

RIVERSDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

"A nurturing, ambitious and values led school."

Teaching & Learning Policy

Date: 12/03/2024

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INTENT

At Riversdale Primary school, we are committed to empowering each child to reach their full potential. Our values driven, inclusive and nurturing environment fosters a love of learning, enabling our pupils to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Through an ambitious, broad and enriching curriculum, we cultivate lifelong learners who are equipped to navigate the challenges of the modern world with confidence and compassion. Together we inspire our community to embrace diversity, promote wellbeing, and create a brighter future for all.

Across the school, the expectation is that all pupils are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to consistently high levels of achievement for all pupils. As such, we recognise that continued and sustained improvement in pupil outcomes is dependent upon improving the quality of teaching and learning that is taking place on a daily basis. To ensure that the teachers in the school become the most effective practitioners they can be the school's teaching and learning policies and practices use principles established from evidence-based research, cognitive science and experience.

By adopting a whole school approach to teaching and learning, we aim:

- to ensure consistency of teaching and learning in each classroom and enable teachers to teach as effectively as possible,
- to create effective learning environments to support and facilitate pupil learning,
- to give pupils the skills they require to become effective lifelong learners,
- to secure knowledge into long-term memory through developing secure schemas with connected networks of ideas, building on existing knowledge so that pupils achieve a deep understanding,
- enable pupils to become confident and interested learners, actively engaged in their own learning,
- develop pupils' self-respect and respect for the cultures and values of others,
- develop core learning behaviours essential for successful future study,
- for staff to learn from each other, through the establishment of an inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning and a culture where opportunities for sharing good practice are in place.

IMPLEMENTATION

Lesson Structures:

The role of teachers is to teach in a precise way which makes it possible for all pupils to engage successfully with learning at the expected level of challenge, whilst making adaptations to their practice to meet the varying needs of the school's cohort. To achieve this, lessons at Riversdale are developed with an evidence-informed approach, incorporating Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction:

1. A daily review of previous learning using retrieval practice strategies.
2. New material presented in small steps, with teachers ensuring that each step is mastered before moving on.
3. Teachers asking a variety of open questions, and using a range of questioning techniques, to establish pupils' understanding.
4. Teachers model clearly, using manipulatives, visual and/or other aids to show pupils how to solve problems.
5. Time for pupils to do guided practice.
6. Teachers check all pupils' understanding in a variety of ways.
7. Pupils have a high rate of success, with enough mistakes to show that they are being challenged.
8. Scaffolds are provided for all.
9. Pupils are given opportunities to practice independently.
10. There are regular reviews of learning.

THE PRINCIPLES OF INSTRUCTION

TAKEN FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF EDUCATION

This poster is from the work of Barak Rosenshine who based these ten principles of instruction and suggested classroom practices on:

- research on how the brain acquires and uses new information
- research on the classroom practices of those teachers whose students show the highest gains
- findings from studies that taught learning strategies to students.



01 DAILY REVIEW



Daily review is an important component of instruction. It helps strengthen the connections of the material learned. Automatic recall frees working memory for problem solving and creativity.

02 NEW MATERIAL IN SMALL STEPS



Our working memory is small, only handling a few bits of information at once. Avoid its overload — present new material in small steps and proceed only when first steps are mastered.

03 ASK QUESTIONS



The most successful teachers spend more than half the class time lecturing, demonstrating and asking questions. Questions allow the teacher to determine how well the material is learned.

04 PROVIDE MODELS



Students need cognitive support to help them learn how to solve problems. Modelling, worked examples and teacher thinking out loud help clarify the specific steps involved.

05 GUIDE STUDENT PRACTICE



Students need additional time to rephrase, elaborate and summarise new material in order to store it in their long-term memory. More successful teachers built in more time for this.

06 CHECK STUDENT UNDERSTANDING



Less successful teachers merely ask “Are there any questions?” No questions are taken to mean no problems. False. By contrast, more successful teachers check on all students.

07 OBTAIN HIGH SUCCESS RATE



A success rate of around 80% has been found to be optimal, showing students are learning and also being challenged. Better teachers taught in small steps followed by practice.

08 SCAFFOLDS FOR DIFFICULT TASKS



Scaffolds are temporary supports to assist learning. They can include modelling, teacher thinking aloud, cue cards and checklists. Scaffolds are part of cognitive apprenticeship.

09 INDEPENDENT PRACTICE



Independent practice produces ‘overlearning’ — a necessary process for new material to be recalled automatically. This ensures no overloading of students’ working memory.

10 WEEKLY & MONTHLY REVIEW



The effort involved in recalling recently-learned material embeds it in long-term memory. And the more this happens, the easier it is to connect new material to such prior knowledge.

Build upon these principles and incorporating wider strategies to ensure a manageable cognitive load, reduce pupil anxiety and maintain consistency, all lessons At Riversdale follow a basic structure made up of four key phases:

Phase One: Setting the Scene

Within this phase, teachers will place the learning for the lesson within the wider context. This incorporates a combination of:

- sharing intended learning questions (LQs),
- use of the knowledge organiser to identify where the lesson falls within the sequence (Journey),
- review of prior learning (Retrieval).

Rosenshine's evidence shows that lessons should include some recall of previous learning – not just of recently learned information, but also of information that was learned much earlier. This helps to build and strengthen the schema of knowledge in the child's mind, enabling new information to be understood, stick more easily and for longer. For knowledge to be used and applied in the long-term memory, knowledge needs to be retrieved. It is vital that pupils are asked to search their memory for prior learning and then apply this knowledge in their learning.

As such, teachers at Riversdale ensure that they plan for a range of low stakes retrieval practice opportunities which are based on the "Last Questions" strategy. Pupils will be expected to retrieve knowledge from:

- last lesson,
- last month/term, and
- last year.

In addition to this, teachers will use their lesson reflections to ascertain additional knowledge that pupils have not yet secured and include a corresponding retrieval question as a means of consolidating this. Pupils will respond to these retrieval questions, through a range of means which teachers will plan based on the needs of the pupils, for example independently, in pairs, using online quiz platforms etc.

Phase Two: New Learning in Small Chunks and Practice Time for Pupils

This is the main teaching phase. Although it is our intention for pupils to understand the information as they encounter it, the emphasis within this phase is upon providing new content in small chunks. The quality of the input at this stage will clearly have a large bearing upon the extent to which the pupils understand information that they are given. We aim to achieve this through teaching knowledge and skills in sequential parts with regular opportunities for pupils to rehearse and discuss their learning.

- Periods of Input are Short:

We recognise that pupils have limited concentration spans. Periods of input are therefore kept short and punctuated by rehearsal activities and partner talk. Research shows that significantly more learning takes place when new information is shared in shorter bursts of 10 minutes rather than extended periods of time.

- Questioning (Including Checking for Understanding):

Effective questioning and classroom talk is essential for learning, developing higher order thinking, promoting imagination, speculation, creative thinking, and to pitch tasks at a suitable challenge level. This is where the quality of questioning is paramount. Questions highlight misconceptions and challenge pupils to think deeper and harder. The greatest value of questioning is that it encourages pupils to practise retrieval, thus strengthening and deepening their long-term memory. Although we encourage questions to be planned, we also encourage questioning to be responsive to pupils within the moment.

We ensure talk time is given to pupils to allow them to discuss lesson content with others. We use partners to promote talk in all classrooms and wait times are given to allow pupils to pause and review, enabling them to process the information. To support effective questioning in the classroom, we encourage a graduated approach towards higher order questions that encourage deeper investigation of concepts.

- Monitoring Levels of Understanding:

Riversdale recognises the importance of ensuring that the understanding of taught concepts is secure before moving on. To achieve this teachers ask well-crafted questions, including hinge questions, carefully monitoring pupil responses to these. To support this, teachers give careful consideration towards the deployment of additional adults in the room and how this supports the ongoing assessment process, such as the use of TAs for marking and feedback.

Once misconceptions and gaps in learning have been identified, within or after lessons, we aim to maximise the impact of additional adults in the school. For example, TAs may be utilised to deliver pre-teaching and post-teaching tasks with identified pupils or be deployed to work with specific pupils during lessons, both within and outside the classroom, to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.

- Provide Models and Scaffolds:

Rosenshine found that successful teachers spent longer guiding pupils' practice through explanations and modelling than less effective teachers. After pupils have been exposed to high-quality explanations and models, they can begin to be involved in the knowledge recall or procedural process. This is where pupils begin to take ownership over parts of the task with the support of the teacher as a scaffold or guide.

At Riversdale, we understand the importance of providing all pupils with scaffolds despite their level of ability to help guide their responses or help them recall information. This could be in the form of manipulatives/physical resources, sentence starters, or vocabulary banks. We have high expectations and with these scaffolds and expect all pupils to take part in the learning.

Phase Two is punctuated through clear modelling of what it is that we want the pupils to be able to do. Opportunities for modelling key learning points are carefully considered in every lesson and clearly outlined within lesson planning. By ensuring that periods of input are followed by practice activities, pupils are given opportunities to apply and deepen their understanding before the lesson moves on.

Phase Three: Guided and/or Independent Practice

More effective teaching occurs when time is given for guided practice. This is directly linked to pupils spending more time asking questions, more time checking for understanding and using more worked examples. If learners are to be successful in becoming confident and independent within a certain knowledge area, the teacher must make sure that they are forming strong schema early on. Therefore, at Riversdale, we ensure learners spend additional time rephrasing, elaborating and summarising new material, in order to store knowledge in their long-term memory.

All pupils need to practice; however, practice must be guided so that the chance of forming misconceptions is minimised. If pupils have any misconceptions, then these must be unpicked, and retaught where appropriate. At Riversdale, guided practice is where learning activities involve a combination of explanations, high frequency short answer questions or simple tasks where the teacher and learners are engaged interactively. These parts of the lesson will incorporate modelling, corrective or affirming feedback and aspects of re-teaching where gaps remain. Key examples of these include Guided Practice as part of the Maths, No Problem! Scheme, and the Initiate and Model stages of the Write Stuff writing lesson framework.

Within lessons and over a series of lessons within a unit or learning, pupils are given time to practice using new knowledge and skills. Rosenshine (2012) recognises independent practice as a vital part of learning because it provides pupils with the much-required opportunity to complete a procedure or activity over and over. He identifies 'overlearning' as necessary for pupils to become fluent or automatic in a skill. When pupils become automatic in a process or skill, they free up their working memory which can be used to apply their learning to new contexts. This is when pupils can consolidate their learning through independent practice.

At Riversdale, effective independent practice ensures that pupils work on the same material covered during guided practice, with further guides and scaffolds, which are removed over time as pupils gain confidence. Independent practice may also incorporate the use of collaboration with peers where appropriate. A key examples of this includes the Activate stage of the Write Stuff writing lesson framework.

Phase Four: Review Learning and Plan Next Steps

The emphasis in this phase is reviewing what has been learned and reflecting on how and why it has been learned.

Review is key to memory, and we understand that it is important not just to confine it to the end of the lesson. As such, teachers constantly refer back to the LQ throughout the lesson and reinforce prior learning. This is a very important aspect of the lesson and the learning process in general, as large amounts of information can be forgotten quickly by pupils.

We recognise that when teachers and pupils summarise what has been learned, through “Head, Hand and Heart” discussions, pupil memories are significantly boosted.

Subject Specific Lesson Structures:

Across the curriculum, the school has implemented some external schemes for learning which have specific lesson structures built into them. For these lessons, the pupils will be taught through the alternative lesson structures, which have been assessed in response to the evidence-informed practice outlined above.

In mathematics, pupils are taught through Maths, No Problem! which employs a very similar structure built on the very same concepts.

In phonics, pupils are taught through the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised scheme. Each lesson revolves around the retrieval of prior learning (speedy sounds), new learning in small steps where a new grapheme/phoneme correspondence is explicitly taught, guided practice through oral blending and teacher modelling and independent practice or word/sentence reading.

In writing, pupils are taught through The Write Stuff framework. Each writing lesson is separated into three learning chunks in order to focus learning and ensure a small steps approach. Each of these chunks is then divided into three further sections entitled: Initiate, Model and Activate. These sections utilise the concepts of small steps, modelling/guided practice and independent practice to support pupils in making progress.

Learning Environment:

The surroundings in which pupils learn can greatly influence their academic performance and wellbeing. The better the school looks, the more it inspires those inside it. It makes pupils feel that they want to achieve and that how they themselves are perceived is important. At Riversdale, we believe that classrooms should be calm, well organised learning spaces. Therefore, to ensure a sense of consistency across the school, the following points must be reflected in each learning environment:

- Working walls for all subjects which can be interacted with/adapted as pupils progress through their learning,
- Tier three vocabulary for all subject areas that are relevant to the pupils’ current learning,
- Sentence Stacking display (The Write Stuff) which models high-quality writing from the current unit of learning,
- 3Ps Poster (Handwriting),
- Head, Hand and Heart Display,
- Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Grapheme Frieze/Grow the Code (depending on year group),
- An engaging and well-kept reading corner/class library that encourages curiosity around books and reading for pleasure,
- Spaces are tidy, labelled and organised,
- Pupils take responsibility for ensuring their classroom is a pleasant and safe place to learn,
- Pupils are taught to respect equipment and resources.

Developing Vocabulary:

At Riversdale, we recognise the vocabulary gap that exists in our community particularly in reference to disadvantaged pupils, and the impact that this can have on pupil outcomes. The development of a rich vocabulary is important in

helping pupils to develop both the ability to understand spoken and written language and acquire a control of language that enables them to express their ideas and feelings clearly.

One key aspect of vocabulary development is the strong relationship between vocabulary and comprehension, where a broad vocabulary (knowing lots of words) and a deep vocabulary (knowing those words well) correlates with better understanding. As such, the weekly reading sequence of lessons at Riversdale, includes a vocabulary specific session whereby pupils are explicitly taught a range of “tier two”, exploring the meaning, the application of the vocabulary in different contexts, as well as pupils giving examples of the vocabulary linked to their own personal experiences, thus contextualising the learning.

Across the rest of the curriculum, new vocabulary, particularly “tier three”, has been identified at the planning stage of all subjects. Our lesson structure incorporates the new vocabulary necessary for the lesson as part of Phase One, where it is explicitly taught, using a variety of different strategies. In addition, this vocabulary is on display in the classroom and age-appropriate definitions are provided on pupil Knowledge Organisers, so that they can be referred to where needed.

Adaptive Teaching:

The curriculum at Riversdale is ambitious for all pupils, as such we ensure that every child is appropriately challenged, engaged in meaningful learning, and equipped to succeed.

Whilst our lesson structures are designed to optimise knowledge and skill acquisition, all pupils are individuals, and adaptive teaching may be required for pupils to access the curriculum and achieve age-appropriate milestones. We believe that all pupils deserve equality of opportunity and can make progress when provided with the right support at the right time, therefore, our approach is underpinned by quality first teaching as a priority, with additional strategies that are reactive and responsive to the needs of pupils at any point in their learning journey.

Adaptive teaching involves offering tailored support, such as targeted group instruction, breaking down complex concepts into small steps, providing additional practice opportunities, and acting on assessment for learning insights. But, for this to be effective, teachers must get to know each of their pupils, reflecting on and assessing what strategies are impactful for them. For any pupils on the SEND register, teachers must familiarise themselves with SEND documentation associated with the pupils, to develop a clear understanding of the nuances of how these pupils’ learn best. For example, for pupils with speech and language needs, strategies such as pre-teaching vocabulary, or rephrasing instructions can be particularly effective for some, whilst others may benefit more from the use of manipulatives and pictorial representations.

For pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL), adaptive teaching plays a crucial role in ensuring they can access the curriculum and make progress alongside their peers. Our approach recognises the importance of valuing and building on pupils’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds while providing targeted support to develop their proficiency in English. Strategies include scaffolding learning through pictorial representations and real-life objects, as well as providing opportunities for collaborative group work where language can be modelled and practised. Pre-teaching key vocabulary, using sentence starters, and providing dual-language resources where possible help EAL pupils engage meaningfully with lessons. Teachers also ensure that EAL pupils have regular opportunities to develop both social and academic language, recognising that proficiency in both is key to their success. By combining high expectations with tailored support, we aim to ensure that EAL pupils are challenged, included, and empowered to achieve ambitious outcomes.

Assessment:

Regular assessment is a vital facet of teaching and learning, as it enables teachers to understand pupils' progress, identify gaps in knowledge, and plan next steps effectively. By using a range of assessment for, of, and as learning strategies, such as regular questioning, low-stakes quizzes, and end-of-unit summative assessments, teachers can tailor their approach to meet the needs of all learners. In addition, assessment allows pupils to reflect on their learning and celebrate their achievements, fostering confidence and motivation and provides a platform for pupils and teachers to work collaboratively in target setting, demonstrating high expectations and an ambitious approach to learning.

For further details on our approach, please refer to the Curriculum Policy and the Marking and Feedback Policy.

Induction Process for New Pupils:

Given the school's high mobility rate, we recognise the importance of a comprehensive induction process to ensure new pupils integrate smoothly and can effectively access the curriculum.

Upon arrival, each child will undergo a tailored induction that includes assessments appropriate to their age and stage of development. For EYFS and Key Stage 1 pupils, this involves a phonics placement assessment or reading fluency evaluation to gauge literacy levels and potential gaps in phonic knowledge, as we recognise the differences in SSP schemes across the UK. Key Stage 2 pupils will complete both a reading comprehension and a reading age assessment to determine their reading proficiency. If the pupil arriving in Key Stage 2 has English as an additional language, they will first undertake a phonics placement assessment to ascertain if they require access to the Rapid Catch-Up Phonics programme to support initial decoding skills.

Additionally, all new pupils participate in an age-appropriate mathematics assessment and a writing task. These evaluations enable teachers to identify any gaps in knowledge and provide targeted support, facilitating a seamless transition into our learning environment.

IMPACT

At Riversdale we measure the impact of our teaching and learning strategy in the following ways:

- Analysis of data and performance in statutory assessments;
- Analysis of school performance at the end of each key stage compared with national and local data;
- Analysis of data and performance in termly core subject assessments;
- Assessment of pupil retention and understanding in end of unit foundation subject assessments;
- Moderation of work, pupil progress meetings, assessment and data tracking;
- Termly RAG Quality of Education impact evaluation of the school development plan;
- Termly RAG impact evaluation of subject action plans and leadership analysis;
- Subject monitoring evidence;
- Learning walks and peer observations;
- Regular pupil voice and child-led monitoring activities;
- Work scrutiny/book looks;
- External reviews and audits e.g. School Improvement Partner visits;
- Parental feedback including parents' evenings, coffee mornings, informal meetings and parent surveys;
- Assessment of digital evidence, particularly in EYFS, where learning may be captured in alternative ways.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Board:

- Monitor that resources and funding are allocated effectively to support the school's approach to teaching and learning;
- Monitor the impact of teaching and learning strategies on pupils' progress and attainment;
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation;
- Make sure other school policies promote high-quality teaching, and that these are being implemented.

Senior Leaders:

- Have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education to all;
- Celebrate achievement and have high expectations for everyone;
- Hold staff and pupils to account for their teaching and learning;
- Plan and evaluate strategies to secure high-quality teaching and learning across the school;
- Manage resources to support high-quality teaching and learning;
- Provide support and guidance to other staff through coaching and mentoring;
- Input and monitor the impact of continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to improve staff's practice and subject knowledge;
- Promote teamworking at all levels;
- Address underachievement and intervene promptly;

- Meet the expectations set out in the related policies as outlined below.

Subject Leaders:

- Help to create well-sequenced, broad and balanced curriculum plans that build knowledge and skills;
- Sequence lessons in a way that allows pupils to make good progress from their starting points;
- Use their budget effectively to resource their subject, providing teachers with necessary resources for learning;
- Drive improvement in their subject, working with teachers to identify any challenges;
- Timetable their subject to allocate time for pupils to:
 - Achieve breadth and depth,
 - Fully understand the topic,
 - Demonstrate excellence.
- Moderate progress across their subject/phase by, for example, systematically reviewing progress against a range of evidence and reviewing qualitative and quantitative performance data;
- Improve on weaknesses identified in their monitoring activities;
- Create and share clear intentions for their subject;
- Encourage teachers to share ideas, resources and good practice;
- Meet the expectations set out in the related policies as outlined below.

Teachers:

- Follow the expectations for teaching and professional conduct as set out in the Teachers' Standards;
- Meet the expectations as outlined in this policy with regards to lesson structures, adaptive teaching etc.;
- Actively engage parents/carers in their child's learning, for example including, but not limited to parents' evenings;
- Update parents/carers on pupils' progress and produce a termly report on their child's progress;
- Meet the expectations set out in the related policies as outlined below.

Support Staff:

- Know pupils well and adapt support to meet their individual learning needs;
- Support teaching and learning with flexibility and resourcefulness;
- Use agreed assessment for learning strategies;
- Use effective marking and feedback as required by the class teacher;
- Engage in lessons and learning opportunities;
- Feedback observations of pupils to teachers;
- Ask questions to make sure they've understood expectations for learning;
- Identify and use resources to support learning;
- Have high expectations and celebrate achievement;
- Demonstrate and model themselves as learners;
- Meet the expectations set out in the related policies as outlined below.

Pupils:

- Take responsibility for their own learning, and support the learning of others;
- Meet expectations for good behaviour for learning at all times, respecting the rights of others to learn;
- Attend all lessons on time and be ready to learn, with any necessary equipment for the lesson;
- Be curious, ambitious, engaged and confident learners;
- Know their targets and how to improve;
- Put maximum effort and focus into their work;
- Complete home learning activities as required;
- Meet the expectations set out in the related policies as outlined below.

Parents and Carers:

- Value learning;
- Encourage their child as a learner;
- Make sure their child is ready and able to learn every day;
- Support good attendance;

- Participate in discussions about their child's progress and attainment;
- Communicate with the school to share information promptly;
- Provide resources as required to support learning;
- Encourage their child to take responsibility for their own learning;
- Support and give importance to home learning.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Our Governing Body, with particular focus from the Curriculum Sub-committee, monitors the impact of teaching and learning and compliance with other statutory requirements through termly Link Governor visits. Within these visits, governors will meet with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum area, with a focus on achievement and standards. These conversations will include discussions around subject specific pedagogy.

This policy is reviewed by the Deputy Headteacher for Curriculum and Assessment every three years, or before if necessary. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

RELATED POLICIES

- Curriculum
- Marking & Feedback
- Home Learning
- Equality Objectives
- Equality Information
- SEND
- SEND Information Report
- Assessment
- EYFS