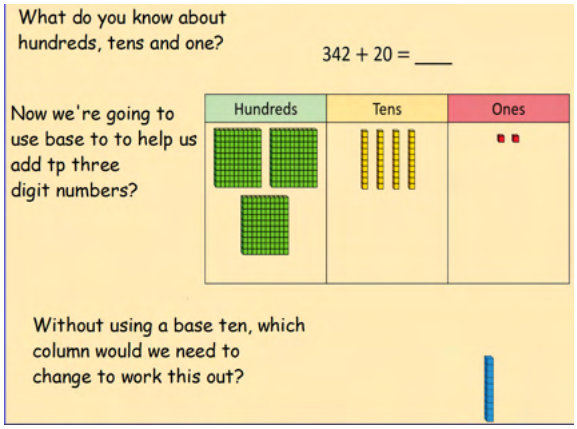
Consequently, teachers need to think carefully about cutting out extraneous (unnecessary) material from demonstrations and explanations. Before they teach a new concept, teachers should also think about how they will explain this and which

specific vocabulary to use; this will prevent excessive unproductive talk that can also overload pupils, and impair the processing of unfamiliar information.

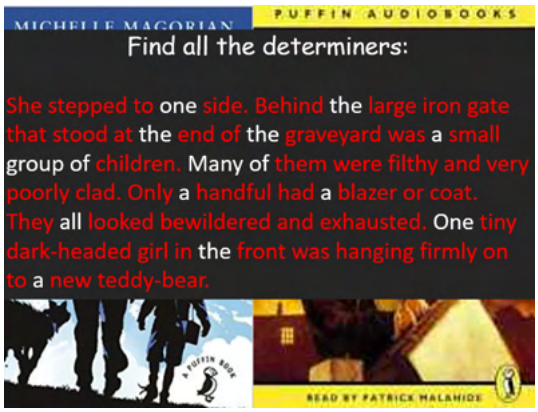
Like this, noisy classrooms, with chatting and fidgeting during the learning of new or unfamiliar information can hamper processing. **In this way, teachers need to be aware of what can distract their pupils' processing of new information and limit this when designing lessons.**



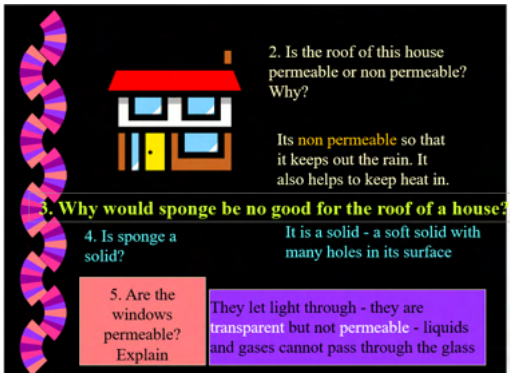
Examples of poorly designed presentations:



Unnecessary teacher script that distracts children from the core content!



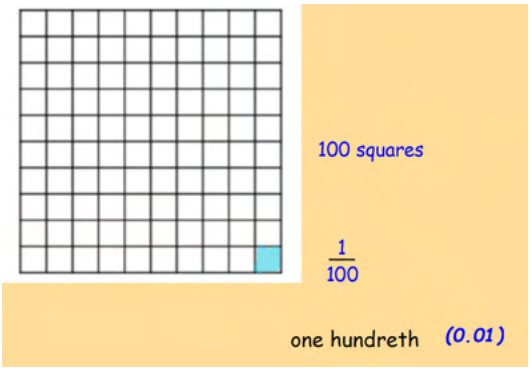
Overly bright coloured lettering can be overwhelming and hinder processing.

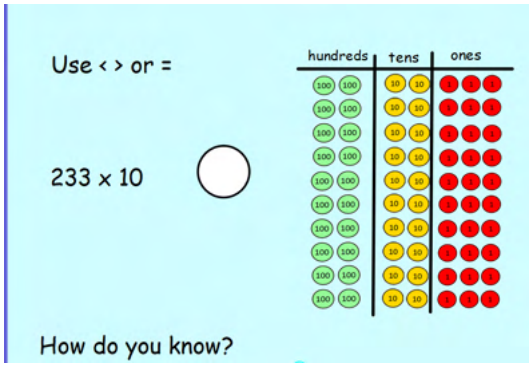


Unnecessary motifs will distract some learners, including cartoons or animated figures.

Lack of clarity can take up processing capacity and make content hard to decipher.

Examples of more effective presentations:





Background colours are neutral and only essential content is used. Text is also consistent and minimal.

Text is minimal and visuals are memorable and focused on the learning content.

10. Section 3: Guided practice

At this stage, pupils are practicing through the repeated processing of the new material. This is when teachers may use scaffolding or worked examples to support pupils where necessary. This will be different for different subjects and the topics within them. For example, guided practice in maths might be carrying out a series of calculations that move from worked examples of the process towards solving complete calculations. In English, this might be working with the teacher to write as a group, or after modeled writing, pupils practicing writing their own. In science, this might be using newly taught information to label a diagram or picture with the teacher then independently. Essentially, this is familiarisation with the new information.

'Know Thy Impact,' John Hattie (2015)

11. Section 4: Feed up, Feedback and Feedforward

At the start of a lesson, teachers should share the learning question which we formulate as a learning question (L.Q). Teachers need to explain the relevant contexts and how this learning might apply. This is known as 'feeding up.' This should also include the use of exemplars so that pupils have a clear picture of the destination, or 'what good looks like', including the steps to success (success criteria).

During and following guided practice, teachers 'feedback' to pupils on how well they are doing and where they need to improve. They 'feedforward,' by directing pupils where to go and what to do next in order to progress. The best forms of feedback and feedforward are immediate and 'in the moment,' so that difficulties in learning, or misconceptions, are tackled 'in real time,' and successful learning is moved on to the next stage. This requires 'responsive teaching' in lessons, where teachers are actively engaged with learners as they are learning.
(See our Assessment for Learning Policy for more details and specific strategies).

12. Section 5: Independent Practice

Once pupils have become secure with new information, they can move onto independent practice. Some pupils are able to move to this stage quite quickly and others may require guided practice for longer. Independent practice means that pupils do not require the teacher's intervention to process the relevant information. This will mean for example in maths, pupils can practice a series of calculations without any assistance. In English, this may mean pupils can write at length without support and in science that pupils understand the new information well, without further explanation required.

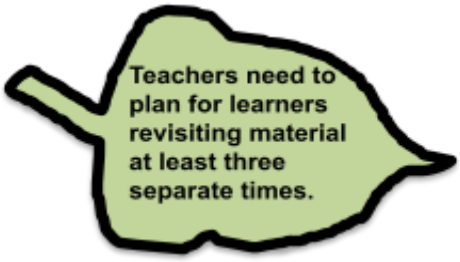
13. Application & Problem Solving

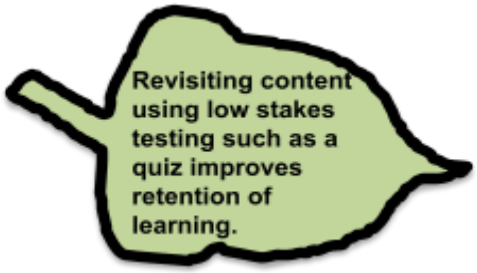
Once pupils are secure with new learning, they should be moved on to applying this to different contexts or problems. For example, in maths pupils who are secure in adding numbers together and can do this independently can move on to solving addition problems in a range of different contexts. In English, pupils might move on to writing their own versions of pieces set in different contexts, or engage in 'free writing' from a stimulus like a photograph.

14. Retrieval Practice

Revisiting learning is essential in order to embed new learning securely into long-term memory. When learners forget then recall information, this creates stronger neural connections and embeds learning further; therefore, retrieval practice is a crucial part of the learning journey (Bjork 2015). Evidence suggests that when learners revisit material at least three times, sufficiently spaced apart, and in three different ways, learning becomes properly embedded. When this happens, learners are able to recall the learned material, or apply the resultant skills well into the future. In this way, teachers need to build in a minimum of three encounters with material into pupils' learning journeys (Nuthall 2007)

The Testing Effect – research shows that low-stakes testing in the form of short quizzes and multiple-choice tests that pupils mark themselves have a very positive effect on learning retention (Bjork 2015). Teachers should build these into learning journeys of all subjects where necessary.



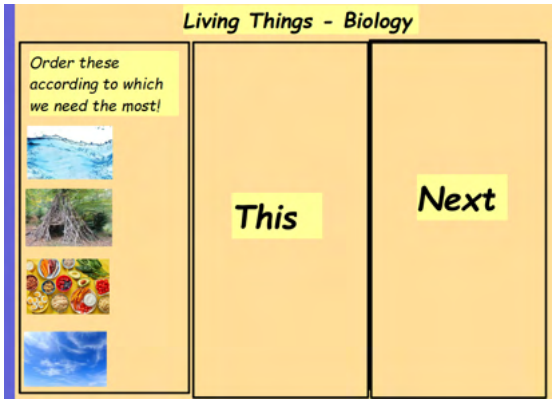


<u>Knowledge Triptychs/ Quadrants</u>:

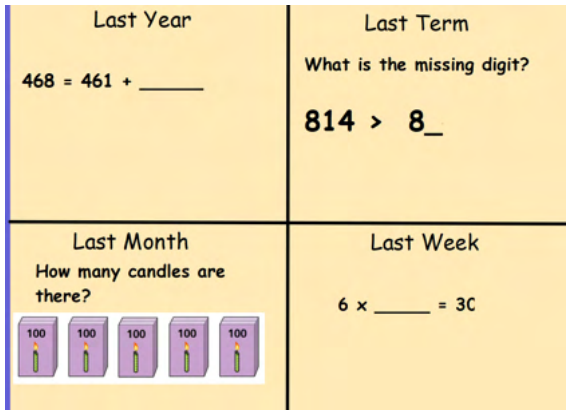
In order to support the embedding of learning into long-term memory, each lesson should begin with a 'Knowledge Triptych.'Each triptych should have three sections. The first section revisits the last lesson; this might be as a mini quiz, or a brief whole class questioning activity that ensures children have to retrieve past learning. Notably, this is not the same as simply reminding pupils about the last lesson. Next, the present lesson is summarised in the middle section to link to the last lesson and lastly, the last section thinks forward to the next lesson. Engaging with the knowledge triptych should take no longer than around 3 minutes at the start of the lesson. In this way, learning is sequenced coherently and pupils are enabled to revisit and embed past learning and relate it to new learning. For maths and English, a slightly different approach is adopted using **quadrants** *(last year, last term, last month, last week)* to revisit previous learning.

Examples below:

Triptych



Quadrant



15. Adaptation - Optimising Access for All

We know that each child is unique and will have differing needs in terms of accessing the curriculum. Teachers need to understand how to adapt learning in order to optimise this access. There are two aspects of adaptation: accommodation and modification. At John Ball, we expect teachers to think carefully about whether a pupil's needs require accommodating, or whether the curriculum needs modifying. Importantly, these are not the same and require different approaches.

Accommodation - This is when the curriculum is not changed; however, the teacher needs to change how the pupil accesses it because of their needs. For example, this might mean changing where the pupil sits, printing the learning on different coloured paper, printing with larger font, or breaking the task down into separate parts such as breaking the learning down into progressive steps as we do with 'Must, Should and Could'. Giving extra adult support is also a form of accommodation, as is giving extra time for completion.

Modification – This is when the curriculum is changed to meet the pupil's needs. This will mean changing what is taught, or what is expected as an outcome. This might mean choosing simplified vocabulary in a word bank, or using tasks or activities from earlier in the curriculum progression.

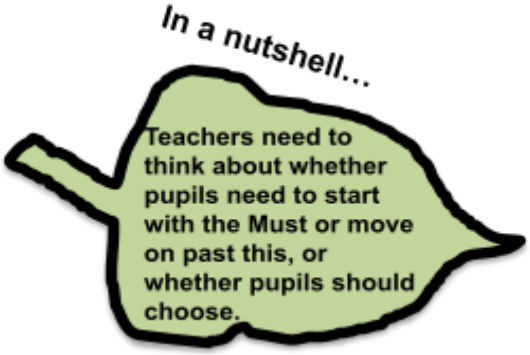
At John Ball, we expect teachers to adapt learning tasks only when it is necessary. **The focus must always be on what will have the best impact on learners.** Teachers need to check that how they adapt does not act as an obstacle for pupils' learning and progress. Over-scaffolding for example, can mean that the curriculum is unnecessarily modified, when instead, the pupils' needs could be accommodated by providing more intense adult support at the start of a task so that a pupil can access the curriculum sufficiently. Clozed procedures where pupils have to 'guess' which word to place in the gap can be restrictive and are generally less effective. Sentence starters are usually more effective,

16. Choice

It is important to engage pupils in assessing themselves and making decisions about where they are in their learning; however, ultimately the teacher will know more about the curriculum and whether a pupil needs to move on or not.

At John Ball, we often break down points in a learning journey into 'Must, Should, Could and even 'Might' tasks. The teacher needs to decide whether to offer pupils a choice in where to start, or whether it would benefit pupils to be directed to start at a certain point. For example, starting at Must might at times act as a form of retrieval practice, thus embedding learning, or at other times a pupil might need to skip the Must or Should. Like this, teachers need to recognise when completing a learning task might not be necessary and pupils need to move on. It would not be effective for a child to always have to complete the MUST task regardless of their prior attainment.

Importantly, classroom practices should not drift into rituals that are not always the most beneficial for learning. It is the teacher's job to be alert to this.



17. Planning for Learning

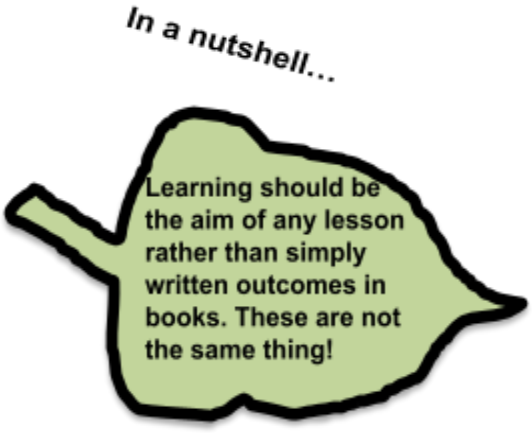
Teachers should plan for learning following the school's curriculum, as outlined in our John Ball curriculum documents and medium-term overviews. It is an expectation that year groups plan together in order to share expertise and ideas, but that teachers adapt their lessons to suit the learners in their class. **One size does not fit all!** We expect teachers to share ideas and resources so there is consistency across year groups in intended outcomes. **No one is an island – we share!**

Medium Term Plans
Although we do not express particular formats for weekly or daily lesson planning, **the expectation is that teachers deliver 'planned for lessons'** and that these follow the sequence and task design detailed on the **medium term plans (MTPs)** for the subject**.** Teachers are also expected to keep the MTPs for subjects updated on the shared server ensuring task design is made clear, with links to resources and additional notes for adaptation. This will help cover teachers, colleagues and teachers who join a new year group.

When lessons fall short of our expectations, it might be that teachers need to spend more time planning.

(See Appendix 4. for optional planning prompts and a 5-minute lesson plan)

Task design
Teachers should think carefully about how they design tasks with the understanding that **the focus should be on pupils' learning rather than 'production' as an outcome**. Pupils learn more effectively from making connections between prior and new knowledge rather than simply reproducing the lesson onto a worksheet or a long piece of written work. Consequently, effective task design causes children to have to think about the target learning rather than trying to produce 'what they think the teacher wants,' although this may be a little different for writing lessons where teachers need to model outcomes for pupils and pupils to reproduce their own.



Vocabulary
Vocabulary is an integral part of knowledge and skills acquisition. The expectation is that target vocabulary on the MTPs for subjects is explicitly taught and revisited in lessons. Pupils will not learn new vocabulary as effectively if simply exposed to it

during lessons; therefore, teachers need to plan this into the start of lessons. Using devices such as the Frayer model, synonyms, antonyms, examples and non-examples will support subject specific vocabulary acquisition.

Collaborative learning - Collaborative learning in small groups is extremely valuable and should be considered as part of a teacher's repertoire of approaches to lesson design. Not all lessons need to be teacher instruction followed by individual learning tasks. Collaborative learning can be an effective way to support pupils' cognitive load - through 'sharing the learning load'. It can also be an important way to revisit and crystalise understanding . Using previously learned knowledge to collaborate using that knowledge to solve problems can be very effective and support understanding how to apply knowledge and make it relevant. Pupils will also benefit from sharing different and new vocabulary used by other peers. In this way, teachers need to consider if collaborative group tasks would be more effective rather than only opting for individual tasks in lessons.

18. Additional Adults in Class

At times pupils may have adults in class to support them. It is the teacher's responsibility to direct additional teaching staff in lessons. During lessons, we expect additional adults to support pupils' learning rather than classroom administration such as filing or tidying. We expect additional adults to be actively supporting learning rather than 'watching teaching.' This might mean encouraging pupils to focus during demonstrations and discussions, or quietly explaining points again (although without causing a distraction to the rest of the class). We also expect additional adults in class to promote the independence of the pupil(s) they are there to support, which may mean moving away at times and supporting other pupils where necessary. Teachers need to be alert to this and direct as required.

19. The Learning environment

Displays

Teaching staff should ensure the learning environments are non-discriminatory and represent the full range of role models. Displays should reflect and celebrate the diversity of our school community. Teachers should be watchful for unconscious bias throughout their practice.

Cutting down distraction

The area around the interactive white board, or the area where instructions or demonstrations take place, should be kept free from distracting displays, vocabulary or notices such as behavior ladders or points systems, class monitor or job lists. When pupils are watching demonstrations, their attention needs to be on this and not material that does not relate to that learning specifically. Teachers should minimise paraphernalia hanging down and around where pupils are learning also.

Displays in classrooms

The classroom is the learning environment and teachers need to think about how the room affects pupils' learning. It is an expectation that teachers use displays in class to both support and celebrate pupils' learning, and to avoid displays becoming 'wall paper'.

In this way, 'learning or working walls' should be used to highlight current learning in the progression of a learning journey which will support learners to revisit and link old to new learning. They should display key learning questions for the subject and key vocabulary from the MTPs rather than just any vocabulary related to the subject from websites like Twinkl. Displays should also have the correct grammar and spelling, unless it is being used as a teaching tool (i.e. class activity around upskilling a piece of a child's work). **Subject learning walls in class should be updated frequently.**

Protocol for displays (learning walls) in classrooms:

- As soon as teachers have their class established, they should have examples of learning processes, vocabulary and pupils' learning on their learning walls. **Learning walls should take shape within the first two weeks of the year and not be left empty for any longer.**

- There should be individual learning walls for the core subjects: Reading, Writing, Maths and Science with additional smaller learning walls for topic work where possible (Science and Topic can be combined if necessary, so long as these are clearly defined.)

- Speech bubbles or captions if handwritten, should be in neat handwriting to reflect what we expect of our pupils.

- Displays should be neat and orderly with spaces between pieces to aid visual processing, but it is not necessary to mount display pieces in class.

- Laminating should be kept to a minimum to cut down glare and be kind to the environment.

- Each class must also have a 'class community' display featuring the class rules, the and code of conduct that pupils have agreed to, as well as the Hive, proud cloud and worry box in clear view. This should also feature the John Ball Pride Tree and the names of class pupils, and if possible, their photographs.

- Displays should not be stuck on windows, newly painted or plastered walls.

<u>Protocol for displays in common areas:</u>

- Displays in common areas should be renewed at least once a year and more often if they become untidy or tired. They should celebrate learning achieved in class or aspects of our school principles and community.

- All items should be mounted neatly, taking care they are cut straight and mounted perpendicular on all sides and positioned thoughtfully to create visually effective displays.

- Laminating should be kept to a minimum to cut down glare and be kind to the environment.

- Any handwritten captions or titles should be exceptionally neat, or printed, and also mounted.

- As the point of these displays is to showcase, colour and impact should be a focus with a view to drawing attention and bringing the ideas in question to life in an aesthetically pleasing way.

- The quality of students' work on display should be high and should come from a range of pupils with various levels of ability. All pupils should have a chance to have their learning displayed no matter their level of attainment.

- Displays should reinforce the school's Equal Opportunities policy by acknowledging and celebrating the richness and diversity of society and community.

- Displays should be well maintained, and modified or dismantled when too tired rather than being allowed to 'age' or disintegrate. They should be removed or repaired immediately if they have been damaged. **It is everyone's responsibility to stop and help repair damaged displays.**

- Displays usually require some explanation. Labels and captions should be carefully prepared and positioned. These can be a mix of computer-generated text (Primary Sassoon or Comic Sans are best) or handwritten by staff to exemplify good handwriting.
- The vast majority of what is on display should be children's work and not a display of adult or commercially produced printouts.
- Displays should not be stuck on windows, newly painted or plastered walls.

(See Appendix 5, for examples of display expectations).

20. Health and Safety while learning

The classroom should also be a safe place to learn and promote the physical and mental wellbeing of both pupils and teachers.

(See Appendix 6, for Health and Safety expectations in the classroom).

"Have nothing in your house that is neither useful nor beautiful." William Morris

Cutting down clutter

Classrooms with unnecessary resources and objects can create an unsettling, distracting environment for learning. Clear surfaces and neatly arranged resources will create a more focused and purposeful environment. Like this, teachers are expected to maintain 'a clutter free' classroom where resources and belongings are stored away properly.

Classroom Organisation

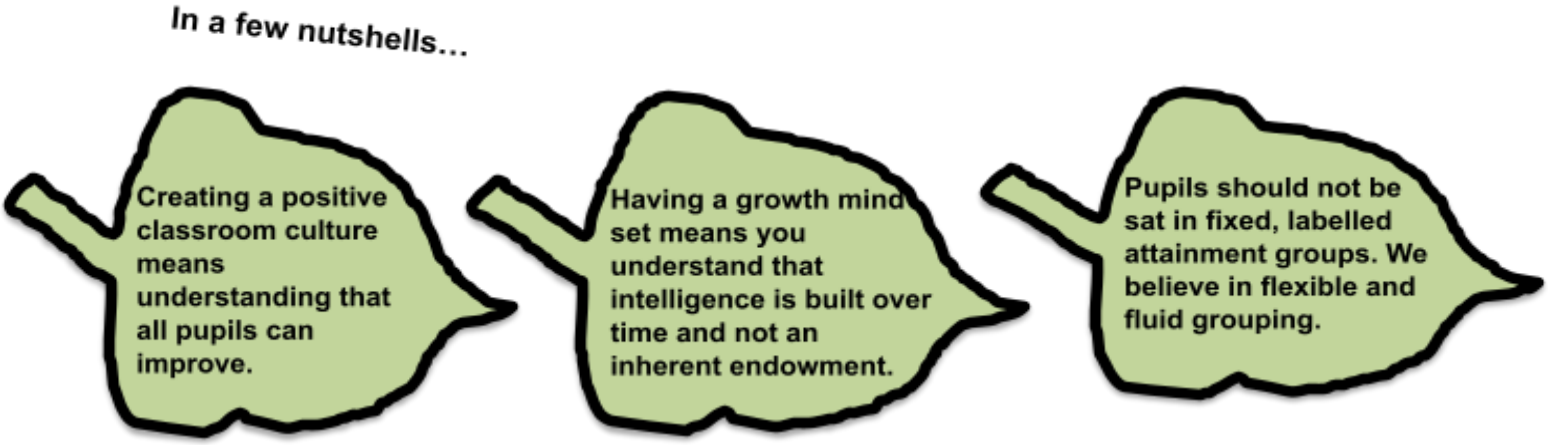
The way a class is organised also has an effect on learning. Teachers need to ensure pupils can access the resources they need to for learning without unnecessary fuss or movement around the room. If pupils spend a long time finding and organising the resources for a task, they can easily forget important learning points before they get started, especially if working memory is limited. Poor behavior is often connected to the ease of access to resources in class. Like this, the smooth running of lessons needs to be considered and planned for in advance. Through this, pupils develop their understating of the learning process and their 'behaviour for learning.'(See Appendix 7, for an Evaluative Checklist for classroom)

Date agreed:	March 2025
Next review:	March 2027

21. Class Culture and Mind Sets

Creating a conducive classroom culture is the bedrock of effective learning. At John Ball we expect teachers to be positive and enthusiastic with all learners whatever their level of attainment. We expect teachers to recognise that all learners can improve. Teachers should embed a classroom culture where all pupils feel they can improve and that effort, and the use effective mental strategies, leads to success. We expect teachers to understand and use the language of a growth mind set (Dweck 2000). This means that pupils are not labelled at 'bright,' 'smart' or 'clever,' and that groups of pupils are not referred to as for example, 'top, middle or bottom,' or sat in fixed attainment groups for every lesson. However, it might be that groups of pupils with similar attainment needs are brought together at different times. **We believe in flexible and fluid grouping for learning.**

We also expect teachers to understand the difference between 'task orientated' praise and 'ego orientated' praise. Pupils should feel they are receiving feedback on their learning and not themselves as a person. Teachers also need to be reflective and watchful about who they praise and respond to in class and ensure that all pupils feel equally valued.

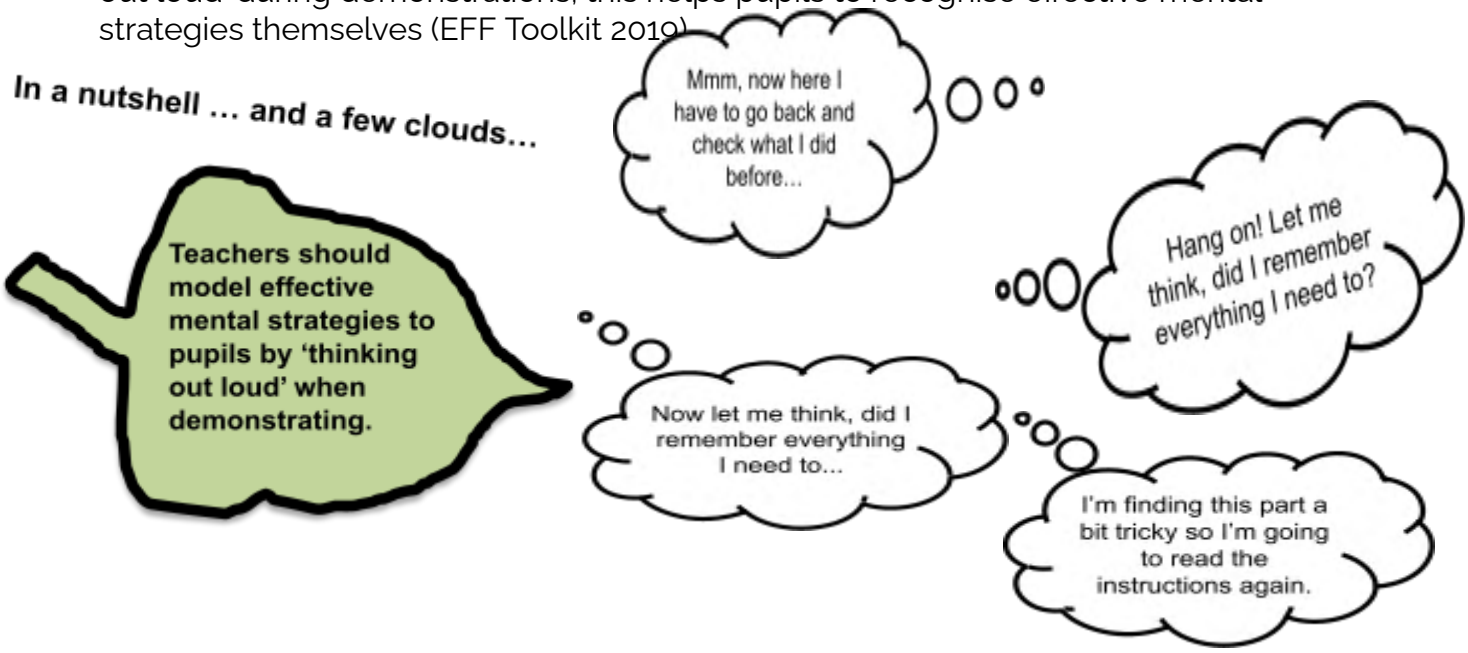


Teachers should understand the concept of 'desirable difficulties' in that learning always begins with the learner experiencing some form of cognitive conflict. Pupils should be encouraged to recognise and enjoy a level of difficulty, but understand when they need support, or when they are too comfortable and need to move on. This can be achieved by talking about the learning process frequently and modelling experiencing difficulties that are overcome. Teachers can explain this

using a 'learning zones' target board with panic, comfort and stretch zone (where learning happens). (See Appendix 8, for a Learning Zone diagram).

Metacognition

Evidence suggests that pupils' learning improves when they develop their levels of self-regulation and metacognition (EFF Toolkit 2019). This refers to the ability to think about one's own thinking and cognitive strategies. Metacognition and self-regulation approaches aim to help pupils think about their own behaviour and learning more explicitly, often by teaching them specific strategies for planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning. If teachers regularly model their own thinking by 'thinking out loud' during demonstrations, this helps pupils to recognise effective mental strategies themselves (EFF Toolkit 2019).



22. Home Learning

At John Ball, our philosophy regarding home learning centres around ensuring that we promote the process of learning between children and parents.

For this to happen, teachers should ensure that they are sending home learning activities that will allow parents to gauge how their child is progressing, practice key skills and work together on an activity that promotes a shared learning experience. Most importantly, home learning should be motivating.

Reasons for home learning

Home learning extends the amount of learning time available and can help establish a good work ethic, which will stay with children as they move through to secondary school, further and higher education and into the world of work. Every parent knows their child best and can use their own skills, knowledge and experiences to support their child's learning. Children often respond well to individual attention from their parents, thus promoting positive relations within the family. Children become aware that learning doesn't only take place in school.

The purpose of home learning tasks will vary from class to class and stage to stage, but will be used to promote:

- Reinforcement and consolidation of class work
- Preparation for future class work
- Opportunities for independent learning
- Use of resources which may not be freely available in school
- Training pupils in organising and managing their own time
- Encouraging ownership and responsibility for learning
- Opportunities for parental co-operation and support
- Communication of information on class work to parents
- Creation of channels of communication between home and school
- Positive work habits and self-discipline

What should parents and carers expect to receive for home learning?

Parents and carers will received a weekly email on a Friday explaining the home learning for the week ahead and any other information or news the class teacher wishes to share.

Pupils should be given home learning appropriate to their needs and be given clear information. Some home learning may be celebrated by sharing it in class, but generally teachers will not give written feedback on home learning as their focus and time should be on the learning completed in school. Teachers expect parents to support their children with the implementation of home learning tasks.

Home learning tasks will vary according to age, year group, from class to class and will depend on the curricular area of the task. All pupils are expected to read regularly at home**, at least four times per week**. Older children may read alone, but younger children should read with their adults and also have books read to them regularly.

The details of home learning activities offered, and time allocations are as follows:

Year group	Recommended time allocation	Recommend content (this will vary)
Year 1	1 hour per week	Spellings. MyMaths (set weekly by class teacher). Children may also engage in Numbots. Reading of their staged book, online Little Wandle book and free reader book. **Families will be expected to record reading in the child's home/school planner.**
Year 2	1.5 hours per week	Spellings. MyMaths (set weekly by class teacher). Children may also engage in Times Tables Rock Stars and, for reading, Accelerated Reader quizzes and MyON. **Families will be expected to record reading in the child's home/school planner.**
Year 3 and Year 4	1.5 hours per week	Maths: MyMaths and page(s) from CGP book (set weekly by class teacher). English: Spellings and page(s) from CGP book (set weekly by class teacher). Children may also engage in Times Tables Rock Stars and Accelerated Reader quizzes and MyON. **Children will be expected to record their own reading in their reading journal.**
Year 5 and Year 6	30 minutes per day	Maths: MyMaths and page(s) from CGP book (set weekly by class teacher).

		English: Spellings and page(s) from CGP book (set weekly by class teacher). Children may also engage in Times Tables Rock Stars and, for reading, Accelerated Reader quizzes and MyON. **Children will be expected to record their own reading in their school planners**.

What should the child do?

Engage with the home learning as set by their class teacher.
Be responsible for looking after their reading record and home learning books / tasks.
Ask for help and advice when necessary.
Complete the tasks to the best of their ability and hand them in on time.

What should the family do?

Emphasise the importance of home learning.
Agree a routine for the completion of home learning and check that it is being followed.
Give support and assistance when required.
Encourage your child to always complete tasks to the best of their ability.
Inform the class teacher if pupils are having difficulty completing it.

Half-termly Creative Learning Projects

At the start of every half term, teachers are expected to set a creative learning project that pupils can work on at home over the school term. This should link with the topic for that half term and be featured on the Year Group Curriculum map. Pupils are expected to bring this learning into school on the week before the next holiday. Teachers then give pupils a short opportunity to share this with the class individually, or as a group. Teachers are not expected to give written feedback on this, simple verbal feedback and praise on effort and strategies are sufficient.

Further information and links to useful websites can be found in the Curriculum and Year group sections of the school website: www.johnball.lewisham.sch.uk

23. Appendix 1: Details for Phonics in EYFS

In Nursery, we prioritise children's language development with 'Communication and Language' being a prime area of the EYFS curriculum. For our children to be 'school ready' we focus our efforts on increasing their language and this can only be done through high-quality interactions, reading stories and singing songs and rhymes.

Little Wandle is the phonics scheme that we have adopted as a school and we immerse the children in the Foundation of Phonics where we introduce the letter sounds through exciting and engaging listening games.

In Reception, the children will work through Phase Two, Three and Four of the Little Wandle phonics programme across the academic year. Children review and revise GPCs and words daily, weekly and across the terms, in order to move this knowledge into their long term memory. Phonics lessons happen daily and as the children's knowledge grows, as does the duration in which a phonics lesson will go on for. We conduct whole class phonics lessons and complete targeted intervention in the form of 'keep up', 'catch up' sessions to ensure every child secures their phonics learning at an early age.

Our aim at John Ball School is to ensure that all children are able to access the curriculum and enjoy reading as soon as possible.

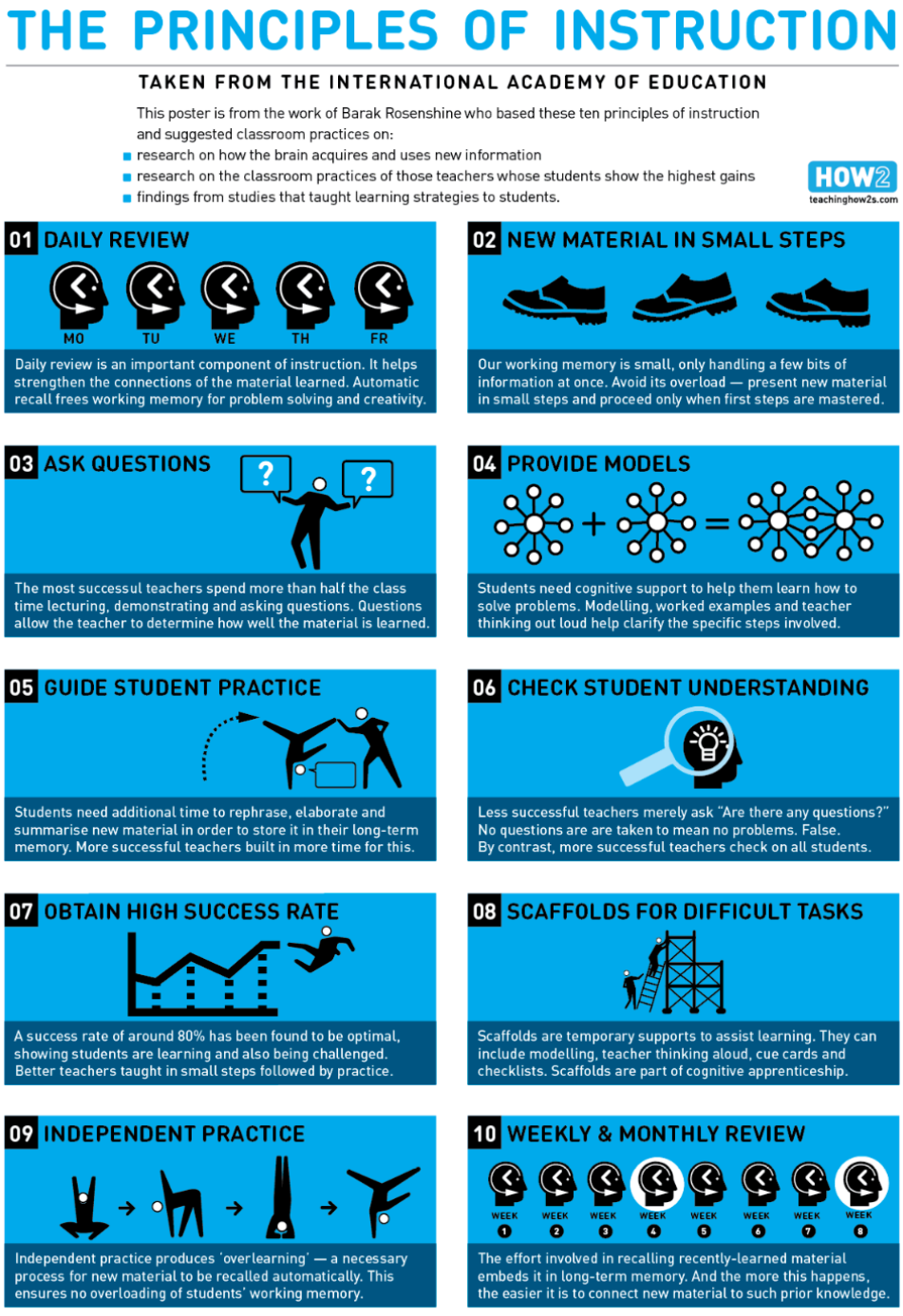
24. Appendix 2: Signs of working memory difficulties

According to Susan Gatherole and Tracey Alloway (2007), children with working memory difficulties typically:

- have normal social relationships with peers;
- are reserved during group activities in the classroom, and sometimes fail to answer direct questions;
- find it difficult to follow instructions;
- lose track during complicated tasks, and may eventually abandon these tasks;
- make place-keeping errors (skipping or repeating steps);
- show incomplete recall;
- appear to be easily distracted, inattentive, or "zoned out"; and
- have trouble with activities that require both storage (remembering) and processing (manipulating information).

25. Appendix 3: Rosenshine's Principles of Instructions

- **Clip to support these ideas:**
  https://researched.org.uk/sessions/tom-sherrington-rosenshines-principles-and-curriculum-design/
- **Website to support these ideas:**
  https://teacherofsci.com/principles-of-instruction/#Who_was_Barak_Rosenshine

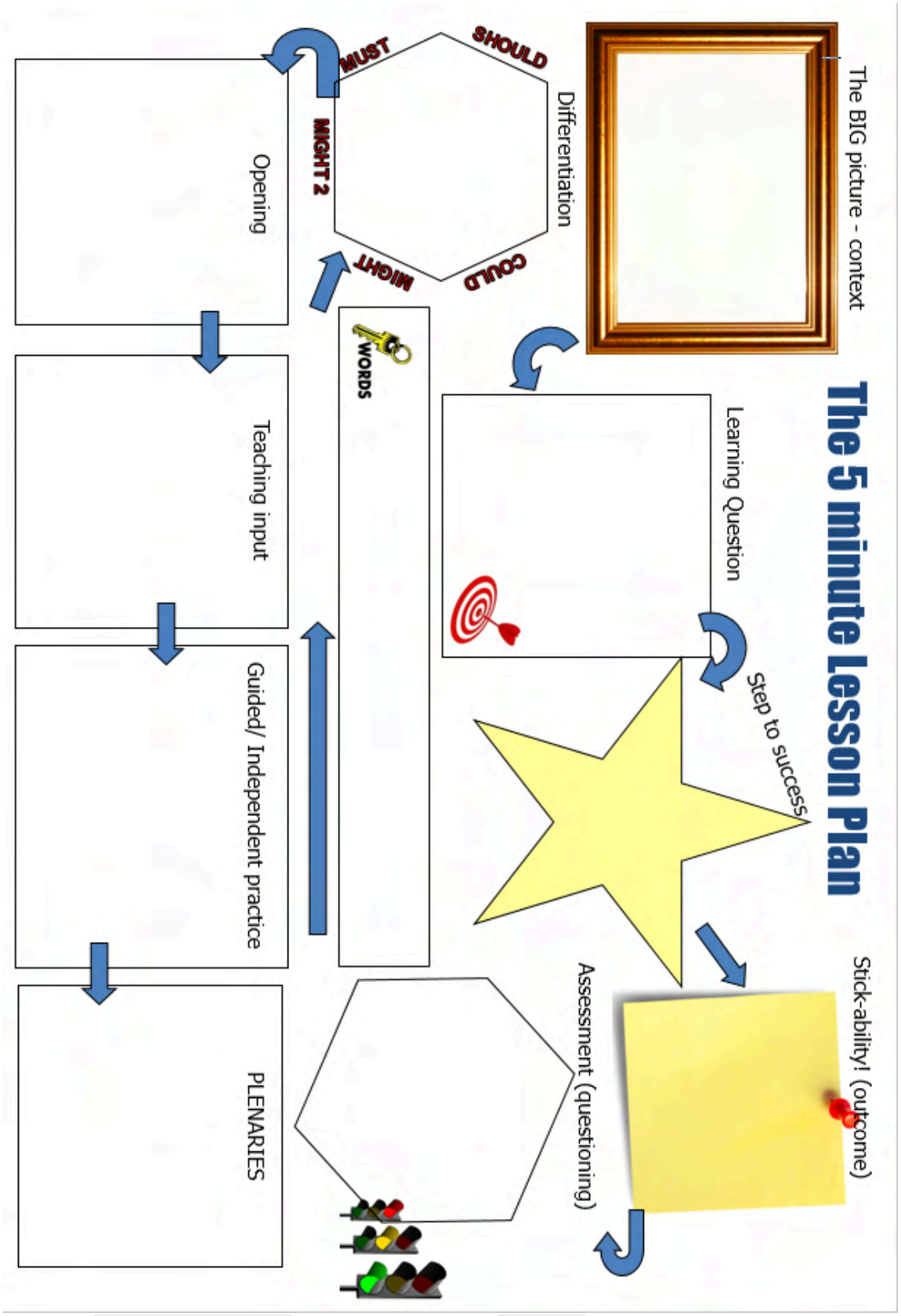


26. Appendix 4: Planning prompts and 5 minute lesson plan

Planning prompts for MEMORABLE learning

Learning intention	What should pupils be able to do/recall/ think by the end of the lesson?	L.Q:
STS Outcome	How will I and the pupils know they have understood this and it's sticking? What will this look like?	
Prior knowledge	What cognitive connections will pupils already have to this that I can capitalise upon to make links to?	
Lesson structure- activities or tasks	What will pupils do so they think about this enough (enabling it to stick!)	
Effective teacher talk	How will I explain this? (vocabulary/ analogies I will stick to so I don't ramble and overload resulting in pupils losing focus)	
Effective pupil talk (time for self/peer explanation/ clarification	How will I demonstrate this clearly and minimise cognitive load? (Flipchart/ models/ resources)	
	What questions will I ask to support clarification and more in-depth thinking?	
Feedback	What misconceptions/ problems do I expect in thinking? What do I plan to do about this?	

Behaviour management	What problems might arise in behaviour? How will I deal with this?	
Adaptation	How will I support lower attaining pupils to understand this?	
	How will I support higher attaining pupils to make new connections/ apply this further?	
Resource management	What will pupils need in order to complete learning tasks? How will I ensure getting resources or using them doesn't distract from learning?	


The 5 minute Lesson Plan
The BIG picture - context
Differentiation
MUST
SHOULD
MIGHT 2
MIGHT
COULD
Learning Question
Step to success
Stick-ability! (outcome)
Assessment (questioning)
WORDS
Opening
Teaching input
Guided/ Independent practice
PLENARIES

27. Appendix 5: The Environment for Learning - Examples

Examples of effective learning walls:

These learning walls have pieces that are well-spaced apart which supports processing for all ages. They have well-chosen vocabulary (not too much) and examples of learning in progress. The focus is also on the current topics.

Example of less effective displays in class - to be avoided:

These learning walls are far too busy and full. A learner would find it hard to pin point what relates to present learning, or visually locate what they might need.

Although, there are good uses of concrete apparatus to support pupils' thinking, this maths wall (shown below) has too many topics displayed at once and few examples of learning process or written recording. This is the type of display below that soon becomes 'wall paper'.

Example of effective displays in common areas:

28. Appendix 6: Health and safety in the learning environment

- **Appropriate ambient temperature.** Check the ventilation in the room. Is it too hot or too cold? Sometimes a simple thing like increasing the ventilation can cure the unrest that goes on when a class is hot and tired.

- **Lighting and glare.** Check the vision in the room. Is the board/whiteboard easy to read? If curtains or blinds are damaged, contact the Premises Manager immediately.

- **Health and safety.**
  - There should be no trailing or taut wires across areas that adults or students walk through.
  - Damaged or dangerous equipment should be removed immediately and reported to the Premises Manager.

29. Appendix 7: Evaluate your classroom - checklist

Staff may find it useful to use the following checklist at the start of the year and indeed throughout the year, to ensure the learning environment is meeting the needs of all pupils at all times.

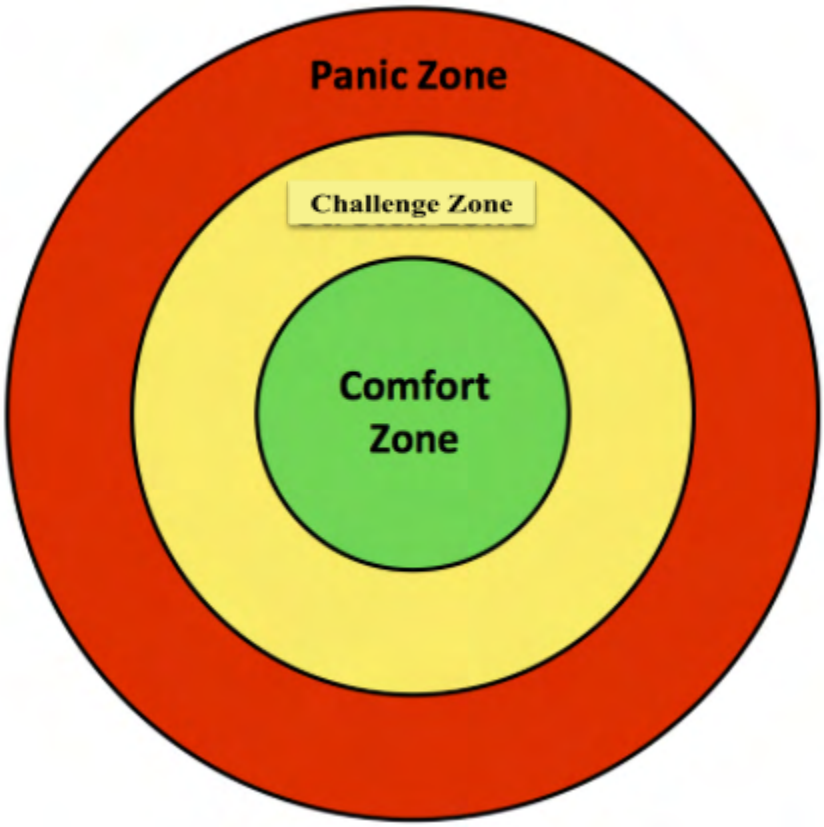
CRITERIA	YES	N	COMMENTS / ACTIONS
HAS THE TEACHER ORGANISED THE SPACE AVAILABLE EFFECTIVELY FOR LEARNING? Is the classroom an attractive and focused place in which to learn? Has space been allocated to different aspects of curriculum with headings: 1. Maths Learning Wall 2. English Learning Wall 3. Reading corner promoting love of reading 4.Science Learning Wall 5. Topic Learning Wall Are these updated regularly showing learning processes? Is there a visual timetable on display for each day and used accordingly? Have unwanted, unsuitable, out-dated, non-working, irreparable items of furniture (e.g. pianos, free-standing black boards, cupboards!) been removed?			
IS THE CLASSROOM CLEAN AND SAFE? Is the classroom safe e.g. plugs, cables, flooring, pegs, school bags? Are the fire exits and notices obvious and readable? Is the classroom clean and tidy and clutter free? Do children have easy access to resources? Do they children have their own labelled tray?			

Does the provision and organisation of furniture take account of children's size and safety?			
ARE THERE EFFECTIVE ROUTINES FOR: Giving out and collecting learning and resources? Undertaking a series of tasks without interruption? Moving from one activity to another? Ensuring children get help without disrupting the learning of the class? Asking and answering questions during a discussion?			
DOES THE TEACHER CREATE SPACE? To allow pupils to work individually without undue disturbance? To allow pupils on some occasions to learn together on more space-intensive practical activities? To enable adults to move from child to child with ease? To give everyone some 'personal' space?			
USE OF CLASSROOM FIXTURES Has good use been made of natural lighting? Are blinds in good working order for use when the sun is too bright? Are windows clear (no displays or bluetac use) and as clean as possible When required, is lighting working effectively for pupils' learning? Are windows able to be opened for good ventilation?			

Can an ambient temperature be achieved through use of fans or working radiators? Are floor coverings stuck down to avoid trip hazards?			
ARE LEARNING WALLS USED TO Enhance the achievements of all pupils by demonstrating learning processes? Give guidance and information to pupils? Promote the use of the correct vocabulary for the different topics? Clarify assessment criteria? Provide a stimulus for further work?			
DO WALL COMMON DISPLAYS: • Contain at least 50% of pupils' work? • Avoid an overuse of commercial products such as Twinkl etc? • Involve the pupils in presentation? • Show pupils' names, titles etc? • Comments from pupils (speech bubbles) • Relate to current/recent class work? • Captions of learning experiences • Labels of learning outcomes • Use photographs to show learning happening • Relate to several areas / components of the curriculum? • Illustrate clean, well-presented and attractive work? • Reflect the learning process			
ORGANISATION OF RESOURCES? Are materials and equipment are in good order, labelled, tidily stored and accessible to children? Are resources limited to those needed every day? Those needed frequently? Those needed once or twice a term?			

Are all other resources removed?			
HAS THE TEACHER Made explicit what children can and cannot use: safety, age and experience of pupils, scarcity, cost etc? Put resources on show where pupils can see them and get them? Labelled the resource, the box, the number and the place where it is stored e.g. 20 pairs of scissors? Explained the layout of resources to pupils? Delegated responsibility to individual pupils for the smooth running of the classroom and trained these pupils?			
HOW ARE THE CHILDREN ORGANISED AND WHY? Individuals Pairs Group Class Social			

30. Appendix 8: Learning Zones Diagram



31. Appendix 9: References

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