



Teaching & Learning Policy

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1. Rationale

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for teaching and learning at Oakwood Primary School. It is the method through which we offer a rigorous knowledge-led curriculum and its implementation is the responsibility of all the members of the school community. The aim of this document is to help the teachers in the school become the most effective practitioners they can be by using principles established from research, cognitive science and experience. The impact of quality teaching and learning is the progress pupils make and the outcomes they achieve.

2. Through our teaching we aim to

- achieve deep understanding, by helping children connect new knowledge with existing knowledge so they are fluent and unconsciously competent at applying their knowledge as skills
- deliver academic excellence
- secure knowledge into long-term memory
- develop secure schemas with connected networks of ideas
- equip children with knowledge and cultural capital that they need to succeed in life
- give all pupils access to the best that has been thought and said and engender an appreciation of human achievement
- enable children to become confident and interested learners, actively engaged in their own learning
- develop children's self-respect and for the cultures and values of others
- develop our Learning Dispositions: communication, collaboration, resilience, determination, independence, curiosity and reflection

3. Strategies for Teaching and Learning

We advocate research-based principles of instruction that are 'faithfully' adopted and 'intelligently' adapted from research in cognitive science, research on master teachers and research on cognitive supports. The sources of these principles are referenced and found in the bibliography. We encourage all teachers to read these to develop their knowledge and understanding of the art of teaching. Teaching at Oakwood Primary School should be guided by these principles.

Barak Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction¹

1. Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning (Reactivation)

This might be a review of vocabulary, events or a previously learned concept or additional practice to learn facts and skills where overlearning is required to develop automatic recall. Effective teachers review knowledge that is essential for the lesson. At Oakwood Primary School, some teachers use multiple-choice quizzes, timed tests, counting activities or review knowledge organisers.

2. Present new material in small steps with pupil practice after each step: Only present small amounts of new material at any one time, and then assist pupils as they practice this material. Our working memory can only hold a few bits of information at once - too much information swamps the working memory. The most effective teachers present only small amounts of **new material** at one time, and they teach in such a way that each point is mastered before the next point is introduced. They check the pupil's understanding on each point and reteach when necessary. In a study, the most effective teachers spent about 23 minutes of a 40-minute lesson in teaching, demonstration, questioning and worked examples. In contrast, the least effective spent only 11 minutes presenting new material. The most effective teachers use this extra time to provide additional explanations, check for understanding and provide sufficient instructions so pupils can learn to work independently without difficulty. The less effective teachers in the study gave much shorter explanations, and then passed out activities and were then observed going from pupil to pupil having to explain the material again.

3. Ask a LARGE number of questions and check the responses of ALL pupils: Questions help pupils practice new information and connect new material to their prior learning.

Questions provide necessary practice and allow a teacher to determine how well material has been learned and whether there is a need for additional instruction. This can also help to uncover misconceptions.

Teachers at Oakwood Primary School also ask pupils to explain the process they used to find the answer.

Teachers might ask pupils to:

- Tell the answer to a partner;
- Summarise the main idea in one or two sentences or repeat the procedures to a partner;
- Write the answer on a mini-whiteboard and hold it up;
- Explain how you worked out the answer;
- Raise hands or raise hands if they agree with an answer someone else has given.

4. Provide models: Providing pupils with models and worked examples can help them learn to solve problems faster.

Teacher modelling and thinking aloud while demonstrating how to solve a problem are examples of cognitive support. A worked example is a step-by-step demonstration of how to solve a problem or how to perform a task. The presentation of worked examples begins with the teacher modelling and explaining the steps that can be taken to solve a specific problem. The teacher also identifies and explains the underlying principles for these steps.

5. Guide pupil practice: Successful teachers spend more time guiding pupils' practice of new material After presentation of new material, the most successful teachers guide pupil practice. This might consist of the teacher working the first problems on the whiteboard, serving as a model for pupils. It could include a visualizer being used to demonstrate or a pupil working out a problem on the board. This provides additional models, more time for checking for understanding, asking questions and correcting errors and more time having pupils work out problems with teacher guidance. Pupils are then better prepared for independent work. Some pupils might receive further guided practice as part of a masterclass or guided group.

6. Check for pupil understanding: Checking for pupil understanding at each point can help pupils learn the material with fewer errors.

Effective teachers frequently check to see if all pupils are learning the new material. **They check for understanding by asking questions, by asking pupils to summarise the presentation up to that point, or to repeat directions or procedures.** This helps pupils to make connections with other learning in their long-term memory and to alert the teacher to when parts of the material need to be retaught. A less effective teacher might simply ask “Are there any questions?” Other ways to check for understanding are to ask pupils to think aloud while completing tasks or to explain or defend their position to others. This can help to limit misconceptions. The wrong way to check for understanding is to ask only a few questions, call on volunteers to hear their (usually correct) answers, and then assume that all of the class either understands or has now learned from hearing the volunteers’ responses. Another error (particularly with older children) is to assume that it is not necessary to check for understanding, and that simply repeating the points will be sufficient.

7. Obtain a high success rate: Pupils need to achieve a high success rate during classroom instruction.

Research suggests that the optimal success rate is about 80% - as judged by oral responses during guided practice and individual work. It shows that pupils are learning the material and that they are being challenged.

8. Provide scaffolds: The teacher provides pupils with temporary supports and scaffolds to assist them.

Scaffolds are a form of guided practice. They include modelling the steps by the teacher or tools, such as cue cards, word banks, checklists to guide or evaluate their work, or a model of the completed task against which the pupil can compare their work. Others may be in the form of prompts – such as question stems to help pupils ask questions while they read or the opportunity to ask the teacher to think aloud when solving a problem. Teachers should carefully consider who needs what type of scaffold, rather than regularly provide the same scaffold to all.

9. Require and monitor independent practice: Pupils need extensive, successful practice in order for skills and knowledge to become automatic and embedded in long-term memory. Independent practice is necessary because a good deal of practice (overlearning) is needed in order to become fluent and automatic in the recall of knowledge or a skill. Independent practice should involve the same material as the guided practice and pupils should be fully prepared. Research shows that pupils were more engaged when their teacher circulated the room and monitored their individual work – the optimal time for these contacts was 30 seconds or less. Cooperative learning can increase achievement if it provides extra instruction through someone else (the other pupil) explaining the material to the pupil.

10. Engage pupils in weekly and monthly review: Pupils need to be involved in extensive practice in order to develop well-connected automatic knowledge

Pupils need extensive and broad reading and extensive practice in order to develop well connected networks of ideas (schema) in their long-term memory. When one’s knowledge on a particular topic is large and well-connected, it is easier to learn new information and prior knowledge is more readily available for use. For this reason, we employ weekly reviews in mathematics, opportunities to retrieve knowledge at the start of lessons, weekly reviews as part of homework, knowledge organisers for revision and end of unit assessments.

These principles are presented in the Appendix B in a thematic interpretation suitable as a reminder or for display.

Retrieval Practice

At Oakwood Primary School, teaching is designed to help learners to remember in the long term the content they have been taught and to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts. We use retrieval practice methods as described above routinely. We aim for pupils to remember all that is on the knowledge organisers and in the curriculum - without need to refer to learning aids, knowledge organisers or other reference material. Pupils should learn strategies for revision, including self-quizzing and elaboration. See <http://www.learningscientists.org/elaboration>

For optimal retrieval practice, teachers must space out the practice – rather than cramming. Memory is more enduring when practice is spaced out as pupils need to forget a little to benefit from spaced practice.

4. Classroom Talk and Questioning

The central mechanism in effective classroom talk is good use of questioning. Good teachers ask a large number of questions and both closed and open questions play an important role. While we should make deep knowledge the goal, shallow knowledge will always come first and without closed questions to check it, there is no point moving on to deeper concepts.

Cold Calling: (Based on Lemov, TLAC)

Principle: All pupils should be involved in engaging with the teacher-pupil dialogue with time to think, and not be allowed to hide, dominate or be overlooked.

Practice: No hands up. Teachers ask questions and then select pupils to respond based on their knowledge of the class, avoiding the pitfalls of hands-up or calling out. This is an inclusive process that involves all pupils, front, back, in the corners, shy, confident...everyone. It's not a one-off strategy; it should be routine and the default mode for most questions. It does not require the use of lollipop sticks.

No Opt-Out: (Based on Lemov, TLAC)

Principle: Pupils should feel safe in answering when unsure but, if they don't know or get things wrong, they should be given the opportunity to gain confidence by consolidating correct or secure answers.

Also, pupils should not be allowed to opt out by saying 'I don't know'.

Practice: If a pupil or several pupils get an answer completely or partially wrong or they say they don't know, move to other pupils or provide the correct answer. But then go back to all those pupils who made errors or couldn't answer giving them a chance to now say the right answer. This gives them an opportunity for practice but if done routinely, it also means that pupils soon learn there is no value in offering 'I don't know' as a defence, in the hope of being left alone. Highly effective teachers maintain an expectation that it's not OK not to try. They eliminate the option for pupils of opting out: muttering 'I don't know' or shrugging impassively when

asked a question. There are six basic strategies for responding to pupils who get the answer wrong or cannot provide an answer.

1. You provide the answer; the pupil repeats the answer.

Teacher: What's the subject of this sentence, Mustafa?

Mustafa: Happy.

Teacher: Mustafa, the subject is *mother*. Now you tell me. What's the subject? *Mustafa:*

The subject is *mother*.

Teacher: Good, Mustafa. The subject is *mother*.

2. Another pupil provides the answer; the initial pupil repeats the answer. A variation is to ask the whole class.
3. After the pupil answers incorrectly, you provide a cue the pupil uses it to find the answer. *Teacher:* When I ask for the subject, I am asking for who or what the sentence is about. Now, Mustafa, see if that can help you find the subject.
4. Another pupil provides a cue, the initial pupil uses it to find the answer.
5. Another pupil provides the answer, the initial pupil repeats the answer and is then asked a question to apply this knowledge. This gives extra practice and also shows that the success was no fluke. *Teacher:* Can you also tell me the subject of the next sentence?

Checking for Understanding:

Principle: As explained through Rosenshine's 3rd principle, teachers should not assume that knowledge aired and shared in the public space of the classroom has been absorbed. It's necessary to check for understanding from pupils to determine whether they understood what you meant.

Practice: After any exposition or question exchange with a particular pupil, ask a number of others to relay back what they have understood. Even if they are answering a question that someone else has already answered, it's valuable for others to be given a chance to offer their version, showing what they have understood and, in so doing, giving the teacher feedback about how successful the teaching has been. It's especially powerful to ask multiple pupils, often yielding various different responses which throw up subtle points for further teaching.

Probing:

Principle: In order to explore a pupils' schema in any depth, you need to ask them several questions; asking several pupils one question each provides shallow responses compared to when each pupil has to provide multiple responses.

Practice: Aim to try 3-5 questions before moving on, probing for understanding, checking for misconceptions, adding extra challenge, providing scaffolding to engineer success.

Say it again, better:

Principle: It's normal for first responses to be half-formed as pupils think aloud and formulate ideas. A second opportunity to respond allows them to finesse their answers, adding depth, accuracy and sophistication. It's

important not to inhibit pupils when they are unsure; it's also important not to allow them to assume mediocre answers are good enough.

Practice: When pupils offer a short, half-formed or partially incorrect answers, say, 'jzk/thanks, that's interesting....now say it again better. Try again but make sure you add in X and link it to idea Y' giving them an immediate opportunity to give an improved response. Modelling this for pupils is vital.

Think, Pair, Share:

Principle: In pairs, all pupils have space to think, to air their initial thoughts, to confess their lack of knowledge and to prepare to give good answers, to rehearse. They are all involved and subsequent discussions then have lots of material to explore. It prevents 'blood out of stone' silences inhibiting discussion and it prevents 'forest of hands' or calling out cultures taking hold.

Practice: Give the class a specific time-cued task – e.g. to decide on four main points in order of importance, in three minutes – get them all talking in pairs, with a reminder at after half the time has elapsed to allow their partner to talk, and then, on time, bring them back together with a signal. Then engage in probing, cold call questioning asking them to report back what their three points were.

Whole-Class Response:

Principle: Sometimes it is useful or even essential to get a response from every single pupil at the same time. This provides quick feedback to you as the teacher about the success of the relevant teaching and learning exchanges, identifies individuals who need further input and can help direct subsequent questions or exercises as you respond to the feedback you gain.

Practice: Mini-whiteboards are quick and allow for responses to multiple-choice questions as well as practice sentences, calculations and diagrams. Set the question, give some response time and then, on cue3,2,1 *Show Me*.... pupils show their answers at once. A simple A, B, C, D = 1,2,3,4 show of fingers also works very well for multiple-choice. **It's vital to engage with the responses and then to adjust your teaching accordingly, consolidating, re-explaining or moving on as appropriate.**

5. Working Memory and Cognitive Load Theory

Dylan William has described cognitive load theory as 'the single most important thing for teachers to know'. Grounded in a robust evidence base, cognitive load theory provides support for explicit models of instruction. The human brain can only process a small amount of new information at once, but it can process very large amounts of stored information. Information is processed in the working memory, here small amounts of information are stored for a very short time. The average person can only hold about four 'chunks' of information in their working memory at one time. The findings from this research lead to a number of implications for classroom practice:

- 1. Tailor lessons according to pupils' existing knowledge and skill and use worked examples.** When teaching new content to pupils without much pre-existing knowledge, teachers should provide pupils with lots of detailed, fully guided instruction and worked examples (this is a problem or task already solved or completed with every step fully explained). As the pupils' knowledge and skill increases, teachers should provide a mix of guided instruction and problem solving practice.

- 2. Gradually increase independent problem solving as pupils become more proficient.** Finally, as pupils become very proficient, teachers should provide minimal guidance and allow pupils to practise their skills with lots of problem-solving tasks. Some pupils will progress to independent problem-solving faster than others. To provide a need for greater independence, teachers will omit steps from a worked example or gradually give pupils fewer worked examples.

- 3. Cut out inessential information.** Pupils do not learn effectively when their attention is directed to inessential information. This could be in the content of the instruction or multimedia presentations. In this type of lesson, it is very common to use verbal explanations and written text at the same time. For example, the teacher might show their pupils a quote on a powerpoint slide, and also read the quote aloud at the same time. But presenting the same information in two forms is redundant – pupils’ working memories can become overloaded when they are required both to listen and to read at the same time. The best strategy to avoid overloading pupils’ working memories is for the teacher to either read the text out loud (without presenting it on the slide), or allow the pupils to read it themselves – not both. It is still okay for the teacher to read the text out loud and present a relevant image or diagram on the powerpoint slide at the same time. While providing the same information in both written and spoken forms can overload working memory, there are some strategies that can reduce the chance of this occurring:
 - The material can be presented in small chunks. For example, instead of presenting a quote as one big block of text on a powerpoint slide, the teacher could break the quote up into smaller sections of text across several slides.

 - The pupils, rather than the teacher, can direct the pacing of the presentation. When pupils can take their own time to process the information on one slide before moving onto the next, they are more likely to be able to process the information.

- 4. Simplify complex information by presenting it both orally and visually.** Pupils can process complex information more easily when it is presented in both oral and visual forms at the same time. When there are two or more sources of information that can only be understood in reference to each other, cognitive load can be managed by presenting information both orally and visually. This strategy increases the capacity of pupils’ working memories, creating more mental space for learning. Accompany diagrams with narrated explanations, not written explanations. This is based on the theory of **Dual Coding**. Research has shown that pupils learn new words more effectively through visuals with verbal information rather than with just verbal.

6. Differentiation

Differentiation applies to the level of support and scaffolding learners need to reach common, aspirational goals. Not all learners learn things at the same-rate – some will need more help, more time or more guidance. In practical terms, differentiation involves setting the same learning objectives and planning different ways to support pupils to get there.

Differentiation at Oakwood Primary School, can involve:

1. Setting common high-challenge learning objectives which are defined in detail, with success criteria. Differentiation involves teachers sharing learning objectives and success criteria with children so that they can:
 - assume greater responsibility for their own learning
 - measure their own success and achievement
 - identify more clearly their own learning needs
 - assist the teacher in meeting those needs
 - identify areas for improvement
2. Scaffolding planned with guided practice leading to independent practice. Scaffolding can of course be removed – it is a temporary support. Scaffolding could be in the form of distinct tasks or writing scaffolds for some pupils.
3. Providing appropriate help, possibly with different but carefully selected resources.
4. Providing distinct tasks.
5. Embedded tiering: this supports the organisation of a class where pupils progress at different rates, allowing everyone to find a suitable challenge level (seeking an optimal 80% success rate). We use *Tricky/Trickier/Trickiest*. Tricky being at age related expectations.
6. Different modes of questioning and feedback, tailored to push pupils forward from wherever they are.

7. Planning

We believe that there is ‘Room at the Top’ – meaning anyone can achieve success. We expect many children to become high-performers – not just a select few, who in the past were deemed ‘gifted’. Schools like Oakwood Primary School that focus on expecting high academic achievement from more children have a fairer system than schools that have a well-intentioned but flawed ethos of protecting children from cognitively demanding and academic work. For pupils to reach the highest standards they must all be taught how to do so and should learn that it is achieved through their own hard work and concentration, as well as great teaching.

When planning, teachers should consider the Zone of Proximal Development, *what is just beyond what my pupils know and can do?* This is to allow the creation of opportunities for pupils to think while respecting cognitive limits. Activities that require cognitive work that poses a moderate to high challenge should be planned for pupils to practice or apply their knowledge and understanding. Teachers should ensure they are confident in their own subject knowledge, and their understanding of class texts before planning lessons.

Good planning is essential to effective Learning and Teaching. The school plans in different stages:

- a. **National Curriculum** supported by schemes of work; ActiveLearn (Abacus for maths and Wordsmith for English); Twinkl, Plan Bee and PE champions.

- b. **Medium Term** plans which show objectives for every subject for the year. Knowledge organisers are used to outline the key knowledge that pupils should be taught to recall in topics.
- c. **Short Term** plans are the final part of the cycle. Teachers plan weekly to provide specific learning objectives, success criteria and outcomes for each session. Assessment opportunities are planned for and provide the formative evidence for future planning.
- d. **Experiences, trips and visits** are planned using the Learning Outside the Classroom plan, the evaluations of teachers who have been in the year group before. Experiences outside of the classroom provide a wide array of benefits to pupils' education. These experiences have the most impact when pupils are well prepared with the knowledge necessary to understand and appreciate the experience before the trip, and when time is given to reflecting on the experience through a follow-up lesson or activity, after the trip.

When planning work for children with special educational needs we use the information and targets set out in the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Please see SEND Policy.

Teachers in each year group should meet in the previous term to plan the content and delivery of the curriculum to their classes. They also hold a weekly planning meeting (Tuesday) in phases to assess and evaluate the week's learning and use those assessments to inform the teaching and learning for the following week. Teachers must work together to ensure experiences, trips and visits are well planned to allow adequate time to book transport and to notify parents.

For successful collaboration with colleagues, it is vital that resources are shared and tasks delegated and completed in a reasonable time to allow colleagues to evaluate and if necessary, make amendments to suit the pupils in their class. Giving lessons to teachers the day before increases workload and can affect the quality of teaching and learning.

8. Evaluation and Assessment

At Oakwood Primary School assessment is for and with pupils rather than 'done to' pupils. Good assessment and evaluation improves the quality of teaching and learning and as such is integral to the whole process. In conjunction with this policy please also read the Feedback and Marking Policy and the Assessment Policy. The school particularly values assessment as an on-going process and uses Assessment for Learning strategies. Assessment for Learning includes:

- Learning objectives and success criteria explained to pupils
- Staff to encourage pupils to self-assess and peer assess their work against the LO strips.