

Signature Pedagogies

Talk

Language is key to accessing the curriculum in all schools – and key to be able to access information throughout life. Children enter Southcoates with a significant language deficit. We have identified 'talk' as one of our signature pedagogies.

"The limits of my language mean the limits of my world."

Wittgenstein's statement refers to the belief that if one cannot describe something in words, then it does not exist. He comments in his book *Tractatus* that "what can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence." It could be argued that language is the core to interaction. It is interesting to note that, while most species of animals communicate, the more intelligent the animal, the more complex the language; the more complex their language results in deeper interactions.

A 1995 study by Hart and Risely found that:

"By the time children are 4-years-old, advantaged children have roughly 30 million more words addressed to them than the least advantaged - a finding often referred to as the "30 million word gap." Language is the currency of education and is associated with reading ability, income, healthcare outcomes, and secondary school pass - rates. Therefore, children who start out with lower language skills are projected to have lower school readiness scores and will follow a dampened trajectory through school and life.

The Communication Trust found that in England:

- More than 50% of children start school with poor language.
- 5 year olds in poor families are more than a year behind their wealthier peers.
- Poor language impacts on attainment, well-being and long term prospects:
- 90% of children with SLCN have poor reading skills.
- 50% of pupils at risk of school exclusion have high levels of language need.
- 60% of youngsters in young offender institutions have SLCN.

However, both this study and a 2017 document produced by Marie Gascoigne and Jean Gross found that:

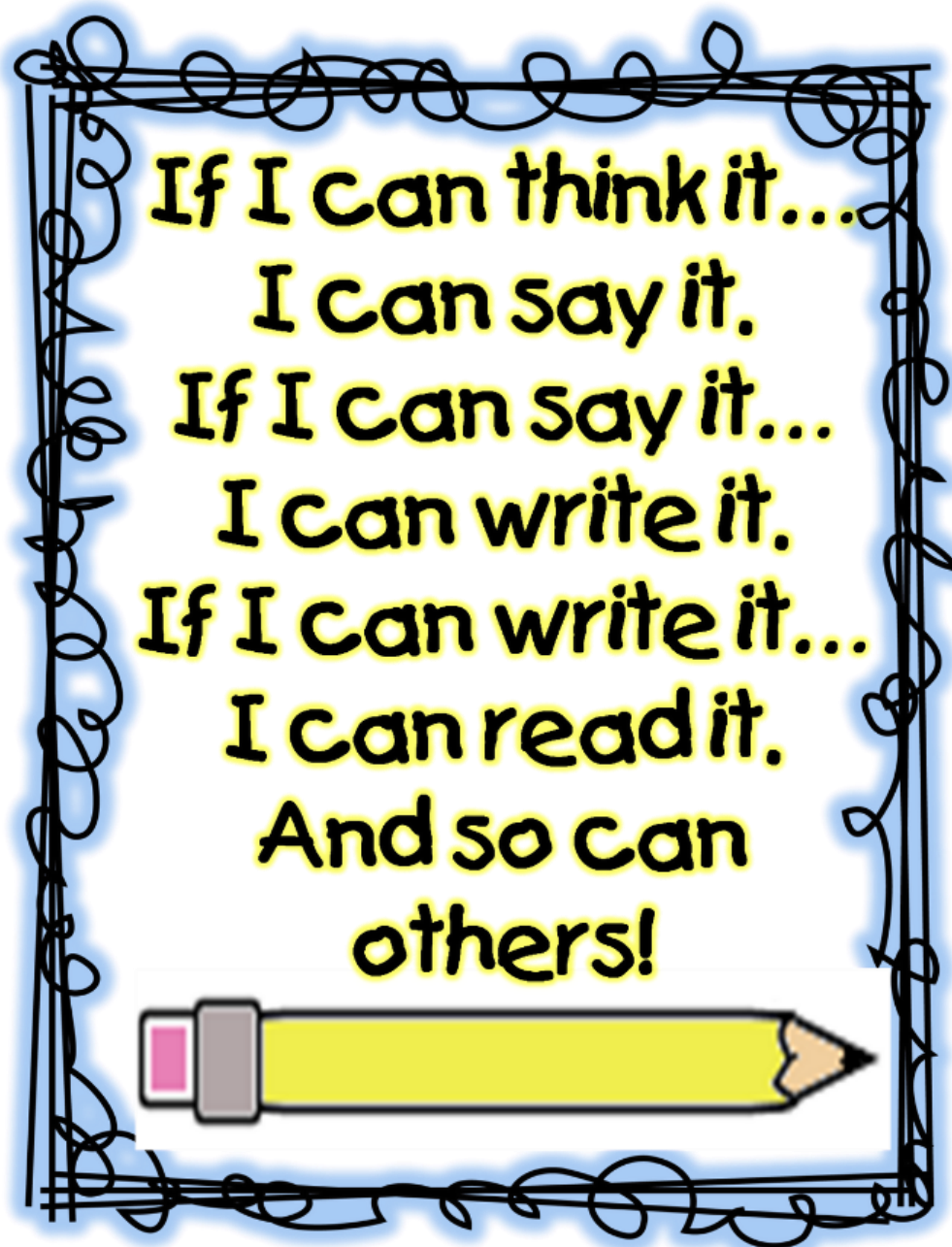
- Children from poorer backgrounds who develop good language skills are more likely to 'buck the trend' and become more affluent in later life
- Good language skills are crucial to social mobility
- It is entirely possible to break the link between language difficulties and disadvantage, with the right support at home, in early education and in school

As an Academy, this is what we want for our children. We are committed to broadening their vocabulary resulting and thus enhancing their ability to achieve throughout life.

We motivate them to aspire to greater things – ensuring that their language skills do not limit their world.

As an Academy, we use a range of strategies to deliver outstanding provision based upon the idea of introducing and expanding children's vocabulary and ability to use Talk in a highly effective way. These include:

- Talk for Writing
- Talk for Learning
- Read Write Inc.
- Rehearsal Room techniques supported by The Royal Shakespeare Company
- Reasoning skills used across the curriculum
- Inference training
- Talking Time Intervention
- Talk of the Town initiatives
- Lego Therapy
- Social groups
- Group roles
- 'Thanks'



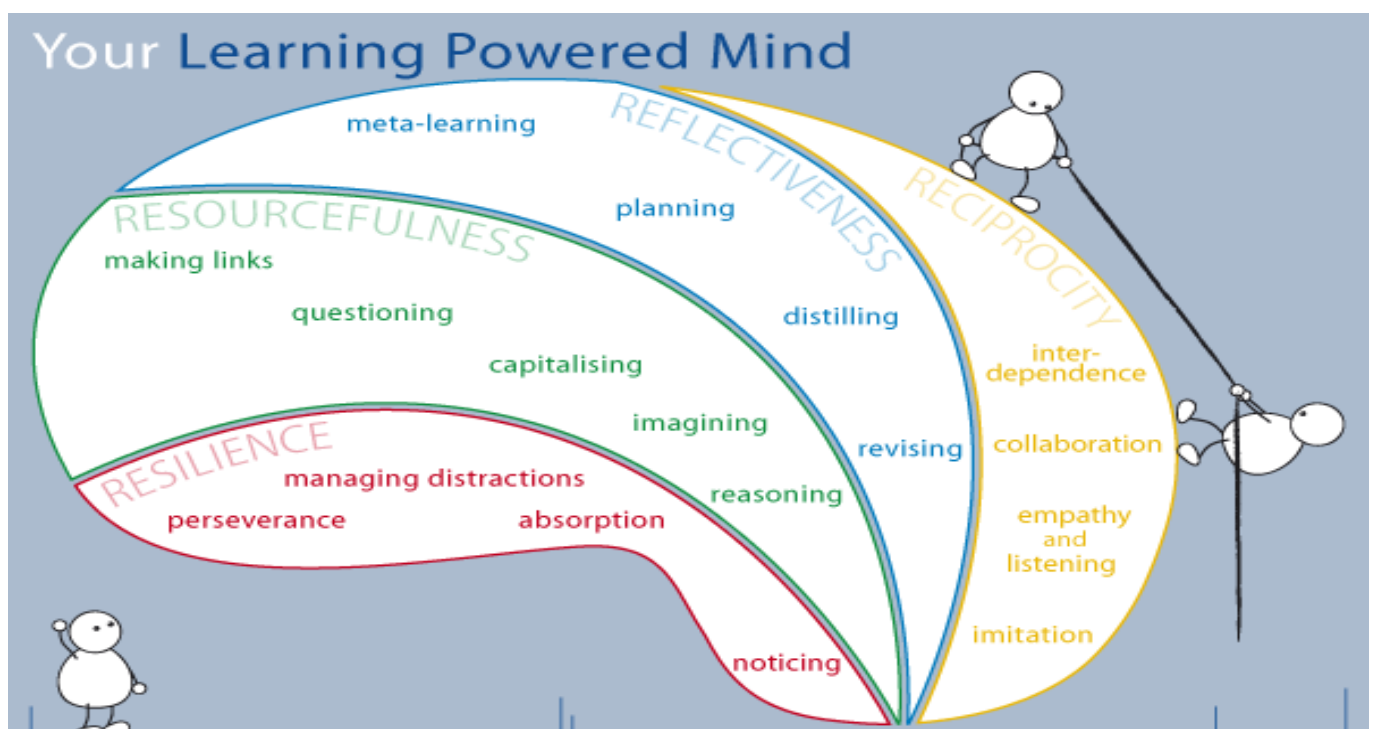
Building Learning Power (BLP)

"In a complicated, fast-changing world the intelligent path is to let go of being a Knower and embrace being a Learner."

Professor Guy Claxton, originator of BLP

As already mentioned, many children start at Southcoates with a deficit in their language development. In addition to this, negative attitudes and preconceptions towards learning, school and homework are prevalent amongst many members of the local community. This creates an initial challenge with regards to engagement in learning and attitude towards school in general. To meet this challenge, staff in school apply techniques and strategies from 'Building Learning Power' (BLP) so that learning is rightly placed at the forefront of what happens in school. BLP directly links to the other key pedagogies of 'Talk' and 'AFL'. Both 'BLP' and 'Talk' are about increasing the articulacy of children so that they are able to discuss and share their learning and work with others. BLP allows children to be more aware of their own learning; making abstract concepts into more material, tangible tools for learning. The strategies of 'AFL' are, in part, about children being able to identify successes and areas for improvement in their own learning; BLP both complements and expands upon this idea.

Our strategy towards using BLP in school is twofold. Firstly, children learn the language of BLP so that they are able to articulate their learning: they know what skills and information they have learnt and that are developing. Secondly, children can then identify their strengths and are aware of their weaknesses. Learning is made relevant by demonstrating to children that it is a process that happens to everybody throughout their lives when at work, at home and when playing; everybody is constantly learning new skills and information. The language of BLP is taught to children in a balanced, progressive way through school. We show them how it is relevant and has context in school, home, work, play and throughout everyone's everyday life. Staff work to highlight and identify with positive praise and sharing when the learning skills of BLP are evident. In phase teams activities are planned that, as well as addressing subject-linked learning objectives, teach the children how to get better at the skills useful for life-long learning. Through the use of BLP, we aim to give children the tools to take ownership of their own learning so that they are able to ask thoughtful, relevant questions drawn from their own curiosity and imagination - they then have the skills to organise themselves and resources to seek out, find and reflect upon their own answers.



THE LEARNING POWER MUSCLES

RESILIENCE

The emotional aspects of learning.

Feeling

RESOURCEFULNESS

The cognitive aspects of learning.

Thinking

REFLECTIVENESS

The strategic aspects of learning.

Managing

RECIPROCITY

The social aspects of learning.

Relating

THE LEARNING POWER SKILLS

Absorption

Being able to lose yourself in learning – becoming absorbed in what you are doing; rapt and attentive, in a state of ‘flow’.

Managing Distractions

Recognising and reducing distractions; knowing when to walk away and refresh yourself. Creating your own best environment for learning.

Noticing

Perceiving subtle nuances, patterns and details in experience.

Perseverance

Keeping going on in the face of difficulties, channelling the energy of frustration productively. Knowing what a slow and uncertain process learning often is.

Questioning

Asking questions of yourself and others. Being curious and playful with ideas – delving beneath the surface of things.

Making Links

Seeing connections between disparate events and experiences – building patterns – weaving a web of understanding.

Imagining

Using your imagination and intuition to put yourself through new experiences or to explore possibilities. Wondering “What if...?”

Reasoning

Calling up your logical and rational skills to work things out methodically and rigorously; constructing good arguments, and spotting the flaws in others’.

Capitalising

Drawing on the full range of resources from the wider world – other people, books, the internet, past experience, future opportunities...

Planning

Thinking about where you are going, the action you are going to take, the time and resources you will need and the obstacles you may encounter.

Revising

Being flexible, changing your plans in the light of different circumstances, monitoring and reviewing how things are going and seeing new opportunities.

Distilling

Looking at what is being learned – pulling out the essential features – carrying them forward to aid further learning; being your own learning coach.

Meta-Learning

Knowing yourself as a learner – how you learn best; how to talk about the learning process.

Interdependence

Knowing when it’s appropriate to learn on your own or with others, and being able to stand your ground in debate.

Collaboration

Knowing how to manage yourself in the give and take of a collaborative venture, respecting and recognising other viewpoints; adding to and drawing from the strength of teams.

Empathy & listening

Contributing to others’ experiences by listening to them to understand what they are really saying, and putting yourself in their shoes.

Imitation

Constructively adopting methods, habits or values from other people whom you observe.

Assessment for Learning (AFL)

Assessment for learning is "The most powerful educational tool for raising achievement and preparing children to be lifelong learners" (Clarke, 2014)

As teachers, it is imperative that we recognise children's achievements within the lesson in order for them to achieve as highly as is possible for them and to make the greatest amount of progress throughout that lesson.

By knowing our children individually, we are able to see their starting point and their next steps. We are then able to provide scaffolding for them as and when required by immediately addressing misconceptions and to assess understanding at each stage of the lesson. We can also set an appropriate level of challenge for all learners, enabling us to increase the level of challenge as needed throughout the lesson.

"If we think of our children as plants... summative assessment of the plant is the process of simply measuring them. The measurement might be interesting to compare and analyse, but in themselves, they do not affect the growth of the plant. Formative assessment, on the other hand, is the garden equivalent of feeding and watering the plant – directly affecting their growth." (Clarke, 2001)

At Southcoates Primary Academy, our Assessment for Learning focuses on these areas:

Where is the learner now?

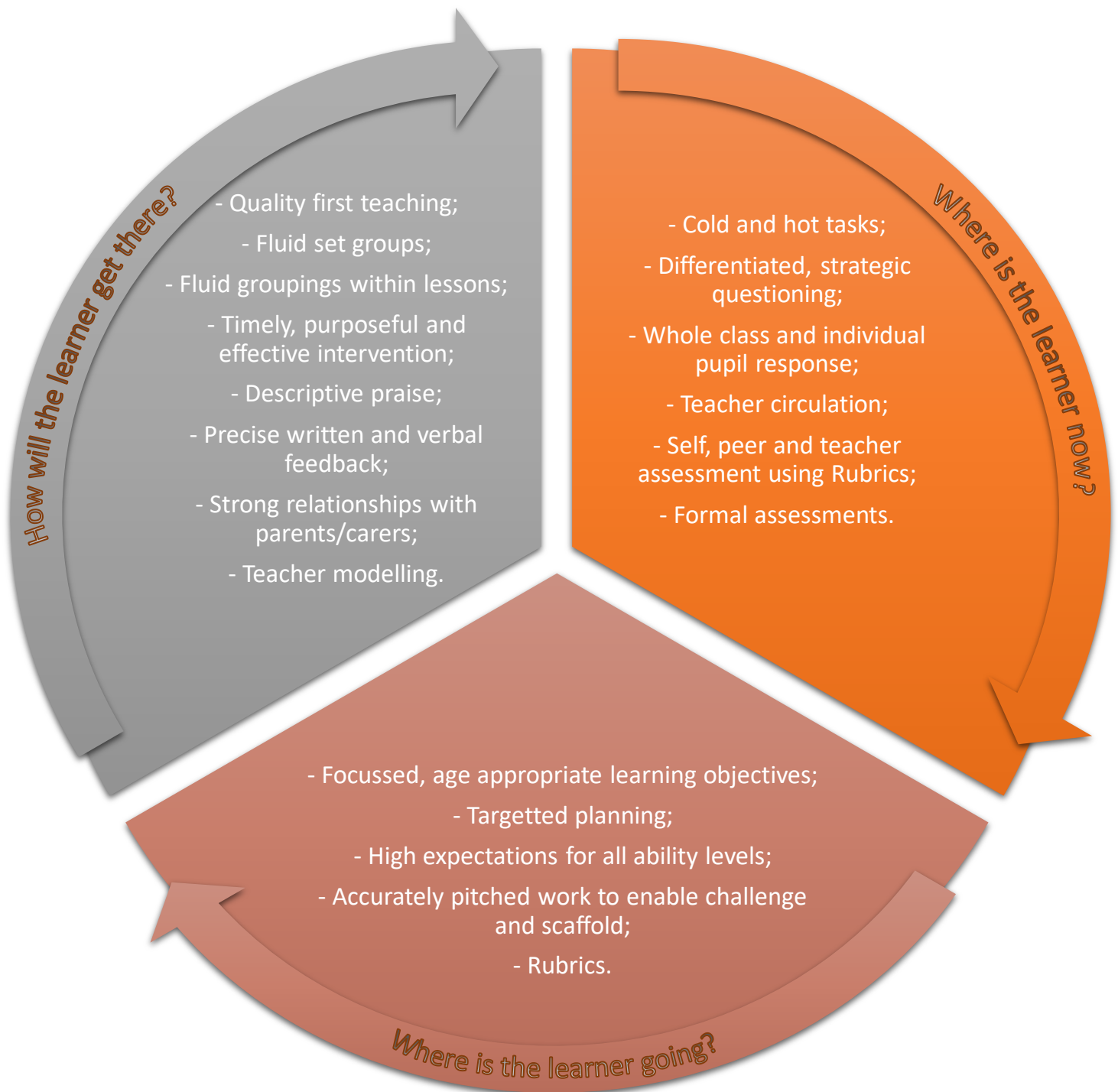
An understanding of the starting point for each child is imperative in order to make maximum progress within each lesson. Continuous evaluation of the point at which each child is working enables all teaching and learning to be relevant in order to maximise learning time. AFL is used at Southcoates Primary Academy to ensure that all work is pitched at the correct level, with appropriate challenge and support, with the aim of maximising progress.

Where is the learner going?

To enable teachers to correctly assess the ongoing achievements of all children, Southcoates Primary Academy understand the importance of well-planned lessons, with precise lesson outcomes.

How will the learner get there?

Teachers at Southcoates Primary Academy use reflective evaluations of ongoing assessment to ensure that all work is purposeful. Assessment for Learning is continuously used to adapt teaching strategies, lesson progression and levels of pitch and challenge to suit individual learners.



Outstanding teaching at Southcoates

| Outstanding teaching at Southcoates Primary Academy is characterised by: | |
|--|--|
| Strong relationships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Teacher to child</i> - <i>Child to child</i> - <i>Teacher to teacher</i> - <i>Teacher to parents</i> - <i>Staff know the children well (personally and academically)</i> - <i>Children know that the staff like them and want them to succeed</i> - <i>The 'House' structure</i> |
| Effective use of a range of talk strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Questioning from teachers and children</i> - <i>Use of group roles</i> - <i>Talk for writing / learning</i> - <i>RSC – Rehearsal Room Techniques</i> - <i>BLP (to articulate learning)</i> - <i>Rubrics (peer & self-assessment)</i> |
| The modelling of positive learning behaviours (BLP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Resilience (absorption, managing distractions, noticing & perseverance)</i> - <i>Resourcefulness (questioning, making links, imagining, reasoning & capitalising)</i> - <i>Reflectiveness (planning, revising, distilling & meta-learning)</i> - <i>Reciprocity (interdependence, collaboration, imitation, empathy & listening)</i> |
| Assessment for Learning (AfL) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Rubrics</i> - <i>Hot & cold tasks</i> - <i>RAG rating of words</i> - <i>RWInc. strategies</i> |
| Clarity of purpose to every lesson and to the intended outcome | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Teachers know what they are teaching, why they are teaching it and how they are teaching it</i> - <i>Children are clear on what they are learning (objective) and how (activity)</i> |
| High expectations with appropriate challenge and support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Use of cold and hot tasks</i> - <i>Use of rubrics</i> - <i>Marking and feedback (with appropriate response from the children)</i> - <i>Descriptive praise</i> - <i>Effective questioning</i> - <i>SEN support is effective, making appropriate use of external agencies and advice</i> |
| Exploitation of opportunities to reinforce basic skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Reading, writing and maths skills</i> - <i>Cross curricular learning opportunities</i> - <i>Reinforcing links between subjects</i> - <i>Read, Write Inc.</i> - <i>Inference</i> - <i>Choral reading</i> - <i>Maths of the Day</i> |

| | |
|---|---|
| Responsive teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>To individual needs: before, during and after work has been set/completed</i> - <i>To behaviour: knowing which strategies to use with which children</i> - <i>To local and national events</i> |
| An enthusiasm for learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>From staff and pupils</i> - <i>Inquisitive and questioning</i> - <i>A wide range of activities – as demonstrated by our 'cultural passport'</i> |
| Clear, well established routines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Collaboration</i> - <i>Organisation</i> - <i>Attendance</i> - <i>Behaviour management</i> |
| Discernment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Teachers make effective and appropriate use of all of the above</i> |