Thinking Schools Academy Trust

"Transforming Life Chances"

Teaching and Learning Policy

Cedar Children's Academy

This policy was adopted in September 2022	
The policy is to be reviewed in July 2024	

TSAT Teaching and Learning Policy

The policy will reflect the Trust Vision of "Transforming Life Chances". We aspire to enhance the learning of the pupils in a manner that will equip them for life outside of school. Teachers are among the most powerful influences in learning and will ultimately impact the pupil's relationship to their learning in all areas of life, influencing how they engage with new ideas and attitudes.

Children first: To provide a stimulating learning environment for all where learners feel safe to explore knowledge and understanding. We believe that children learn best when they are motivated, clear about expectations in their work and behaviour, feel valued, secure and confident, are challenged and receive constructive feedback about their performance.

Aspire: To be the best they can be. We believe that all staff and pupils can aspire for personal and professional prowess.

Challenge: To actively shape the minds, attitudes and habits of young people through a framework of cognitive education that enables them to become the master of their own destiny. We believe that pupils require an accurate reflection of what they are good at and need to develop personal insight and manage uncertainty confidently. Developing skilled, independent, reflective learners is part of our Vision.

Achieve: For all stakeholders to demonstrate the highest levels of thinking and habits. We want our pupils to be questioning in nature, achieving the highest levels of independent and interdependent prowess.

Our 'Thinking School' approach is consistent with the aims below and helps to ensure that:

a) Pupils in TSAT are supported to think for themselves, through the development of a thorough understanding of purposeful thinking tools that they can use to aid and monitor their own progress.

b) Staff in TSAT are encouraged to think accurately and reflectively about their practice and understand a range of thinking tools that can be used to support student motivation and progress.

All new teaching staff undertake a bespoke programme on joining the Trust and this ensures their understanding of the ethos and expertise in integrating the tools to best effect. Further documentation relating to the successful implementation of our tools in each specific learning context is available from each school.

It is an expectation that all staff members ensure their understanding of the Thinking philosophy and their fluency in using the Thinking School approaches, therefore enabling them to implement appropriately and purposefully in all aspects of their practice to support maximum student progress.

Central to our Teaching and Learning policy are the *Core principles that underpin great teaching and learning in our Trust.* These should form the basis of our lesson planning.

The 7 principles of highly effective teaching and learning: the fundamental facets of what we do whilst also providing a way to keep the self-improvement of teachers manageable and sustainable at all levels.

- *Subject knowledge – what do they need to know at that age group.*
- *Explanations – connecting to what they know, telling the story, providing metaphors and analogies, providing examples, being aware of cognitive load, doing it themselves.*
- *Questioning and responding – sequences of questions, differentiated, probing, thinking time, retrieval practice, active engagement of all students.*
- *Feedback to feed forward – accurate identification of current status and steps forward.*
- *Modelling – content, mindset and dispositions.*
- *Metacognition – tools and self-regulatory methods.*
- *Memory – encoding and retrieval practice.*

We use metacognitive tools and meta-memory to support and meet these principles so the principles sit above the rest of the Tree Map
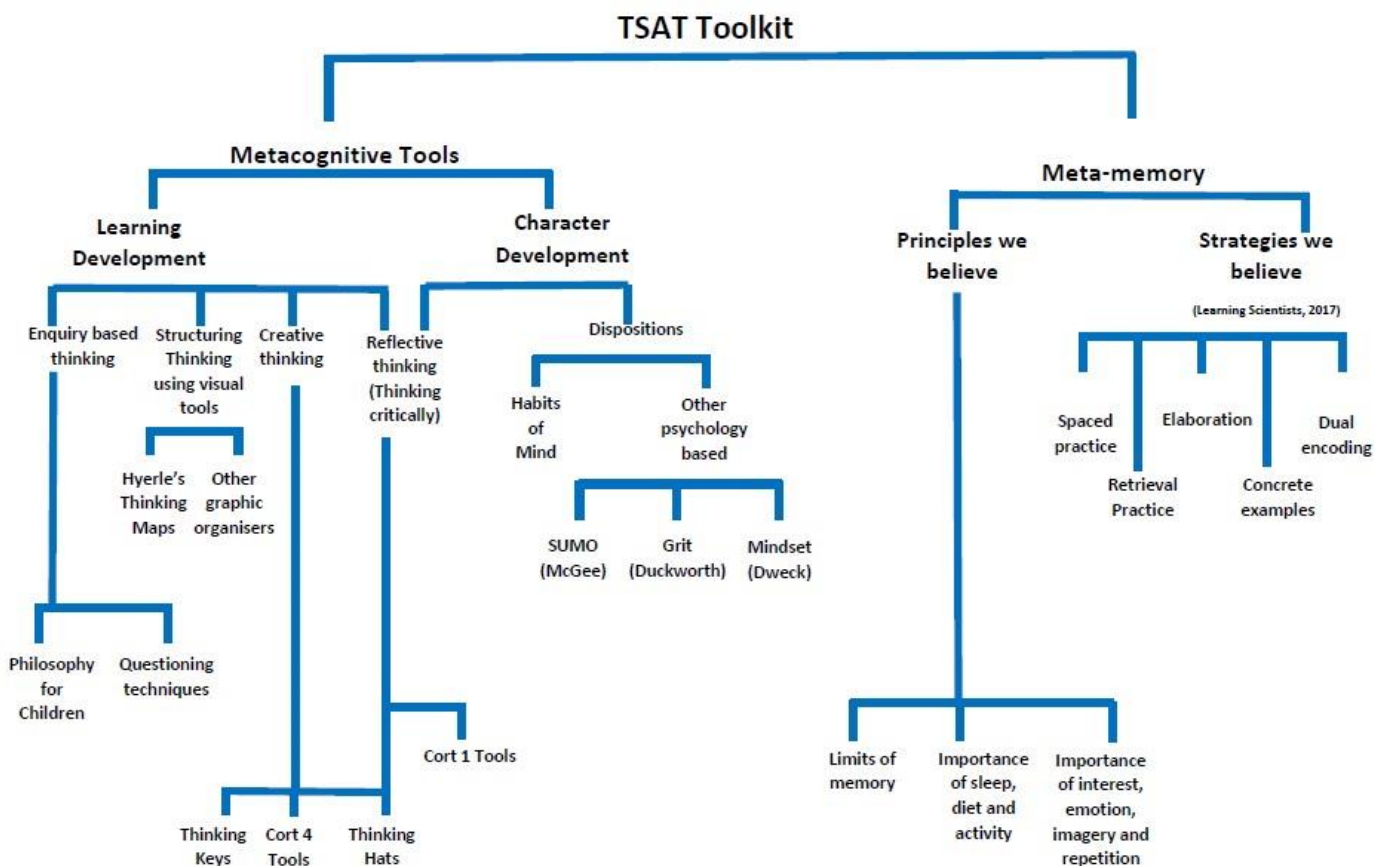
Aims

Our aim is to have a common framework for learning which breeds consistency but allows for creativity and thinking. The outcome of which is enthusiasm, engagement and excitement with the content and skills required to succeed, in every classroom.

To make learning 'visible' in lessons:

- To ensure standards of teaching are high through internal and external judgements.
- Pupils will be fully aware of the purpose of their learning.
- Pupils will be active and resilient participants in their learning.
- Pupils will look for the 'big picture' and seek patterns in the information presented to them.
- Pupils will make links across the curriculum and beyond the classroom.
- Pupils will apply their learning in unfamiliar situations with confidence.
- Pupils will use ICT positively, knowledgeably and proportionately.
- Staff have strong subject knowledge and use this to engage, enthuse and excite their students. Their lessons will include a balance between surface and deep level learning.
- Staff ensure that all pupils make excellent progress and achieve above age related expectations.

To make thinking 'visible' in lessons:

- Pupils will be encouraged to develop the necessary interpersonal skills to communicate effectively with others.
- Pupils will be able to find and process information independently using a variety of appropriate and purposefully selected Thinking Tools.
- Pupils will be able to exercise criticality when exploring different sources of information.
- Pupils will develop high-order thinking skills which will allow them evaluate and create effectively.
- Pupils will develop successful dispositions to ensure knowledge and understanding is accurately, consistently and purposefully applied - The Habits of Mind are valued by teachers as a way to

cultivate and environment where students develop dispositions which will support them inside the classroom and beyond.

- Staff will teach students to think about their thinking to provide them with the skills required for the new curriculum and for life-long learning.
- Staff will promote students' persistence and resilience in overcoming challenges.

To make progress 'visible' in lessons:

- Pupils will be able to work effectively as individuals or part of a team to solve important problems.
- Pupils will develop self-confidence, self-motivation and self-regulation towards their learning.
- Clear learning objectives and success criteria are used to ensure all students know how they can make progress.
- Staff will tailor provision to meet the needs of every pupil so that all can access our shared aims. They have high expectations and a belief that all pupils can achieve their potential.
- Staff will continually seek to research, innovate and improve the learning experience of all pupils.
- Staff feedback regularly to students to recognise and celebrate achievements, whilst challenging them in a constructive manner to strive for improvement and learn from their mistakes. ▢ Teachers use questioning to evaluate student understanding and progression.
- Staff regularly reflect on learning and students' depth of knowledge and understanding.
- Staff within departments use a consistent approach to assessment to ensure accuracy of data and intervention.

Learning at Cedar
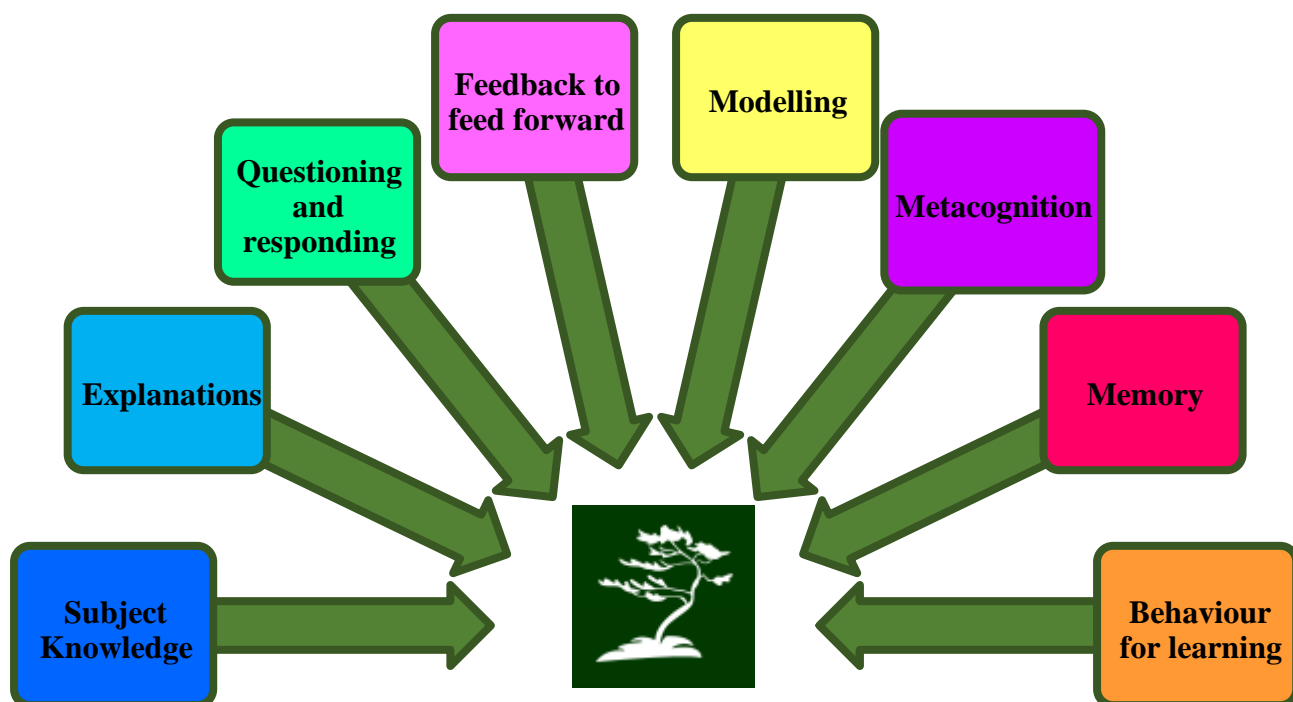
Subject Knowledge
What do they need to know at that age group?

1) Every teacher must know the curriculum areas that they teach, including where individual lessons fit into the wider context of the key stage. Explicit subject disciplines will be shared with children so they can understand the context of their learning.

2) Lesson plans demonstrate the skill, knowledge or understanding acquisition from the National Curriculum programmes of study 2014 and Birth to five.

3) Salient knowledge will be planned for and shared with the children at the end of each lesson.

4) LOs are shared to develop children's skills, knowledge and understanding. The SC is an explicit tool that will enable a child to demonstrate the acquisition of the above.

5) Planning will include challenge for all learners within the classroom with enrichment and extension activities planned and entwined through the learning for individual, groups and whole class learners.

6) Learning will be spaced taking into account the age and concentration span of the age of individual cohorts.

7) Children's books are the core evidence of learning and progress over time. We maintain at least expected progress, through the books, and where needed we are able to accelerate progress.

8) We demand and expect children to have pride of their books. The presentation and handwriting policy is consistently applied through all aspects of the curriculum.

9) Using subject knowledge, it is important to plan for what the children will be learning at each point in the lesson. The second phase is to plan what each adult will be doing at each point in the lesson.

10) Teachers use a range of hooks to inspire and ignite awe and wonder with the learners in their classroom.

11) Adults are learners: they strengthen their own subject knowledge, both curriculum based and pedagogical, through self-study and when appropriate direct study.

12) All adults take a shared responsibility in end of key stage outcomes. They know and understand what has come before and what comes next, therefore enabling all teachers to teach and support learning in any year group.

13) We use assessment, including formative and summative assessment, to plan, track and modify planning, questioning, extension and challenge tasks.

14) We understand and use the feedback and marking policy to develop learner's knowledge, skills and understanding as well as deepening the child's knowledge of themselves as a learner, planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning.

15) Adults know, understand and plan for children's vulnerabilities including their specific needs and learning styles. This is including the knowledge and use of Statutory documentation such as the SEND code of practice.

Explanations

Connecting to what they know, telling the story, providing metaphors and analogies, providing examples, being aware of cognitive load.

1) We teach to the most able setting challenging Learning objectives. Teachers use their skills to scaffold learning so that all students can access the learning to maximise their progress.

2) The LO will be shared with the children. They will either repeat it back (younger children) or have think, pair, share time to discuss and understand the learning that they will undertake. The SC may be shared to support learners to achieve success.

3) Differentiation is expected in every lesson, this is also true for Foundation subjects.

4) All lessons start with a review of previous learning in the form of a Do Now Activity (DNA). Children who are able to link new learning to prior learning are more likely to make connections, making new learning memorable.

5) Children will be provided with resources to support their learning. This will include, but not exhaustive, writing frames, national curriculum spellings, word mats, subject specific vocabulary, key word cards, Mathematical equipment, dictionaries, IT, challenge cards.

6) Adults will employ a range of strategies in the lesson, looking, listening, targeting, mini plenaries, hinge questions and focused tasks.

7) Models, images and where possible concrete examples are provided to ensure that all children are able to relate, contextualise and rationalise their thinking. Eg when teaching about a River bed, don't assume the children know what you mean.

8) Teaching is clear and specific delivered in manageable 'chunks' including spaced learning.

9) Adults will provide structures, scaffolding and a calm purposeful learning environment to reduce children's cognitive load.

10) Adults will demonstrate knowledge of how to assess children during learning tasks to be able to intervene, explore and challenge learners appropriately.

11) All staff will promote a love of learning in the classroom through clear established routines, expectations and appropriate explanations and support to enable children to achieve success whatever their starting points.

Questioning and responding

Sequences of questions, differentiated, probing, thinking time, retrieval practice, active engagement of all students.

1) Every child should be ready to respond to questions, classes should adopt a no hands up policy to ensure all learners to be actively thinking.

2) The Q Matrix and Blooms question stems will be used to support the planning of questions.

3) Set and defend a high standard of correctness in the classroom. Adults will not accept partially answered questions. Adults will expect children to answer using technical language.

4) Adults and children will be taught to develop responses to questions through 'pose, pause, pounce, bounce' (or similar) techniques to develop the learning environment and quality of conversations.

5) Thinking is stretched and challenged. Wait time is given to all children; adults provide time for children as 'thinking time' for the children to be able to formulate their response into a coherent developed answer.

6) Think, pair, share will be used routinely for children to develop their thinking with a partner/ groups before answering some questions/ challenges.

7) Developing metacognitive talk in the classroom through questioning develops children's interactions. This is to use a range of question strategies to develop children's thinking skills. Effective modelling of responses expected as well as developed responses to questions will help prepare children. Providing further thought/ideas within each question will help guide the children's effective talk.

Feedback to feed forward
Accurate identification of current status and steps forward.

1) All learning will receive feedback in line with the feedback and marking policy. Feedback develops learning by consolidating, developing, or extending learning against the Learning objective. This might include pre-teaching to support a child being ready for the next lesson.

2) Children are explicitly taught, potentially with the use of a visualiser, to self and peer assess to develop a rich learning conversation.

3) Thinking tools are used to develop feedback between the adults and the children as well as child to child.

4) Adults will use pupil examples to celebrate and exemplify the achievement of the LO or SC/parts of SC as part of classroom practices.

5) Use of testing/ retrieval practice to assess children's ability to identify their strengths and areas for development will be often. Adults use this information in an informative way to systematically plan learning to ensure progress is made and where needed accelerate progress.

6) Feedback to questions, discussions and other oral communications is clear, precise and developmental. Incorrect answers are explored further, whilst correct answers are challenged and extended.
For further information see Feedback and Marking Policy.

Modelling
Content, mind-set and dispositions

1) We are all teachers of eloquence. Children are expected to answer questions in full sentences, with adult modelling where appropriate. No child should be answering with single word answers. Phrases such as 'tell me more, explain that further, can you add to that', can be used.

2) Teachers model and encourage children to use STEM sentences to formulate their answers.

3) Teachers must challenge misconceptions rather than correct children's answers to ensure children's understanding of their learning.

4) All learners (children and adults) develop and demonstrate a growth mind-set. The language of 'can't do it yet' is a regularly featured phrase used in an appropriately challenging learning environment.

5) Children are supported to see challenge as growth. They seek and accept challenge taking responsible risks. Children see mistakes/errors as part of their growth as a learner.

6) Adults use strategies including the I do, we do, you do model, guided practice and live modelling.

7) When introducing new or technical vocabulary children will be expected to repeat it back.

8) Knowledge organisers will be used to support children's retrieval, application and monitoring of personal learning to be able to evaluate and move their own learning forward.

9) Adults model their thinking as they approach a task to reveal the reflections of an effective learner. Teachers will make strategies/resources available explicit by using them to model their own thinking to the children.

Metacognition
Tools and self-regulatory methods.

Teachers will explicitly plan and teach metacognition strategies, including the following:

1) The use and application of Thinking tools is used widely in all contexts of school life. Thinking tools are modelled to the children as well as children selecting the correct thinking tools given the context of the situation.

2) All thinking maps, including frame of references, are used by all learners within the school.

3) Creative thinking is modelled through the use of thinkers keys, thinking hats and the six seeds of Cedar.

4) Thinking about thinking- be reflective and choosing the right pathway or course of action is central to all learners within the Academy.

5) The 8 habits of mind are expected by all learners. They are explicitly taught, acknowledged and celebrated throughout the school.

6) Growth mind-set is prevalent throughout school life.

7) Self-regulation will be explicitly taught to pupils for example through the 5 B's, BYBS booklet and the learning environment

Memory
Encoding and retrieval practice.

1) All learning topics start with a hook to ignite interest and curiosity.

2) We value the repetitive nature of accessing long term memory. Skills will be practised at appropriate times of the learning sequence. E.g. Arithmetic lessons daily.

3) Deliberate difficulties are planned for. Children who find a task challenging are more likely to recall information from such tasks from their long-term memory.

4) Learning is spaced within each lesson as well as between lessons. Children will be taught how to access prior learning as foundations for the next steps in learning.

5) Wherever possible, Duel encoding will be modelled. Picture (nonverbal processing) alongside words (verbal processing).

6) Retrieval practice will be used regularly- testing demonstrates children's ability to recall and apply previous learning from their long-term memory demonstrating a 'learnt' skill. For example, through
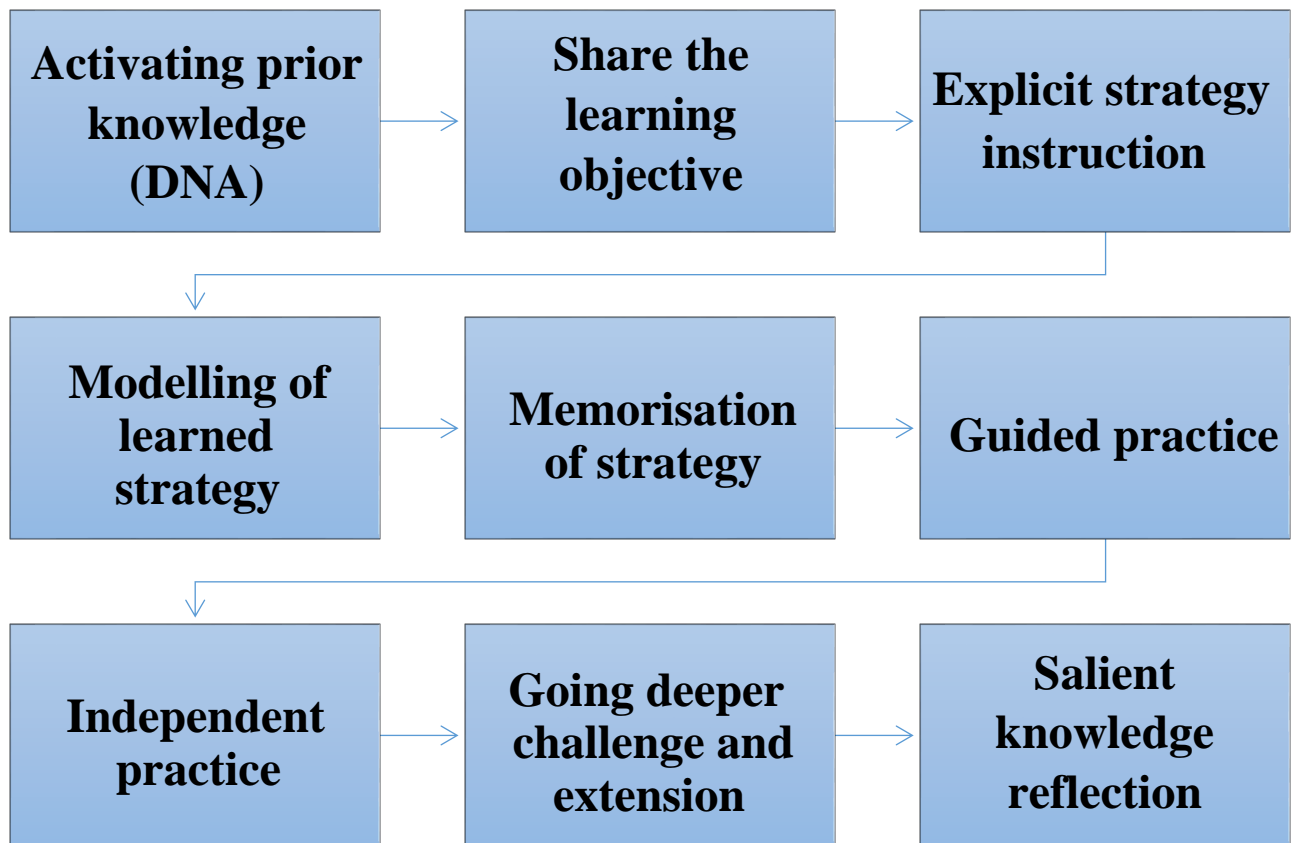
the use of Carousel Learning. QLA will be used to analyse, plan and develop children's next steps in learning.

Behaviour for learning
Engaged, active learners.

1) Classrooms will adopt and establish clear expectations that are non-negotiable. Children are expected to Sit up, Listen, Ask and answer questions and Track the speaker (whoever that is e.g. child/adult).

2) Children are active and drive the learning forward. Children work hard and know every second counts.

3) Pace will be expected during all lessons to develop children's habits. Use of timers and a teacher strict announcement of allocate time will motivate and enthuse learning.

4) Each class will establish exemplary routines that are explained and clearly understood by all children. This is essential to the children listening and responding without delay to adult instruction.

5) Transition from one activity to another will be smooth. The children will respond without a fuss ensuring that no learning time is wasted.

6) Children are taught to manage their impulsivity.

7) We demand and expect children to have pride of their books as it shows their learning journey.

For further information see the Behaviour Policy.

Lesson structure

Activating prior knowledge (DNA)	→	Share the learning objective	→	Explicit strategy instruction
Modelling of learned strategy	→	Memorisation of strategy	→	Guided practice
Independent practice	→	Going deeper challenge and extension	→	Salient knowledge reflection

The above flow map provides a clear structure for each lesson. At each point there is a 'check point' of the stage before moving on to the next stage. Time spent on each stage depends on the response of the children and the time needed to ensure that learning is successful for all learners. However, adults should be cautious about spending too much time on retrieval/ activating prior knowledge as this should be short and succinct. If this aspect takes too long, the task/activity was inappropriately selected.

The classroom is a learning environment. It is therefore essential to monitor and moderate the amount of time that is 'adult talk' and children actively participating in learning. Children will be active thinkers, never passive and always finding curiosity and therefore learning becomes irresistible.