



Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Policy



The Stour Federation

1. THE BELONGING AND LEARNING CONNECTION



Belonging is not something else for us to do; it is everything we do. We believe belonging is the essential foundation for academic engagement and success, where every child, staff member, and family feels seen, heard, supported, and deeply connected.

We believe great teachers create the optimal conditions for learning. Our schools are inclusive by design, removing barriers to learning in an evidence-informed way.

Our schools are hubs for high-quality learning experiences that cultivate 21st-century skills, resilience, and a life-long zest for learning. We

prioritise holistic, deep, and joyful learning in low-arousal, sensory-aware environments, grounded in the belief that every individual deserves the opportunity to live 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). Our RESPECT values are fundamental to our approach.

2. OUR DRIVERS

Our approach to teaching and learning is driven by interconnected drivers aimed at achieving human flourishing for all:

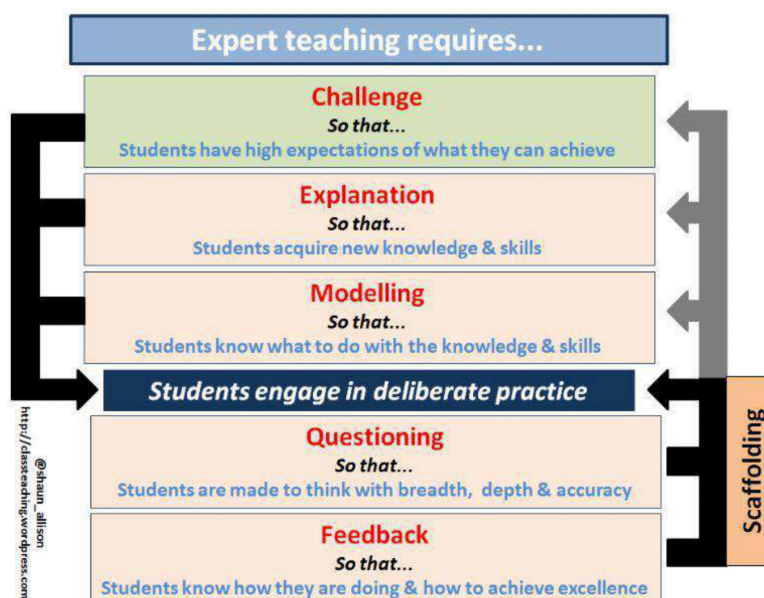


- **Wellbeing and Learning:** We know that happy children learn better and are more likely to keep learning on a lifelong continuum. Our schools foster a lifelong love of learning by ensuring that achieving children are happy and happy children achieve well. We recognise that happier teachers teach better; when our staff flourish, they strengthen their relationships with children and families and develop an authentic, confident teaching practice.
- **Human Intelligence and Artificial Intelligence:** We leverage technology to enhance learning while developing our six global dispositions (6Cs): character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking.
- **Equity-Equality Investments:** Happy school environments are inclusive by design and support the learning and wellbeing of disadvantaged children, directly contributing to improving educational inequities.
- **Systemness:** We share best practices for consistency across our Trust to ensure every

school is an optimal learning environment - one that is active, engaging, meaningful, socially interactive, and joyful.

3. OUR PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES

Our pedagogy is based on *Making Every Lesson Count* and an *Ethic of Excellence*. We believe that joy and engagement are important pedagogical vehicles to motivate better and deeper learning.



Challenge: Provide work that requires appropriate struggle and highest expectations to move children beyond their best, using scaffolds that gradually fade as competence builds.

Explanation: Clearly convey complex ideas, using metacognitive talk. It is vital to recognise that experiencing positive emotions like joy, enthusiasm, and curiosity contributes to the success of these explanations.

(Live) Modelling: Demonstrate procedures and thought processes, making implicit decision-making explicit and modelling what excellence looks like.

Practice: Ensure consistent retrieval and deliberate practice to build secure memory and move towards independence and excellence.

Feedback: Provide regular, individual, and whole-class feedback that demonstrates an active teacher presence and that children can act on.

Questioning: Use questioning to check for understanding, address misconceptions, and promote deeper thought.

4. DEEP LEARNING

We aim to empower children with the knowledge, skills, and 6 global dispositions needed to be a force for good.

- **Oracy:** A powerful tool for learning that allows children to find their voice.

- **Metacognition:** Consistently modelling the "plan, monitor, evaluate" cycle.
- **Intrinsic Motivation:** We believe the process of learning is one that should be enjoyed, and the learning experience matters as much - if not more - than academic results. We cultivate curiosity and interest because they are the strongest drivers of engagement.
- **Spirituality and SMSC:** Reflected in our commitment to imagination, creativity, and a sense of wonder.

5. EXPECTATIONS OF OUR COMMUNITIES

Teachers and Teaching Assistants: You are expected to live our Trust values, model the 6Cs, be positive role models, deliver high-quality, engaging teaching, and recognise the unique needs of every child by building positive relationships. Professional and personal development, collaboration, and contributing positively to wider school life are key.

Teachers retain primary responsibility for the progress of every child. Teachers must use the Class Vulnerable Map as a dynamic tool to deeply understand needs and barriers.

Parents: We build strong, collaborative partnerships, expecting parents to ensure regular attendance, punctuality, and to reinforce learning at home.

Children: Pupils are expected to come to school ready to learn, work hard, and show respect to themselves and others.

6. CURRICULUM PRINCIPLES

Our curriculum is meticulously designed to ensure deep learning. It is ambitious, relevant, broad, balanced, and accessible for all, aspiring beyond the National Curriculum.

1. **Integrated Wellbeing and Learning:** Our curriculum integrates wellbeing and learning, offering an inclusive, holistic and joyful education that develops academic, non-academic, life, and character skills to build resilience and intrinsic motivation.
2. **Four Learning Stages:** Learning is structured through four research-backed stages: Engage (stimulate curiosity), Develop (deepen understanding), Innovate (apply knowledge), and Express (reflect and celebrate).
3. **Reading at its Heart:** Reading is central, prioritising early literacy and fostering a love for books as 'windows' (new worlds), 'mirrors' (familiar experiences), and 'sliding doors' (immersive stories).
4. **Ambitious, Broad, and Balanced:** Our curriculum is ambitious, broad, and balanced, extending beyond National Curriculum minimums with rich 'beyond the classroom' experiences to foster high aspirations and academic excellence.
5. **Progression Model for Learning:** The curriculum acts as our progression model for wellbeing and learning, ensuring coherent, interlinked lessons that help children retain knowledge and make connections over time.
6. **Accessible for All:** The curriculum is accessible for all, with teachers committed to equality and making adaptations to ensure every child, including those most disadvantaged, with EAL or with SEND, can engage and progress. Some children have an bespoke curriculum as stated in their EHCP.
7. **Continually Evolving:** The curriculum is continually evolving, driven by teacher agency, growth mindset and ongoing teacher reflection to stimulate, challenge, and promote a love of learning.

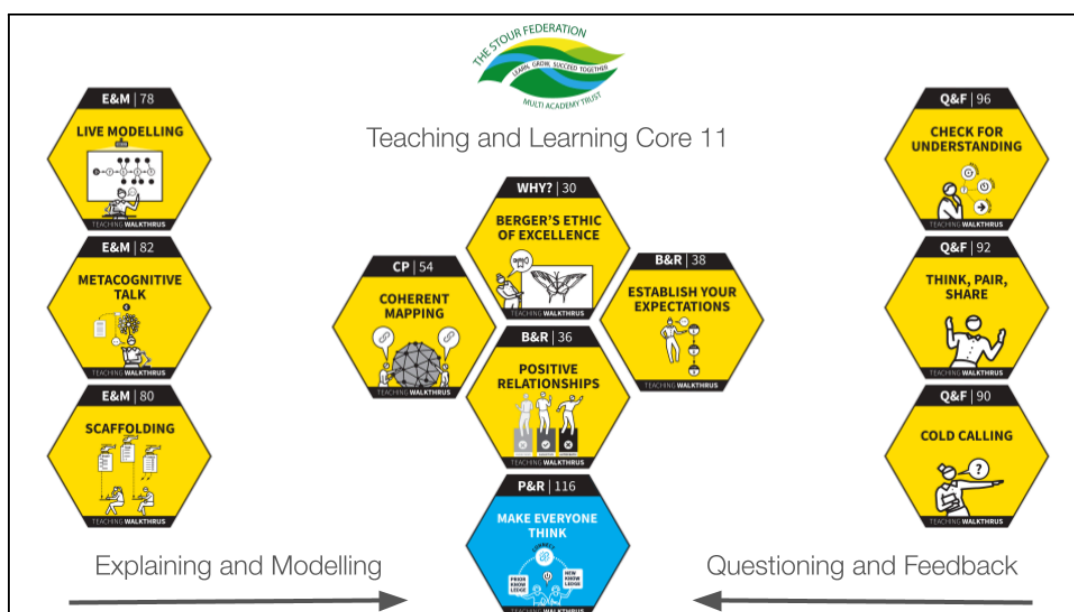
8. **Active Global Citizens:** We foster active local, national, and global citizens using the 6Cs framework to develop well-rounded individuals of moral and spiritual depth.
9. **Responsible and Values-Driven:** The curriculum is responsible for keeping children safe, promoting physical and mental health, and instilling fundamental British values (democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, tolerance) to prepare them as active citizens.
10. **Guardians of the Planet:** The curriculum empowers children to be guardians of the planet by providing climate education focused on nature, climate change, and sustainability.

7. PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE FOR JOYFUL LEARNING

Great teaching is the most important lever for improvement. In the Early Years and Key Stage 1, we skillfully balance direct instruction with play-based learning. Play-based learning is an effective method that brings together the many aspects of active and learner-centred pedagogies. We recognize that learning through play improves outcomes and supports the development of holistic skills across childhood, including cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and creative skills.

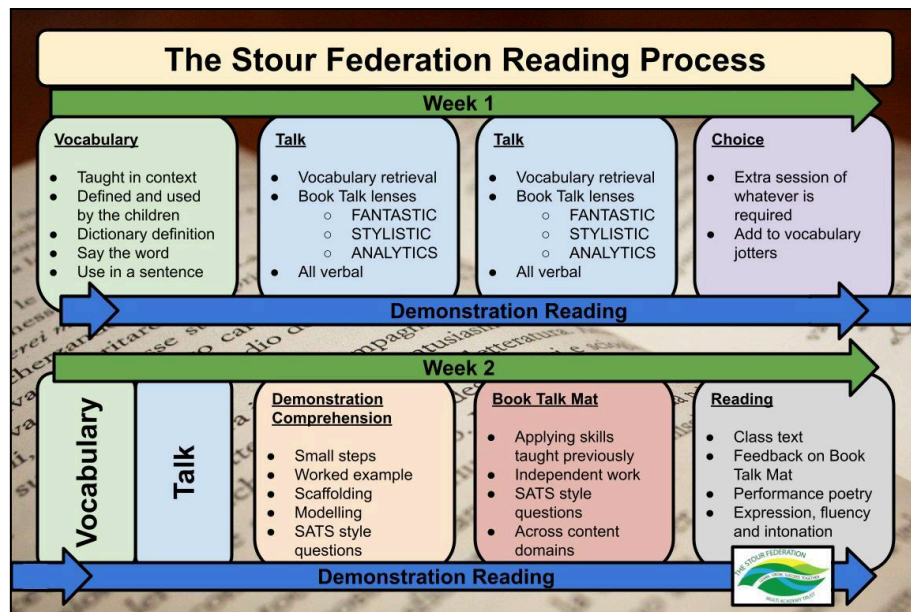
[Strong foundations in the Early Years and Key Stage 1](#) are the bedrock of lifelong wellbeing and academic success. We prioritise essential knowledge within a balanced curriculum and manageable workload, ensuring that deep and joyful learning is never left to chance. Children build fluency and memory through deliberate practice, while we skillfully use play-based learning as a pedagogical vehicle to develop language and executive function. Through responsive assessment and adaptive teaching, we proactively remove barriers, ensuring every child - regardless of their starting point - has an equitable opportunity to flourish.

Our teaching practice must be evidence-informed, ensuring teachers have deep subject and pedagogical content knowledge. Our classrooms are open and communication-friendly spaces where children are not afraid to admit mistakes. We understand that joy, enthusiasm, and engagement are not just “nice to have” - they are promoted by the school environment and the pedagogies we employ to ensure children flourish. We focus on careful information presentation, immediate success, deliberate and purposeful practice, and responsive teaching to address misconceptions. We use repeated quizzing for long-term learning and introduce desirable difficulties.



The Stour Federation has identified our [Core 11](#) key teaching strategies from the broader [Teaching WalkThrus](#) framework that have been identified as particularly high-impact and widely applicable. They include fundamental strategies that address common teaching challenges and contribute significantly to student learning.

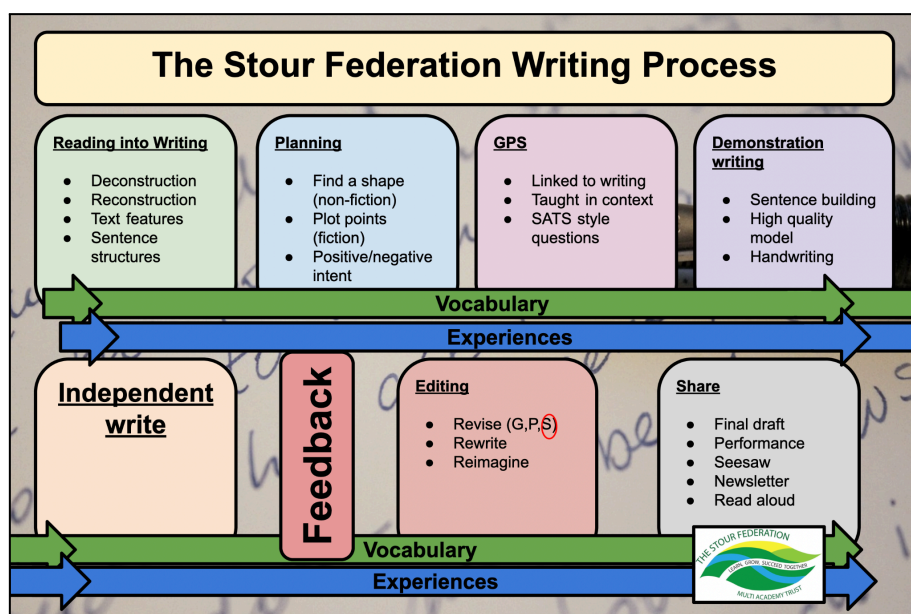
The Stour Federation has designed evidence-informed consistent processes for the teaching of reading, writing and maths, which are strongly recommended to all schools in the Academy Trust as they align with the Department for Education's [Reading Framework](#) and [Writing Framework](#), and Ofsted [subject report](#) and [research review](#) for maths.



Our reading curriculum and culture helps every child become a confident, enthusiastic reader, able to access the whole curriculum and reach their full potential. We believe reading is fundamental to success in all areas of life. Our approach is based on The [DfE Reading Framework](#), which views reading as a combination of language comprehension and word reading.

- **Developing Language Comprehension:** We immerse children in high-quality texts, including stories, poems, rhymes, and songs, from an early age. Daily opportunities for talk and exposure to varied language structures help children develop a broad vocabulary and understand what they hear and read.
- **Mastering Word Reading (Decoding):** Daily, explicit phonics instruction starts in Reception. Pupils learn grapheme-phoneme correspondences, blending, and segmenting. They practice these skills with decodable books that align with their phonics knowledge, building accuracy and automaticity. Handwriting is also linked to spelling.
- **Nurturing Fluency:** Consistent re-reading and teacher modelling of expressive reading help pupils develop reading speed and accuracy. This reduces the cognitive load, allowing them to focus on comprehension. As pupils become more fluent, their motivation to read increases.
- **Cultivating Reading for Pleasure:** We foster a love of reading by exposing children to a wide range of literature and providing time for independent reading. Teachers recommend books and create a culture where reading for pleasure is highly valued, as it's strongly linked to academic achievement and wider knowledge.
- **Targeted Support:** We provide timely and targeted interventions for pupils needing extra support. Well-trained adults offer additional daily practice to ensure all children keep pace, with early identification for those struggling with decoding or fluency.

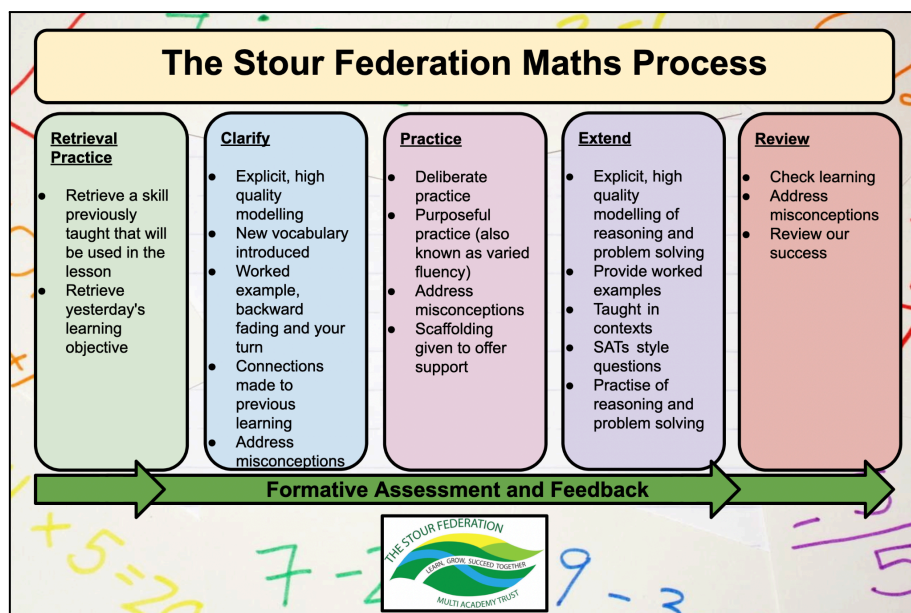
- **Reading Across the Curriculum:** Reading is integrated across all subjects, recognising that strong comprehension relies on broad background knowledge. All teachers support pupils in accessing subject-specific texts and vocabulary, contributing to overall reading development.



Our writing curriculum helps all children find their voice and express themselves clearly. Our approach is based on the [DfE Writing Framework](#), which sees writing as the combination of **transcription** (spelling and handwriting) and **composition** (vocabulary, grammar, and structuring ideas). Strong transcription skills free up working memory, allowing pupils to focus on their thoughts. We always start the writing journey by exploring high-quality texts, as reading and writing are deeply connected. Teachers use Colourful Semantics, Widgit symbol-supported writing frames and technology in creative and innovative ways to manage the cognitive load of sentence construction.

- **Reading into Writing:** Pupils deconstruct and reconstruct texts to understand different writing structures and author techniques. This provides models for their own writing and builds a broad reading repertoire.
- **Planning:** This vital phase focuses on generating and organizing ideas, setting clear goals, and considering the purpose and audience for their writing. This preparation helps manage the cognitive load of composition.
- **Transcription Mastery:** We prioritise daily, explicit handwriting instruction from Reception for automaticity, fluency, and legibility, covering posture and pencil grip. Systematic spelling instruction begins with phonics and progresses to orthography, morphology, and etymology. Dictation is a frequent tool for spelling application and reducing cognitive overload.
- **Composition Focus:** Mastering sentences is key to teaching composition, often starting with oral composition before writing. Grammar and Punctuation (GPS) are taught in context, enabling pupils to apply grammatical knowledge for clear meaning and precise vocabulary choices.
- **Demonstration Writing:** Teachers model their thought processes and writing strategies through sentence building and providing high-quality examples. This includes shared writing, where pupils collaborate with the teacher to construct texts.
- **Independent Write:** Pupils get ample opportunities to apply their developing skills independently, fostering self-reliance and consolidating their learning.

- **Revising and Editing:** These are distinct, challenging phases where pupils enhance content and structure (revising) and accuracy in grammar, punctuation, and spelling (editing). Regular, specific, and actionable feedback, often oral, is crucial for guiding improvements.
- **Share:** The writing process ends with sharing final drafts through various mediums like performances, Seesaw, newsletters, and read-alouds. This reinforces the purpose of writing and celebrates pupils' achievements as authors.



Our Maths Process at The Stour Federation aims to build mathematical fluency, reasoning, and problem-solving using evidence-based teaching. We guarantee manipulatives and scaffolds are independently accessible to model mathematical thinking.

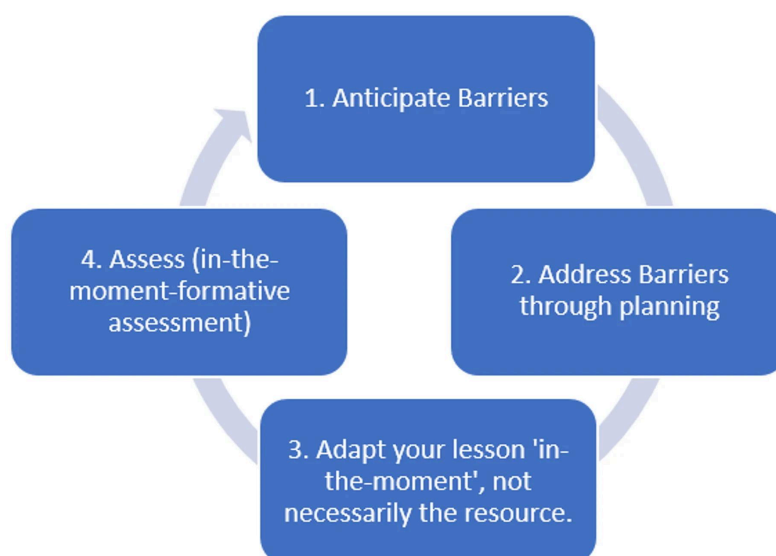
- **Retrieval Practice:** We regularly use retrieval practice to strengthen memory and promote automatic recall of facts and procedures. This frees up working memory for new learning.
- **Clarify:** New concepts are introduced through explicit instruction and high-quality modelling. We break down complex ideas into small, manageable steps and use worked examples with backward fading to address misconceptions.
- **Practice:** Children then engage in deliberate and purposeful practice to achieve automaticity and overlearning. This embeds procedural fluency in long-term memory and reduces cognitive overload.
- **Extend:** This phase focuses on reasoning and problem-solving. We explicitly model and practice these higher-order skills, applying them only after pupils are secure in the underlying facts and methods.
- **Review:** We check understanding, address persistent misconceptions, and provide formative assessment and feedback to continually refine learning.

Appendix 1 contains our 3 checklists (lesson observation, book scrutiny and inclusion) that our teachers have refined in Communities of Practice.

8. LESSON PLANNING

Teachers plan sequences of lessons using a "backwards design" approach, starting with clear learning outcomes. In the context of lean lesson planning this means two things:

- Starting planning with the question: what do I want ALL my children to have learnt by the end of the lesson?
- Spending more time on this activity than you think you should.



Teachers must plan **sequences of lessons** which clearly link into each school's long and medium term plans. Staff are encouraged to use slide presentations as their plans for sequences of lessons, utilising the 'presenter notes' section and amending slides as the lesson progresses. We call this 'Smart planning'.

Teachers must utilise **spacing** and **interleaving** approaches in their planning. Learning is better when two or more exposures to the information are separated in time (spaced apart) compared to when the same number of exposures occur back-to-back. The **spacing** of the sessions causes students to begin the process of forgetting the material, which lowers the retrieval strength. Therefore, when retrieval is induced at a later date, the material benefits from a larger boost in storage strength. **Interleaving** is where students practise all of the problems in an order that is more random and less predictable. The latter approach has been found to enhance learning and transfer. Interleaving naturally produces spacing.

A single **Learning Intention** needs to be precise and discussed with the class to frame their learning and ensure high expectations.

We recognize that the impact of a lesson comes from what happens next after a check for understanding. While great teachers plan well to pre-empt challenges, they must also adapt well, treating feedback as the engine room of adaptive teaching. Teachers utilise the [Check. Adapt](#) cycle to dynamically adjust instruction based on what pupils show them in the moment, rather than being fixed to a rigid pre-lesson plan.

The [Check. Adapt](#) tool in Appendix 2 offers an editable template designed specifically to support planning and professional development conversations.

9. DIFFERENTIATION AND ADAPTIVE TEACHING

Every teacher is a teacher of children with special educational needs. The needs of children

identified as having SEN will be met in the first instance through quality first teaching. Where possible, children may also be supported through additional adult support. Some children will require targeted or specialist scaffolds and/or support to make progress through the curriculum.

In our approach to teaching and learning, we distinguish between traditional **differentiation** and responsive adaptive teaching. While differentiation has historically involved pre-planned adjustments to curriculum and resources based on perceived pupil needs, this can lead to fixed activities and predetermined categories that may not fully address the evolving needs of learners. Such an approach can sometimes be less effective on its own, particularly for children who are struggling.

Adaptive teaching involves adjusting our teaching in real-time, based on the identified needs of all children as they emerge during a lesson. This requires continuous monitoring of pupil understanding and engagement, allowing teachers and teaching assistants to make informed decisions about methods, resources, and activities in the moment. This flexible approach recognises the dynamic nature of learning and ensures that the quality of adaptations genuinely supports individual progress. This responsive method has proven positive effects on both academic and non-academic outcomes, promoting a more effective and sustainable workload by focusing on responding to learning as it unfolds, rather than extensive pre-planning of multiple, separate activities.

Feature	Differentiation	Adaptive Teaching
Focus	Pre-planned variations	Real-time responsiveness
Timing	Primarily before the lesson	During the lesson
Grouping	Often relies on predetermined groups	More flexible, responsive to individual needs
Assessment	Used for initial planning	Integral for ongoing monitoring and adjustment
Materials & activities	Varied but often pre-selected	Adaptable based on pupil response
Teacher role	Primarily instructor/facilitator	Responsive expert, adjusting to pupil needs

To ensure instruction is responsive to all learners, teachers select from a menu of three responsive pathways based on evidence gathered from all learners:

Many misunderstand, so Pause and Fix: Change the provision for the whole class - re-teach using new examples or analogies, or model the thinking step-by-step.

Some are unsure, so Adapt Support: Chunk the task further, add temporary scaffolds (visual aids, checklists), or provide immediate verbal prompts.

Most understand, so Extend and Support: Push for higher-order reasoning, utilise peer teaching, or build links across topics.

High quality teaching benefits pupils with SEND

The 'Five-a-day' principle

The research underpinning the EEF's guidance report 'Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools' indicates that supporting high quality teaching improves outcomes for pupils with SEND. Five specific approaches—the 'Five-a-day' indicated below—are particularly well-evidenced as having a positive impact. Teachers should develop a repertoire of these strategies, which they can use daily and flexibly in response to individual needs, using them as the starting point for classroom teaching for all pupils, including those with SEND.

- 1 Explicit instruction**

Teacher-led approaches with a focus on clear explanations, modelling and frequent checks for understanding. This is then followed by guided practice, before independent practice.
- 2 Cognitive and metacognitive strategies**

Managing cognitive load is crucial if new content is to be transferred into students' long-term memory. Provide opportunities for students to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning.
- 3 Scaffolding**

When students are working on a written task, provide a supportive tool or resource such as a writing frame or a partially completed example. Aim to provide less support of this nature throughout the course of the lesson, week or term.
- 4 Flexible grouping**

Allocate groups temporarily, based on current level of mastery. This could, for example, be a group that comes together to get some additional spelling instruction based on current need, before re-joining the main class.
- 5 Using technology**

Technology can be used by a teacher to model worked examples; it can be used by a student to help them to learn, to practice and to record their learning. For instance, you might use a class visualiser to share students' work or to jointly rework an incorrect model.

More information about finding better ways to support pupils with SEND, including these five principles and more specialist interventions, can be found in the EEF's guidance report 'Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools'.

Accessible design

For teachers & schools

v1 APR25

✓ Do...	✗ Avoid...
- Use sans serif fonts (eg. Arial) - Use generous line spacing (eg. 1.5) - Use left-aligned text 	- Avoid styled fonts (eg. Comic Sans) - Avoid underlining, italics & upper case - Use bold sparingly DON'T DO THIS
- Use dark text on pale backgrounds - Keep handwriting legible and big enough to read Aa	Avoid coloured font on coloured, textured, or smudged backgrounds (esp red/green combos) Aa
- Use consistent slide/booklet design - Highlight key points & use hierarchy - Use whitespace liberally	- Avoid large blocks of text on slides - Remove redundant words and images (eg. decorative graphics) 
- Speak at a measured pace - Use economy of language, pauses for processing & repetition for memory 	- Avoid using ambiguous or complex language (eg. idioms) - Don't digress 
- Use simple & predictable pedagogical patterns (eg. I-We-You) - Chunk instructions 	- Don't force students to hold instructions in their heads - Reduce distractions For more, visit pepsmccrea.com 

To effectively implement adaptive teaching and ensure inclusive and excellent outcomes for all children, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), we integrate a consistent **"5-a-day" adaptive teaching approach**. This involves teachers planning and preparing for the needs of all learners in the class so they have the correct scaffolding and resources prepared before the lesson as part of their universal provision. Teachers and teaching assistants can then adapt as they go using practices such as activating prior knowledge, using targeted questioning, providing responsive feedback, and thoughtfully adapting instruction. By embracing these strategies, we ensure that every child, including those with SEND, is provided with appropriate support rather than reducing expectations, while maintaining access to challenging work.

Accessible design is a proactive mindset that enables us to create inclusive lessons that are usable for the widest range of children from the outset. This means ensuring our teaching is perceivable, understandable, and doable by all, thereby reducing the need for individual adaptations later. This approach strongly aligns with The Stour Federation's commitment to equity and inclusion, ensuring every child, including those with SEND, is valued and can engage fully with the curriculum.

By embedding accessible design from the start, we not only ease the adaptation burden on teachers but also benefit all children, fostering engagement and reducing frustration, complementing our adaptive teaching strategies to prepare necessary scaffolding and resources as universal provision.

Appendix 3 contains our 12 strands of inclusive teaching and classroom guidance.

10. IMPROVING TEACHING, LEARNING AND CURRICULUM

We foster continuous improvement through various strategies:

- **Teaching WalkThrus:** Used for instructional coaching and self-directed learning, creating a common reference point for shared understanding and rapid development.
- **Inclusive Teaching and Classroom Guidance:** leaders conduct Belonging Walks to ensure our inclusive aims are consistently met across the Trust.
- **Collective Teacher Efficacy:** We actively encourage staff collaboration and a shared belief that we directly impact children's learning, knowing this is the number one influence on pupil learning.
- **Coaching:** Underpins our strategic ambitions, fostering empowerment, collective growth, and relational trust through skillful dialogue and active listening, supporting staff development into future leaders.
- **Communities of Practice (CoPs):** Foster deep collaboration, sharing of ideas, and development of expertise across the Trust, boosting morale and driving innovation.
- **Digital Champions:** Empower staff to confidently integrate digital technology and AI into teaching, supporting colleagues and fostering innovation.
- **Regular Lesson Explorations:** Senior leaders conduct short focused observations with prompt feedback and return visits to drive rapid pedagogical improvement.
- **Pupil Book Study:** Used to evaluate the quality of education by studying pupil work and talking with children, providing insights into curriculum structure, knowledge acquisition, vocabulary, and feedback effectiveness.

11. SUBJECT LEADERSHIP

In The Stour Federation, we believe subject leaders are pivotal in driving our "North Star" of flourishing. Their primary role is to lead people and manage things, building relational trust and professional expertise across the school community to ensure every child experiences genuine growth. All teachers (excluding ECTs) are responsible for leading a curriculum subject as an individual or as part of a team, acting as role models and drivers of continuous improvement. Their role encompasses:

Strategic Direction and Intent: Developing an ambitious, coherently sequenced curriculum that ensures all learners, especially those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, acquire the knowledge and cultural capital needed for success.

Implementation and Teaching Quality: Ensuring teaching is effective and based on evidence-informed pedagogy, including the Trust's Core 11 strategies. Leaders must support colleagues by sharing subject-specific expertise to ensure no child is disadvantaged by ineffective teaching.

Impact and Achievement: Monitoring that all pupils - regardless of starting points - develop detailed knowledge, remember more, and can talk like experts through disciplinary literacy.

Inclusion and Equity: Championing an equity mindset that proactively removes barriers to learning, ensuring high ambition for all rather than a reduced curriculum for vulnerable learners.

Resource Management: Taking responsibility for the strategic purchase and organization of high-quality central resources to support teaching and learning.

APPENDIX 1: CHECKLISTS



The Stour Federation Observation Checklist

*Atul Gawande's **The Checklist Manifesto** argues that checklists should not be exhaustive "to-do" lists, but rather "killer items" that ensure we don't overlook the most critical, high-leverage actions in complex environments. In a primary school setting, where a million things happen at once, a Walkthru-aligned checklist helps an observer move past "vibe-based" feedback and into specific, evidence-based coaching.*

1. The Environment & Behaviour (The Foundation)

- ☐ **Thresholding & Greeting:** Does the teacher and TA greet pupils at the door to establish an immediate personal connection and energy for learning?
- ☐ **Signal for Attention:** Does the teacher use a consistent, non-verbal, or routine signal that results in tracking the speaker?
- ☐ **Positive Framing:** Is a 4:1 positive-to-correction ratio evident?
- ☐ **Routine Consistency:** Are transitions (e.g., moving to the carpet, handing out books) crisp and rehearsed?
- ☐ **Accessible by Design:** Are slides, resources and displays accessible by default and uncluttered?
- ☐ **Emotional Regulation:** Are Zones of Regulation visuals and common language actively used to model emotional regulation in context?

2. Explaining and Modeling (The Input)

- ☐ **Small Steps:** Is the new material broken down into digestible chunks to avoid cognitive overload?
- ☐ **Worked Examples/Models:** Is there a "Live Model" or "I Do/We Do/You Do" sequence visible alongside metacognitive talk?
- ☐ **Dual Coding:** Are verbal explanations supported by simple, clear visuals or diagrams?

3. Questioning and Feedback (The Bridge)

- ☐ **Cold Call:** Does the teacher ask the question first, pause (for processing time), then name a child (avoiding hands-up)?
- ☐ **Check for Understanding:** Does the teacher use techniques such as "Show Me" (mini-whiteboards) or "Think-Pair-Share" (turn-taking routines with sentence stems) to gather formative assessment data and identify nuanced misconceptions before moving on?
- ☐ **Process Feedback:** Is feedback focused on the *task* or the *strategy* rather than just "Well done"?

4. Practice and Retrieval (The Consolidation)

- ☐ **Success Breeds Joy:** Are all pupils achieving success through 'appropriate struggle'?
- ☐ **Deliberate Autonomy:** Are pupils given opportunities to take control of their learning pace or challenge, fostering the "personal satisfaction" that comes from intrinsic motivation?
- ☐ **Scaffolds:** Are there supports (word banks, vocabulary displays, sentence stems, dictation) for those who need them, and are they being faded.



The Stour Federation Book Scrutiny Checklist

Applying the principles of Atul Gawande's The Checklist Manifesto, which prioritises "killer items" that are precise, binary, and efficient, we can transform our book scrutiny from a generic overview into a high-leverage tool for quality assurance. Drawing on our Teaching, Learning and Curriculum (TLC) Policy, the Pupil Book Study framework by Alex Bedford, and Ofsted workbook scrutiny indicators, here is a "killer" checklist for The Stour Federation.

1. Presentation & Professional Standards (The Foundation)

- ☐ **Professional Frontage:** Is the front cover well-presented and correctly labelled?
- ☐ **Ethic of Excellence:** Does the overall presentation show care, attention, pride and high expectations?
- ☐ **Foundation Standards:** Are LIs and dates present and spelt correctly in all books (including those with higher needs), adapted where necessary?
- ☐ **Policy Alignment:** Is the work marked and presented according to the Trust's Feedback policy?

2. The Learning Journey (Sequencing & Progress)

- ☐ **Coherent Sequencing:** Is there evidence that knowledge is logically sequenced, moving incrementally from simpler/concrete concepts to complex/abstract ones?
- ☐ **Visible Progress:** Is there clear evidence of progress in the quality of work and depth of understanding since the beginning of the academic year?
- ☐ **Retrieval Practice:** Is there evidence of "low-stakes" retrieval or practice opportunities that help solidify learning in long-term memory?

3. Feedback & Pupil Response (The Dialogue)

- ☐ **Targeted Praise:** Does feedback demonstrate active teacher presence by identifying specific strengths and include targeted praise that reinforces that the work is valued.
- ☐ **Explicit Guidance:** Does feedback provide explicit, actionable guidance on how the pupil can elevate their work to meet high standards?
- ☐ **The "Debrief" (Pupil Response):** Have pupils been given visible opportunities to revisit, correct, or deepen aspects of work they previously misunderstood?

4. Inclusion by Design (The Lived Experience)

- ☐ **Accessible Layout:** Do the teacher's comments and the resources provided (including technology) follow Accessible Design principles?
- ☐ **Scaffold Fading:** Is there evidence of temporary scaffolds (adult support, word banks, sentence stems) being used and then intentionally faded as the pupil moves towards independence?
- ☐ **Equitable Challenge:** Is there evidence that the most vulnerable learners (SEND/Disadvantaged) are accessing the same ambitious curriculum as their peers (with appropriate support and adaptations), rather than simplified "low ability" tasks?



The Stour Federation Inclusion Checklist

*This checklist focuses on the high-leverage enablers of predictability, emotional safety, and cognitive accessibility. Based on Atul Gawande's *The Checklist Manifesto*, a high-leverage checklist must not be an exhaustive to-do list; instead, it should focus on the critical, binary actions that, if missed, would cause the inclusive "tapestry" to unravel. By focusing on these high-impact routines, we ensure that our classrooms are perceivable, understandable, and doable for our most vulnerable learners, truly embodying our commitment to "unreasonable hospitality".*

1. The Inclusive Environment (The Conditions for Belonging)

- ☐ **Visual Timetable Actively Referenced:** Is the timetable on display and actively referenced during transitions?
- ☐ **Sensory-Aware Layout:** Are surfaces and storage areas decluttered to reduce visual overload and overstimulation?
- ☐ **Visual Topic Scaffolds:** Do wall displays feature relevant visual models and key subject vocabulary incorporating Widgit symbols to support comprehension and independent retrieval?
- ☐ **Environmental Navigation:** Is classroom storage clearly labelled using both Widgit symbols and text to support independent retrieval?
- ☐ **Designated Calming Space:** Is there a calming area equipped with sensory tools and Zones of Regulation visuals that pupils can access to self-regulate?
- ☐ **Executive Function Support:** Are Now/Next/Then boards or mini-timetables on desks and actively referenced to support transitions?

2. Adaptive Input (Smashing Down Barriers to Instruction)

- ☐ **Chunked Instructions:** Are complex tasks broken down into small, digestible steps with visual supports?
- ☐ **Accessible Vocabulary (Widgit):** Are topic-specific keywords explicitly taught and supported by Widgit symbols or visuals?
- ☐ **Live Modelling (Visualiser/Manipulatives):** Is the teacher using a visualiser or concrete manipulatives to make abstract thinking visible and "doable"?

3. Scaffolding & Agency (The Bridge to Independence)

- ☐ **Check for Understanding:** Does the teacher use mini-whiteboards or hinge questions to verify the understanding of every child before moving on?
- ☐ **"Least Help First" Hierarchy:** Does the TA follow the 'Least Help First' hierarchy (Wait time → Prompt → Clue → Model) to avoid learned dependency?
- ☐ **Scaffolds as a "Normal Way of Working":** Are word banks, sentence stems, working walls or digital tools available to the whole class to remove the stigma of "different" provision?
- ☐ **Assistive Access:** Do pupils utilise physical supports (e.g., pencil grips, slopes, wobble cushions), innovative technology, or alternative recording methods to independently demonstrate their learning and bypass barriers?

APPENDIX 2: EEF CHECK. ADAPT PLANNING AND FEEDBACK TOOL



Teacher feedback to improve pupil learning

Check. Adapt

Select from a menu of approaches to move learning forward, responding to pupils' understanding.



Scan to access our guidance on giving effective feedback

Check

understanding of all learners

- Most misunderstand, so **pause and fix**
- Some are unsure, so **adapt support**
- Most understand, so **extend and support**

Adapt

to move learning forward

- Re-teach (not repeat)**
 - Explain differently
 - Use new examples or analogies
 - Model the task or your thinking step by step
- Address misconceptions**
 - Ask diagnostic questions
 - Compare or vote on answers
 - Ask pupils to explain their thinking
- Give immediate feedback**
 - Feedback to individuals or groups, verbal or written
 - Use prompts or cues
 - Give time to improve
- Add or remove scaffolding**
 - Give verbal, visual or written help
 - Share a checklist or template
 - Show an example or model
- Support understanding**
 - Link to prior knowledge
 - Use text or images to help memory
 - Connect to real life examples
- Adjust task or challenge**
 - Clarify or chunk challenge
 - Set one short, clear goal
 - Guide or model steps to follow
- Extend understanding**
 - Ask for reasoning or explanation
 - Use peer teaching
 - Build links across topics
- Use flexible groupings**
 - Group pupils by skill or understanding
 - Pair pupils for peer support
 - Use targeted teaching assistant support
- Adapting future lessons**
 - Anticipate pupils' needs
 - Pre-teach key concepts
 - Plan for gaps or misconceptions



Teacher feedback to improve pupil learning

Check. Adapt

Use this editable template to note down suitable approaches.



Scan to access our guidance on giving effective feedback

Check

understanding of all learners

- Most misunderstand, so **pause and fix**
- Some are unsure, so **adapt support**
- Most understand, so **extend and support**

Adapt

to move learning forward

- How will I re-teach this differently?
- What misconceptions need fixing?
- What will I check before moving on?
- What scaffold or prompt will help?
- How will I support and build understanding?
- How will I check it's worked?
- How will I extend learning?
- How will I support others?
- How will I recognise and celebrate secure understanding?

