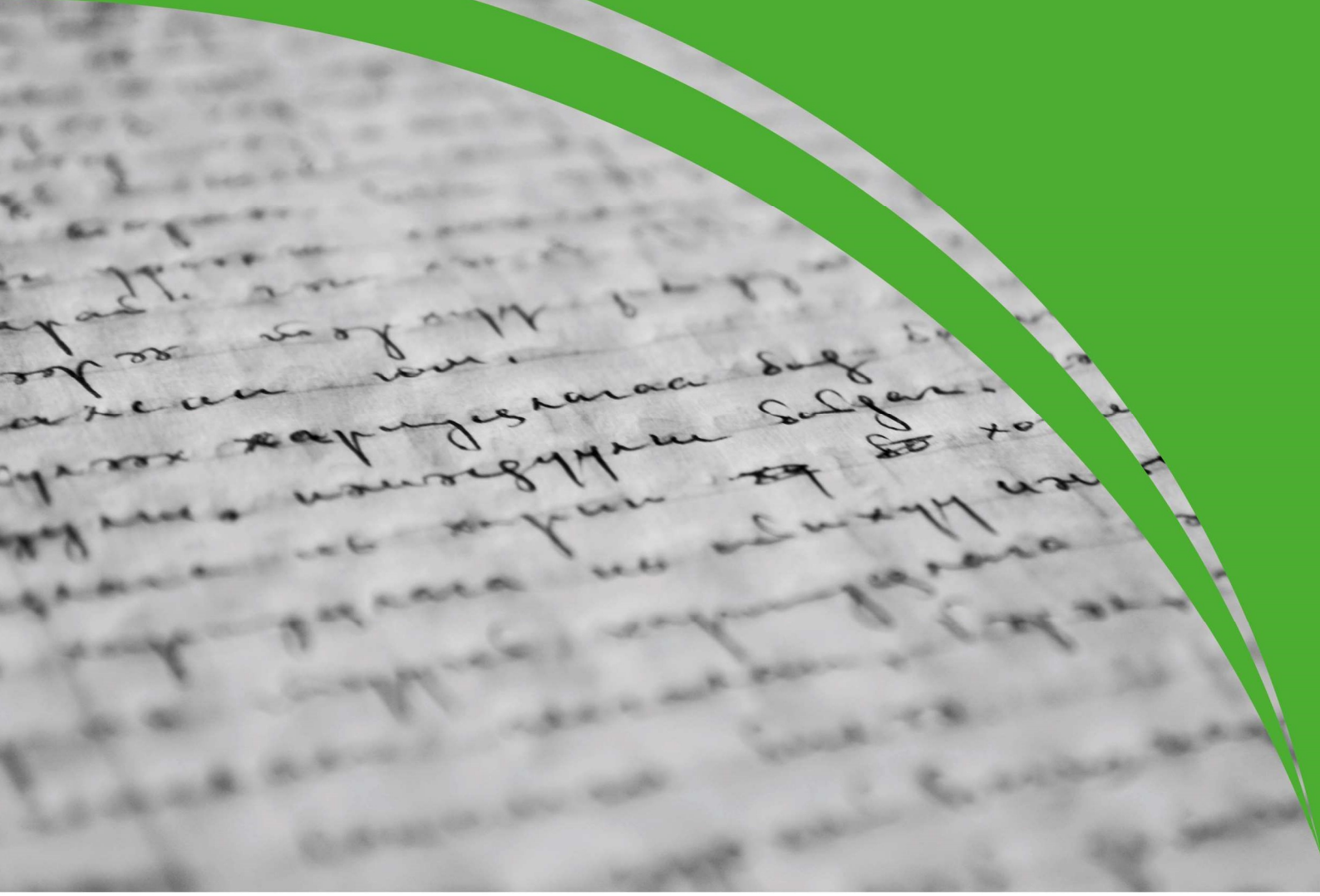

Teaching & Learning Policy

School Name:	The White Horse Federation		
Version No:	9	**Ratified date:**	September 2025
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A Shared Approach to Teaching and Learning – Back to Basics: A Pedagogical Model

Contents

List of policy amendments

Version	Date	Page document	Change	Origin of change e.g. Change in legislation, Policy review.
9.0	September 2025	2	Amendment: Added reference to the Simple Model of Teaching by Goodrich, Mccrea & Lovell (2023)	Policy review, model links with Steplab (new CPDL platform)
9.0	September 2025	3	Amendment: Added reference in the Lesson Design section to the Simple Model of Teaching by Goodrich, Mccrea & Lovell (2023)	Policy review, model links with Steplab (new CPDL platform)
9.0	September 2025	5	Amendment: Added description of Steplab as TWHF chosen professional learning platform	Introduction of a new system.
9.0	September 2025	7	New: Section added referencing new Pedagogical Fundamentals	Policy review; added more guidance on what effective teaching entails
9.0	September 2025	7	New: Section added to briefly outline the TWHF **approach to c**ontinuous Professional Development and Learning (CPDL)	Policy review; more guidance on TWHF CPDL offer for developing T&L.
9.0	September 2025	9	Amendment: 2 additional points added to the Other Key Factors Influencing Teaching and Learning section (Creating culture & Securing attention)	Policy review; brings approach in line with Steplab
9.0	September 2025	11	New: Appendix display Fundamentals for each of the T&L principles.	Policy review; added more guidance on what effective teaching entails

Introduction

At The White Horse Federation, learning and teaching are the foundation of our mission. We aim to inspire every student to set ambitious goals, strive for personal excellence, and develop the confidence and skills to thrive both within and beyond the classroom. In an ever-evolving world, we are committed to creating vibrant, inclusive learning environments that nurture adaptable, resilient, and creative thinkers.

This Teaching and Learning Policy outlines the core principles and expectations that guide our approach to high-quality teaching across the Trust. Grounded in the Teachers' Standards, it provides a shared vision for all staff—new and existing—ensuring consistency, clarity, and a common language for professional development, collaboration, and monitoring.

Our approach is informed by three key evidence-based frameworks:

- Making Every Lesson Count by Shaun Allison and Andy Tharby (2015), which identifies six core principles of effective teaching rooted in practical classroom experience.
- Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction (2012), which draws on cognitive science, the practices of

expert teachers, and scaffolding strategies to support deep learning and mastery.
- The Simple Model of Teaching by Goodrich, Mccrea & Lovell (2023), which offers a clear, research-informed framework for understanding and improving teaching practice through a focus on curriculum, explanation, practice, and assessment.

Together, these frameworks underpin our commitment to excellence in teaching and learning.

Key Features of the Teaching and Learning Policy

Curriculum design

A detailed, structured curriculum is mapped out across all phases, ensuring continuity and supporting transition. Fundamental skills and knowledge are secured first.
The Ofsted Framework has a focus on a 'broad and balanced curriculum' where there is the expectation that manageable steps for each subject are mapped meticulously and with reason across the primary phase to allow pupils to build on previous skills / knowledge purposefully and with evidence of 'knowing more and remembering more'.

Lesson design

Effective lesson design begins with the skilled practitioner's 'craft knowledge' (Wilson, 2012)—a deep understanding of individual learners, class dynamics, school culture, and the wider community context. This professional judgment, informed by experience and evidence of what works, is central to planning meaningful and impactful learning experiences.

Lesson planning should be guided by this contextual knowledge alongside the principles outlined in this Teaching and Learning Policy. To support this, Allison and Tharby's audit tool (2015, pp. 269–272) offers a practical framework for evaluating and enhancing lesson design through the six pedagogical principles detailed below.

In addition, lesson design should reflect the insights from:

- Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction, which emphasise clear explanations, guided practice, and regular review to support cognitive load and long-term retention.
- The Simple Model of Teaching, which encourages teachers to focus on four key components—curriculum, explanation, practice, and assessment—to ensure lessons are coherent, purposeful, and effective.

By integrating these models with professional expertise, teachers across The White Horse Federation can design lessons that are both evidence-informed and responsive to the needs of their learners.

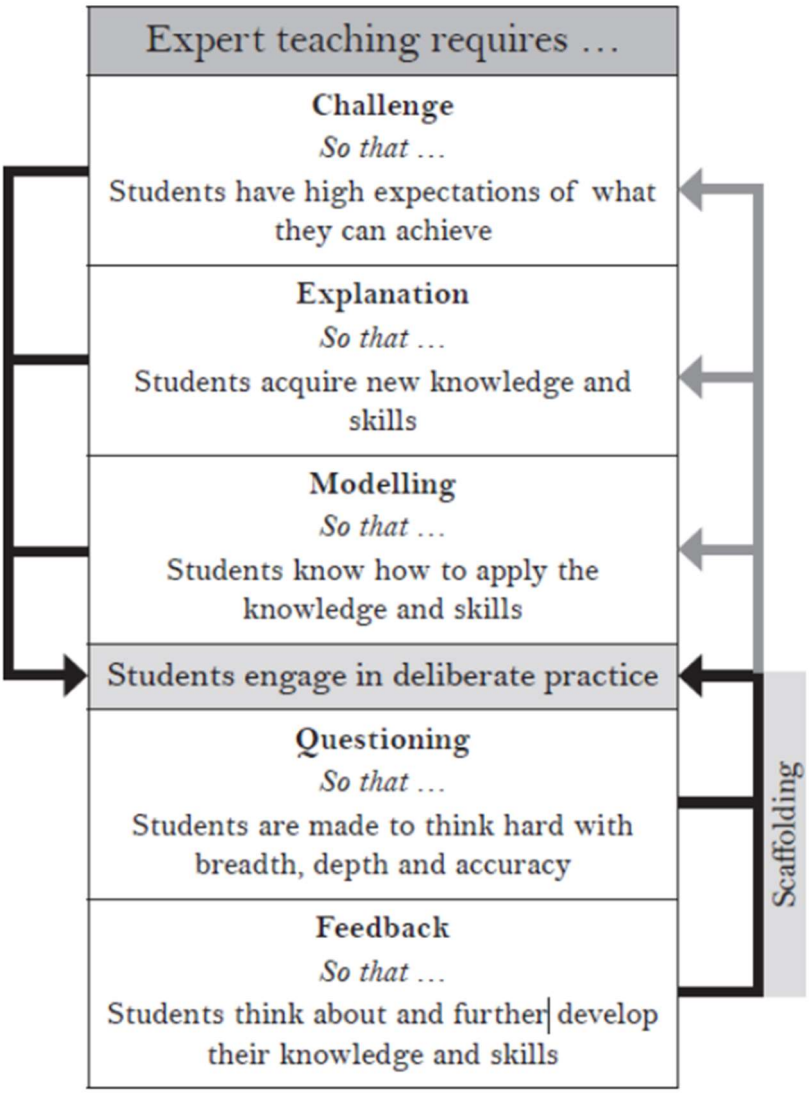
High Expectations and Adaptive Teaching

Taking a mastery approach every student works towards the same goal. Every pupil is required to answers that demand critical thinking. Students' difficulties and misconceptions are identified through immediate formative assessment and addressed with rapid intervention. This is an inclusive approach to individual learners' needs, ensuring language, questioning, concepts and ultimately learning is accessible to all.

Fluency comes from deep knowledge and practice. Explicit learning is important in the journey towards fluency and embedding. All tasks are chosen and sequenced carefully. Class work (and homework when appropriate) provide 'intelligent practice', which helps to develop deep and sustainable knowledge.

The 6 Pedagogical Principles Model

The Teaching and Learning policy is encapsulated by the following diagram, designed by Shaun Allison and Andy Tharby (2015). Teachers are clear that their role is to teach in a precise way which makes it possible for all pupils to engage successfully with tasks at the expected level of challenge:



How is this achieved and what it looks like in the classroom

While there is no single, prescribed formula for effective teaching, a wealth of research-informed strategies and techniques exists to support and enhance classroom practice. At The White Horse Federation, we recognise that teaching is a creative and adaptive profession—one that relies on professional judgment, responsiveness, and innovation.

The six pedagogical principles outlined in this policy represent core elements of effective teaching. However, their implementation is not rigid or uniform. Instead, teachers are encouraged to apply these principles flexibly, tailoring their use to the subject matter, lesson objectives, and the specific needs of their learners. This approach empowers teachers to present concepts in ways that are both engaging and impactful.

To support the development and refinement of teaching practice, TWHF uses Steplab—a professional learning platform that enables instructional coaching, deliberate practice, and evidence-informed development. Steplab helps ensure that our approach to teaching is not only consistent across the Trust but also continually improving through structured feedback and targeted support.

These principles are designed to provide a shared foundation for high-quality teaching, while allowing space for individuality, creativity, and contextual adaptation. They serve as a guide for planning, reflection, and professional growth, aligned with the frameworks of Allison & Tharby, Rosenshine, and Goodrich et al.

1. Challenge

With the mastery learning model, rather than prejudging potential outcomes and stifling expectations by setting a host of differentiated learning objectives based on prior attainment, have a single challenging learning objective and then think about what each individual student needs to achieve it via the use of the 6 teaching principles.

- What do they struggle with?
- What switches them off?
- How much and what type of support do they respond well to?

All students may have different starting points but should aspire to the learning objective and a teacher is responsive in helping them to work towards is, for example:

- focused questioning
- adult/ peer help with starting their sentences
- some may need to do a draft
- some will need apparatus to help
- some will reach the objective and need to be challenged further

It is about equity of opportunity, not all getting exactly the same to reach the objective. The aim is to keep students in the challenge zone, or as Vygotsky describes, the ‘zone of proximal development’

2. Explanation

Three key principles should guide explanations:

1. Plan in to schemes of learning how to **link to and build on something already known.**
   - Begin each lesson with a short review of previous learning (Rosenshine, 2012)

2. Allow for the **limitations of the working memory** when asking students to take on board new information, giving instructions, asking them to sort key bits of information etc.
   - Present new information in small steps with student practice after each step (Rosenshine, 2012)

3. Where possible try to make the **abstract concrete** – think about and plan, how to make abstract ideas make sense:
   - Drawing diagrams; demonstrations in science; sharing and discussing images; taking the learning outside etc.
   - Provide scaffolds for difficult tasks (Rosenshine, 2012)
   - Direct explicit instruction (Kirschner, Sweller, Clarke, 2006)

3. Modelling

Explain the key ideas, then model how to do it / what to do with it. This falls in to two main categories:

1. **Model the creation of products/procedures**. For example: write an essay, *show* pupils how to do it and articulate your thinking. Write it out on the board and discuss how/why you are doing each step as you go. Question them on what is being done. Explain, out loud, thought processes. If mistakes are made, point them out.
2. **Deconstruct expert examples and use worked examples** – have an excellent finished product and share it, discuss why it is good.

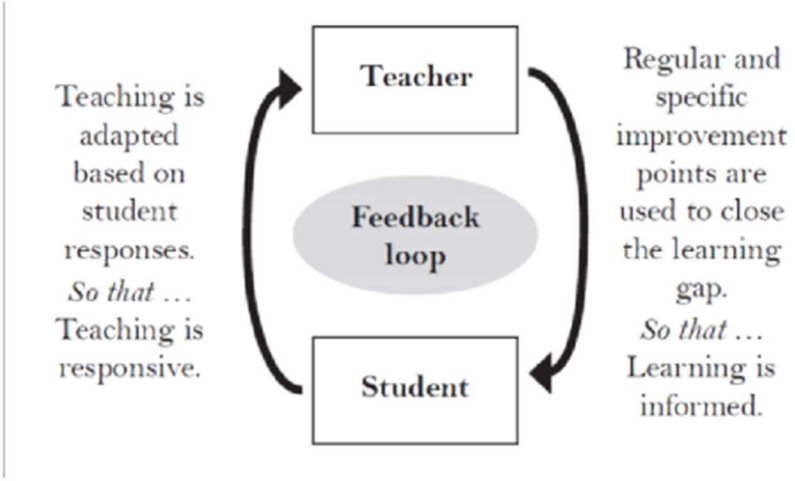
4. Practice

Plan in time, during the lesson and over a series of lessons, for students to practice using new knowledge and skills. Consider the type of practice and its purpose:

1. Practice for fluency and long-term retention – repeating things in order to master them; coming back to things in subsequent lessons etc.
2. Deliberate 'intelligent' practice at the outer reaches of ability – allowing students to make connections and see patterns. Practising at the outer reaches of ability means students will have to layer skills and use them with agility.
   - Guide student practice (Rosenshine, 2012)
   - Require and monitor independent practice (Rosenshine, 2012)

5. Feedback

Plan in how you will give feedback during/after lessons and – for this feedback to be meaningful -how you will allow students to respond this feedback. Feedback is a two-way process and the teacher should use the students' feedback to inform future planning.



Moreover, it is our goal to nurture independent and agile learners who have the skills to be successful in an increasingly globalised and rapidly changing world. To achieve this, we must equip students to be critical and reflective learners in their own right by 'learning how to learn'. Students need to be engaged in their own learning, be part of the creation of their 'next steps' and have the opportunity to assess their own work and that of their peers in a meaningful and useful manner.

- Engage students in weekly and monthly review (Rosenshine, 2012)
- Guide student practice

6. Questioning

Questioning drives thinking. Some questions can be planned for, but some should be responsive to what is happening in the lesson. When considering planned questions, they should be to:

1. Check for understanding – i.e. hinge questions that students should be able to answer at a certain point in the lesson, before they move on.
   - Ask a large number of questions and check the responses of all students,
   - Check for understanding (Rosenshine, 2012)
2. Provoke deeper thinking
3. Increase the ratio of participation and thinking of all students

The Pedagogical Fundamentals

To support the effective enactment of our six pedagogical principles, The White Horse Federation has identified six key actionable elements—referred to as fundamentals—for each principle. These fundamentals serve as practical, observable behaviours that help teachers translate theory into impactful classroom practice.

While we recognise that teaching is not a formulaic process, these fundamentals provide clarity and consistency across our Trust. They are designed to support professional growth, guide lesson planning, and inform instructional coaching. Importantly, they allow for flexibility and creativity in how they are applied, depending on subject, phase, and context.

Each set of fundamentals is:

- Evidence-informed, drawing from research and best practice.
- Aligned with our core frameworks: Making Every Lesson Count, Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction, and The Simple Model of Teaching.
- Integrated into Steplab, enabling focused coaching, deliberate practice, and developmental feedback.

By embedding these fundamentals into our professional learning culture, we ensure that all teachers—regardless of experience—have a clear, actionable pathway to refine their craft and improve outcomes for students.

For a list of fundaments for each pedagogical principle alongside a detailed description see Appendix 1.

Continuous Professional Development and Learning (CPDL)

At The White Horse Federation, we believe that high-quality CPDL is the single most powerful lever for improving outcomes and narrowing the disadvantage gap. Investing in teacher development is not only a moral imperative—it is a strategic priority that underpins our commitment to excellence in teaching and learning across all schools in the Trust.

We recognise that great teaching is the result of sustained, deliberate practice supported by expert feedback and reflection. That's why our approach to CPDL is:

- Evidence-informed, drawing on the latest research in cognitive science, pedagogy, and instructional coaching.
- Collaborative, fostering a culture of shared learning, peer support, and professional dialogue.
- Sustained and embedded, moving beyond one-off training events to ongoing cycles of development and refinement.

To support this, TWHF uses Steplab, a professional learning platform that enables structured instructional coaching and deliberate practice. Steplab allows us to:

- Break down complex teaching strategies into manageable, actionable steps.
- Provide targeted feedback and coaching aligned with our pedagogical principles and fundamentals.
- Track progress over time, ensuring that CPDL leads to measurable improvements in classroom practice.
- Create consistency in professional development across the Trust, while allowing for contextual flexibility.

Through Steplab, teachers engage in high-leverage coaching cycles that focus on the most impactful aspects of teaching. This ensures that every teacher, regardless of experience, has access to personalised, meaningful development that directly benefits their students—especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

At TWHF, CPDL is not an add-on; it is embedded in our culture. It is how we grow, how we improve, and how we ensure that every child receives the highest quality education possible.

Other Key Factors Influencing Teaching and Learning

While pedagogical principles and lesson design are central to effective teaching, several additional factors play a vital role in shaping the learning experience. These elements help create the conditions in which great teaching can thrive and learners can flourish.

1. The Role of the Environment

The physical, social, and emotional environment of the school and classroom is foundational to effective learning. Drawing on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, we recognise that students must feel safe, valued, and supported before they can fully engage with learning.

The environment should reflect and reinforce the learning journey. Classrooms should be thoughtfully organised and visually stimulating, with working walls and displays that evolve alongside the curriculum. These should serve as tools for:

- Reinforcing key explanations and concepts
- Offering additional challenge and extension
- Showcasing model examples
- Presenting probing questions and prompts
- Supporting the hook or stimulus for learning
- Providing access to relevant resources

A well-designed environment supports not only cognitive development but also emotional wellbeing and engagement.

2. The Role of Parents, Carers and Family Members

Parents, carers, and family members bring invaluable insights into their children's strengths, interests, aspirations, and challenges. Meaningful communication and collaboration between home and school is essential to understanding individual needs and celebrating progress.

At TWHF, we prioritise strong partnerships with families, recognising their role in reinforcing learning, supporting wellbeing, and contributing to a positive school culture. Praise and recognition aligned with school rewards policies help strengthen these connections and build a shared commitment to student success.

3. A Values-Based Organisation

All schools within The White Horse Federation are committed to a Values-Based Education approach. Values such as resilience, responsibility, and collaboration are explicitly taught, modelled, and embedded into daily school life.

These values shape behaviour, influence attitudes, and provide a framework for personal development. Staff play a key role in modelling these values, creating a culture that supports both academic achievement and social-emotional growth. This approach equips students with the skills and dispositions needed to succeed in school and beyond.

4. Creating Culture

A positive school and classroom culture is essential for effective teaching. Culture encompasses the shared beliefs, routines, and expectations that shape how students behave, interact, and engage with learning.

At TWHF, we believe that culture is built deliberately—through consistent routines, clear expectations, and positive relationships. Teachers play a central role in establishing a culture of high expectations, mutual respect, and purposeful learning. This culture supports focus, motivation, and a sense of belonging for all learners.

5. Securing Attention

Learning cannot begin without attention. Drawing on The Simple Model of Teaching, we recognise that securing and sustaining student attention is a prerequisite for effective instruction.

Teachers use a range of strategies to capture attention—from clear signalling and engaging hooks to structured transitions and purposeful questioning. Attention is also supported by reducing cognitive overload, maintaining pace, and creating emotionally safe spaces where students feel confident to participate.

By intentionally securing attention, teachers lay the groundwork for deep engagement and meaningful learning.

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Appendix 1: TWHF Fundamental Elements of Effective T&L

CHALLENGE

Fundamental element	1. High Expectations for All	2. Thinking harder	3. Awe and Wonder	4. Questioning to Extend Thinking	5. Productive Struggle	6. Not limiting expectations
Description	The teacher communicates a belief that all students are capable of high-level thinking and achievement and therefore does not set bars limiting expectations of pupils. They consistently reinforce the idea that effort, strategy, and persistence—not ability alone—drive success, and they avoid capping potential by pre-judging what students can handle.	The teacher selects and designs learning activities that require students to think deeply, make connections with prior knowledge and grapple with complex ideas. Tasks move beyond recall to involve reasoning, analysis, problem-solving, and creativity, ensuring cognitive demand is appropriate and meaningful.	The teacher is inspiring their students with fascination, awe and wonder. Encouraging curiosity and a deep desire to understand the world around them. They engage the students in the learning through narratives, visual aids, concrete examples and different media.	The teacher uses open-ended, layered, and follow-up questions to push students' thinking further. They prompt students to justify answers, consider alternatives, and reflect on their reasoning, creating rich dialogue and intellectual stretch.	The teacher ensures learning take places just outside of student's comfort zones and they build a classroom culture where challenge is expected and productive struggle is valued. They normalise mistakes as learning opportunities and promotes resilience even when tasks are difficult or uncomfortable. This GROWTH MINDSET enables pupils to grow out of their comfort zones and experience high challenge but low stress.	The teacher supports students with just enough guidance to help them succeed without lowering the bar. They carefully model, prompt, or break down tasks in ways that make challenging content accessible, gradually reducing support as students gain independence. The teacher ensures that they make adaptations that stretch pupils learning at all levels.

EXPLANATION

Fundamental element	1.Clarity	2. Connection to Prior and Future Knowledge	3. The use of Models, Analogies and Misconceptions	4. Minimal Extraneous load	5. Agile instruction informed by AFL	6. Summarisation and Synthesis
Description	The teacher's explanation has clear and precise language which reduces and avoids unnecessary information. The teacher's explanation is deliberate and pitched to enable learners to be successful in their learning/practice. Across the lesson, the teacher presents information in a logical and concise way and is well paced to suit the learners needs.	Learning is explicitly linked to prior knowledge and builds on this. Students are given opportunities to make links between new learning and prior learning which in turn will develop their schema The teacher's explanation is linked to the wider (real) world and learners are provided with opportunities to establish relevance and meaning within their own context.	The most relevant information is prioritised and is presented in a relevant format that suits the context and learner. Model examples and scaffolds are used to support the explanation. Macro and micro models are used to explain the abstract/unseen. Mis-conceptions are explicitly addressed and avoided. The limitations of model/analogies are discussed.	Extraneous load (the level of difficulty contained within the presentation of information) is effectively managed by: Ensuring minimal requirement for learners holding information in their heads to complete a task. Sources of information are integrated into the same place (avoiding split-attention) Verbal information is accompanied with visual representation to support understanding (dual coding).	Teacher elicits evidence of what learners can do throughout their explanation enabling them to monitor what children understand and to quickly identify any misconceptions or mistakes. Using this evidence, the teacher adapts their explanation effectively. Evidence of what learners can do is gathered through a range of strategies including purposeful questioning and mini-white boards task all which promote activate participation.	The most important learning points, that will dictate success, are identified, emphasised and summarised concisely by the teacher. Throughout the lesson, the majority of students' working memory is focused on the intended learning goal. Students are given opportunities to articulate, summarise and reflect on their learning.

MODELLING

Fundamental element	1. Worked Examples	2. Metacognitive Process	3. Backwards Fading	4. Misconceptions	5. Exposure to Excellence	6. Consider Cognitive Load
Description	The teacher constructs worked examples alongside their explanation to illustrate the best practice to students. The teacher ensures they are providing adequate worked examples with clear, logical steps throughout the lesson. Once students know the method, they are encouraged to refer to worked examples to scaffold their learning.	The teacher thinks aloud to show expert decision making throughout their modelling. Through this process of narrating their thought processes, teachers make it explicit to students what they need to do to be successful.	The teacher structures the student's learning to transition from guided to independent practice. Teachers begin with a fully guided example (I do), progress to a partially completed one (We do), and ultimately have students solve problems independently (You do).	The teacher provides planned opportunities to teach students about potential misconceptions. The teacher uses carefully chosen examples to explicitly highlight potential high frequency errors and identify possible misconceptions.	The teacher uses exemplars of excellence to demonstrate high standards. The teacher engages students in a process of evaluation that allows them all to understand the constituent elements that add up to making the exemplars excellent.	The teacher considers the clarity, speed and length of demonstration, as well as how the model is presented to prevent cognitive overload. The teacher repeats and revisits key ideas throughout modelling to help strengthen memory recall and help build students' schema.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Fundamental element	1. Targeted	2. Effective task design	3. Scaffolding and fading	4. Ongoing Feedback & adaptation	5. Retrieval (spaced) practice	6. Developed growth mindset
Description	The specific skill that is to be practiced is clearly identified by the teacher. The learning objective (or intention) is clearly defined and communicated to the students. The specific skills can clearly identified throughout the lesson including explanation; practice and feedback.	The task that is set enables students to practice and develop the identified skill. The task presents the identified skill in a variety of ways (variation theory) enabling students to deepen their understanding. The task encourages the student to "think hard" The task allows the student to move towards independence.	Strategies are in place that help students complete tasks by providing support and gradually removing it. This support can be in the form of an additional adult; frames/word banks and through the use of technology. The end goal of the support is to help students become independent learners whilst offering appropriate support and challenge to the meet students' needs	From their direct instruction, teachers have a clear understanding of what support is required during independent practice. Teachers are flexible with their groupings and scaffolds as a result. Throughout their practice, students are given regular feedback from adults. Opportunities for peer and self-assessment is given.	Whilst developing a specific skill, tasks are also used to give opportunities for students to return to, and making connections with, prior learning. Regular retrieval practice over time improves memory strength and memory recall. Students are given sufficient time to complete tasks and make connections	The teacher has established an environment that is conducive to leaning and student feel safe to take risks. Students have developed a growth mindset towards their learning and embrace challenges, and recognise they learn from mistakes and setbacks.

QUESTIONING

Fundamental element	1. Variety of Question types	2. Wait Time	3. Question Sequencing	4. Checking for understanding	5. Extend understanding	6. Encourage participation
Description	The teacher strategically asks a wide range of question types, balancing factual recall with higher-order thinking. The teacher frames questions clearly and purposefully to invite diverse responses and encourage deeper thinking. Some questions asked have been pre-planned to check for potential misconceptions (i.e., multiple choice hinge questions	The teacher implements consistent and purposeful wait times, allowing all students to formulate responses and contribute to discussions. By giving adequate wait time, the teacher reduces the risk of 'false negatives. The teacher varies the amount of wait time depending on the type of question they ask.	The teacher sequences and structures questions strategically to scaffold learning and build upon students' prior knowledge The teachers also asks probing questions to deepen understanding while guiding them toward higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis.	The teacher uses effective questioning to regularly check for understanding across the lesson. This includes; asking for proof, probing, and giving adequate wait time. Through effective questioning, the teacher gauges understanding from the whole class efficiently (and quickly) identifying any potential misconceptions or mistakes.	The teacher facilitates (and models) meaningful dialogue that steps away from simple factual answers. Open-ended (or Socratic) questioning attempts to deepen students understanding and encourage them to link together different ideas. Such questions promote clarification, interrogate assumption; support exploration of viewpoint and perspective; and encourage further investigation of implication and consequence.	The teacher ensures high levels of active participation through questioning and response strategies such as no-opt out; cold-calling; pose/ poise/pounce/ bounce; and hinge questions. Where appropriate, the teacher gives opportunity for partner -talk and/or group talk.

FEEDBACK

Fundamental element	1. Timely	2. Meaningful and actionable	3. Specific to learning objective	4. Two-way	5. Tailored to individual needs.	6. Self and Peer Feedback
Description	The teacher provides feedback promptly—often during or shortly after learning activities—so students can immediately connect the feedback to their work and make timely improvements. They recognise teachable moments and act quickly to reinforce or redirect learning.	The teacher gives feedback which is precise and is focused on actionable improvements (feeds forward). The teacher's feedback encourages students to improve on a granular level and avoids generic terms or advice. When praise is given, the feedback focuses on the process as opposed to the outcome giving greater impact on future learning.	The teacher aligns feedback directly with the lesson's learning objectives. They make sure students understand how their current performance matches up to expectations and clearly explain the next steps to move forward. Teacher identifies and addresses any misconceptions that may impact future learning.	Through their feedback, the teacher invites students into a dialogue about their feedback, asking questions and prompting reflection. The teacher creates a classroom culture where feedback is a collaborative process.	The teacher tailors' feedback to suit individual student needs, adjusting the level of detail, language, and support based on the student's current understanding and confidence. They use scaffolding to challenge students just beyond their comfort zone, supporting growth without it being overwhelming.	The teacher explicitly teaches students how to reflect on their own work and engage in constructive peer feedback. They model reflective questions, provide structured opportunities for self-assessment, and create routines that normalise peer dialogue. This empowers students to internalise feedback principles and become more independent, self-regulating learners.