Teaching & Learning Policy

A summary of the key expectations for the way teaching and learning is approached at St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School

St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School

Other key documents to refer to:

- STMS Curriculum Document
- Behaviour Policy
- Feedback & Marking Policy
- SEN Policy
- Staff Handbook: *This document is intended to give guidance on the principles of effective practice in each Key Stage. For specific information on timings and timetables (e.g. 'What happens in wet play?'), please refer to the staff handbook.*

We are aware of the need to review the school Teaching and Learning Policy regularly so that we can take account of new initiatives, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school.

The next review is due – May 2018

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1. Our Vision

Everyone in the school community will leave our school feeling they have achieved more than they ever thought possible. We will remember, in years to come, experiences that helped shape our future and we will make a difference to the world by serving God by helping others.

Everything which our school does is based around three aims;

Ensuring SUCCESS

Everything we do helps to enable children to be successful in whatever they set out to achieve

Providing OPPORTUNITY

We are committed to providing children with as many different opportunities as possible so that they have the chance to experience different things which they may later choose to pursue further

Fostering STEWARDSHIP

We believe that we are all called to be stewards of our time, talents and treasures, and so our school aims to foster this call to Stewardship

Ensuring Success

We believe that a child's background or place of birth should not limit the opportunities they have in education and in life. We believe that all our staff and parents must have high aspirations for all of our pupils. We believe that they are all capable of achieving excellence if we show them the steps. We believe that for this to happen all of our staff need to be knowledgeable and enthusiastic adults. It is our vision that together we can all contribute to building an ever strengthening professional culture based on the notion of continuous improvement.

We expect our staff and pupils to work hard – in a professional manner – at school. St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School is a learning community in which we encourage both adults and pupils to learn new things every day. We believe that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun!

We believe that through our teaching we must equip all children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their future lives, open their eyes to professional occupations and lead them to become independent lifelong learners.

Providing Opportunity

We believe that our approach to teaching and learning must provide a wide range of opportunities for our pupils to understand the world around them, so that we can eradicate any cultural deficit, allow them practical chances to apply their skills and provide meaningful ways to develop self-confidence in their own abilities.

We believe that young children thrive and their minds and bodies develop best when they have free access to stimulating outdoor environments for learning through play and real experiences. We believe that it must be a priority to provide progressive outdoor learning experiences through a combination of school-based outdoor learning and residential programmes.

Fostering Stewardship

We understand that we are called to serve God, and we firmly believe that we can do this through serving others. Through small acts of kindness and putting others first, we can be Stewards of all that we have been given and therefore fulfil God's Plan for each one of us.

The Context of Our School

St Thomas More's supports children from a variety of backgrounds. Bordering Leigh Park, it ranks 37th out of 427 schools in Hampshire for deprivation. Many of our children do not have the opportunities which other children may have, and some do not have high aspirations for their future, therefore, it is our belief that we should provide all children with as many opportunities as we can and nurture in their aspirations for a bright future.

As a community of faith, spiritual growth, commitment to Christian values, respect for social justice, understanding of Catholic social teaching and exposure to the moral teachings enshrined in scripture form the core of our mission.

However, only 48% of our children are baptised Catholic and only 27% are baptised Christians. Of those Christians, only 30% worship regularly. That said, parents chose our school because it offers an education grounded in faith and they look to the school to nurture that faith.

Ethos values

We believe that there are core values which every member of our school community should hold with the upmost importance. These values should be displayed in our work with others, at playtimes and in the classroom. These values influence our approach to everything we do and our attitude towards others. They are steeped in gospel teachings and reflect the kind of person Jesus was and the person he wants us to be.

Our school is a community, and therefore we must work as such. Although there may be professional differences, we must remember that we are working towards a common goal, of which, the Catholic faith is at the heart. Therefore, it is imperative that our relationships between all members of our community is held in the upmost importance and that attitudes towards each other reflect this. If there is a breakdown in that relationship with a member of our school community, it is our responsibility to do what we can to reconcile and rebuild that relationship. Equally vital is our role in developing our own and others' the relationship with God. For this reason, all members of staff are expected to attend school assemblies, liturgies and masses whenever possible. In addition to Collective Worship, all classes must participate in acts of worship before lunch and at the end of the school day.

2. Our definition of learning

At St Thomas More's we believe that learning involves making personal sense of information and experience. It is about making connections between our existing knowledge and understanding of the world and any new information that we may encounter.

Our school curriculum aims to equip children with the highest standards of academic, physical, social and emotional skill that will enable them to adapt to an ever changing society, realise their dreams and ambitions and fulfil God's Plan for each one of them.

Learning is an active process that is *done by* pupils, *not to* pupils. There are two key steps which must be considered when preparing lessons.

In order for pupils to learn effectively they will:

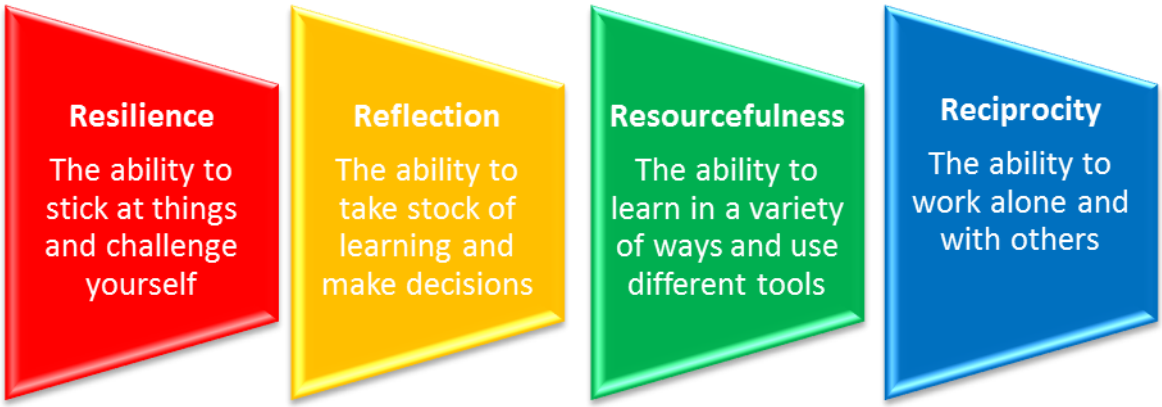
1. Try to make sense of new information by relating it to and evaluating it against known concepts
2. Hold new information in working memory and connect it to other new information and experiences

2.1 Effective Learners

We believe that our teaching should plan for opportunities where pupils can develop learning skills that will help them throughout their life. We believe that all members of the school community should be clear on what these are and why they are important. We believe that all of us should use a common language so that pupils are very clear of the expectations.

Learning values

Our learning values have been developed through our research into the work of Guy Claxton. They focus on building learning power by developing pupils' ability to be **resilient**, to **reflect** on their work before they tackle a problem as well as during and after they have worked, to be **resourceful** and use different approaches when they learn, and to be **reciprocal** in the way they work – working together when needed and knowing when to work autonomously.



Resilience

Absorption – Teaching must engage pupils so that they are able to be absorbed in what they are doing

Managing Distraction – Pupils must be enabled to recognise and reduce distractions; they must recognise the best environment in which to learn

Noticing – Pupils must be able to perceive subtle nuances, patterns and details in their experiences.

Perseverance – Pupils must be able to keep going in the face of difficulties and challenge the energy of frustration productively

Resourcefulness

Questioning – lessons must encourage the children to ask questions of themselves and others
Making links – pupils should strengthen the ability to see connections between disparate events and experiences
Imagining – pupils will strengthen their ability to use imagination to explore their learning
Reasoning – pupils must be able to think logically, construct arguments and spot flaws in the arguments of others
Capitalising – pupils must be able to access and use the full range of resources from the wider world

Reflectiveness

Planning – identify all the issues that may be encountered
Revising – change plans where necessary, monitor and review progress and identify new goals
Distilling – look at what is being learned and be able to identify the essential features
Meta learning – pupils must develop a self-awareness of their learning styles, how they learn best and be able to talk about the process

Reciprocity

Interdependence – know when it is appropriate to learn individually or collaboratively
Collaboration – pupils must be able to manage themselves in collaborative ventures and respect other points of view
Empathy & listening – contribute to others experiences by listening carefully
Imitation – constructively adopt methods, habits or values from those who are observed

We encourage children to take responsibility for their learning, to be involved in reviewing the way they learn and to reflect on how they learn best – *what makes them learn* and *what makes it difficult for them to learn*

2.2 Curriculum Structure

- **Context for Learning**
  Within our school curriculum, learning is placed into meaningful contexts which develop our learning characteristics, knowledge, understanding and skill. This may be centred around the current theme for the year group or may develop from the interests of the children in the class.

  We see coverage, not just as experiencing different topics, as this type of mindset focusses children on being able answer questions on a theme. Instead, we see coverage as a way of returning to learning objectives by regularly changing the context of that learning. This way, an advancing understanding mindset is established which focusses on developing their understanding by exploring questions and deepening their learning. The context for learning is put into non-standard, non-routine learning experiences which encourage decision making, thinking and reasoning.

- **Learning Objectives**
  Learning happens over time, and learning objectives take time to achieve. Lessons are there not to ACHIEVE learning, but to ADVANCE learning. Therefore, in each subject there is a set of broad Learning Objectives which are repeated each year. It is not seen that these objectives will be achieved in any one year, but that they will be returned to, time and time again, in order to deepen a child's understanding.

- **Expectations: Progressive expectations**
  Learning objectives are then approached in smaller progressive steps assigned to year groups or Phases. We see progression as the widening and deepening of essential knowledge, skills, understanding and behaviours. Our curriculum is divided into progressive expectations which build on previous learning and move learners towards the expectations for the end of Years 2, 4 and 6.

2.3 The Role of Parents **(See Home/School Agreement)**

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. Parents and carers are expected to meet the key responsibilities outlined in the Home/School Agreement. However, if a family is struggling to meet these responsibilities, it is up to the class teacher to engage with them and, where necessary, liaise with the school Family Support Worker to provide the support needed to help them fulfil their responsibilities. Lack of parental engagement is not an acceptable reason for lack of progress.

Parent Responsibilities (as outlined in section 3 of the Home/School Agreement)

a. Make sure my child arrives in time for school
b. Make sure my child is dressed in the correct uniform
c. Make sure my child attends regularly, contacting the school if he or she is absent
d. Support my child with their faith development
e. Attend Parents' meetings to discuss my child's progress
f. Work with the school & my child to promote positive behaviour
g. Ensure an adequate amount of sleep and a healthy diet
h. Be considerate to our school neighbours, particularly when parking
i. Support my child with their homework

How do we inform and involve parents?

- Publishing frequent newsletters
- Use social media to inform parents about progress and developments in school
- Providing a range of opportunities for parents to come in and work with their children: Stay & Play, Family Learning Workshops etc
- Holding parents' meetings to explain various areas of the school curriculum/national assessment/testing arrangements
- Sending information to parents at the start of each half term in which we outline the areas that the children will be studying
- Inviting parents to attend parents' meetings to discuss their child's progress
- Providing end of year reports

2.4 Homework Expectations: **(See Homework Policy)**

At St Thomas More's we ensure that homework activities are given in line with DfE guidelines. Homework will have 2 principal functions:

To **consolidate, reinforce and practise** key learning in reading, spelling and number
To promote **learning and enquiry** as a family

Homework will therefore fall under two separate categories, **Consolidation, Practice and Reinforcement** and **Learning and Enquiry**.

	CONSOLIDATION, PRACTICE AND REINFORCEMENT	LEARNING AND ENQUIRY
Examples	Spelling practice, learning number bonds or times tables. Reading aloud to an adult. A piece of writing that supports work done at school. A mathematical task the supports work done at school. Hand writing practice.	Produce a model. Write a poem. Record a rap or song. Produce a piece of artwork. Take or collect photographs. Interview someone. Gather data or information on a topic.
How will these be recognised?	Children will have weekly spelling and number tests, which will be marked that day and taken home to correct. Mathematical or written work will be corrected and a brief comment issued.	Projects will be displayed in class with a brief note from the teacher attached to each project.
How long will children be given to complete it?	Typically spellings and number fact work will be set at the beginning of the week and tested at the end of the week.	All projects will be set with a deadline for completion. Younger children will have a shorter timescale in which to complete the work, usually 1-2 weeks. Older children will have greater freedom to complete projects of their own choosing from a given list. They would usually have 3-6 weeks to complete their work.
What are the procedures for non-completion of this homework?	If homework of this kind is not completed, one of the following sanctions will apply: Discussion between teacher and child Discussion between teacher/Phase Leader and an expectation that homework is completed Lunchtime supervision given to complete homework Discussion between teacher and parents to discuss why homework not completed and to offer support Headteacher to meet with parents if preceding stages have not been effective	There are no formal consequences for non-completion of Learning and Enquiry tasks. However, teaching staff will do everything possible to encourage and support pupils and their families to complete a project.

Progression in type and quantity of homework

Year R

Weekly reading recorded in home/school Reading Record
Key words to learn
From Spring term: Weekly handwriting/ sounds activity *or* number activity

Year 1

Weekly reading recorded in home/school Reading Record
Key words to learn as applicable
Number facts to learn (QFM)
From October half term: Weekly spelling lists to learn
Half-termly learning and enquiry task

Year 2

Weekly reading recorded in home/school Reading Record
Key words to learn as applicable
Number facts *or* times tables to learn (QFM)
Weekly spelling lists to learn
Half-termly learning and enquiry task

Year 3/4

Weekly reading recorded in home/school Reading Record
Number bonds *or* times tables to learn
Weekly spelling lists to learn
2-3 learning and enquiry tasks to complete every 2-3 weeks
Occasional consolidation or revision tasks

Year 5/6

Weekly reading recorded in home/school Reading Record
Times tables *or* division facts to learn
Weekly spelling lists to learn
A menu of learning and enquiry tasks to complete within 3-4 weeks
Occasional consolidation or revision tasks

3. Planning & Teaching:

Teachers are expected to ensure that:

- they have an understanding of the children's prior learning
- they have an understanding of what the children need to learn
- they have planned lessons and schemes designed to close that gap
- they have a clear understanding of the resources required to teach the learning objectives outlined
- strong subject knowledge which enthuses and challenges all pupils
- they understand the processes their learning should involve
- pupils understand the desired learning outcome and what the learning will look like – why they are learning it and how it relates to previous learning and the real world
- lessons have a clear learning objective which is shared with children in a language they understand and, where appropriate, are displayed for the children to see
- targeted learners are identified for focused support during lessons and work is differentiated to meet the needs of all learners
- all adults assisting in the class are fully prepared and aware of the needs of the children they are supporting and the objective of the lesson
- planning will reflect **Developing, Mastered, Deeper** approach. In a lesson this may be how the differentiation is supported. Across a topic it may be that pupils begin learning basic information on the Romans before going on to look at the impact their civilisation has had of our country.

3.1 Long term planning

(For more specific detail on the content for each Year group, please refer to the Curriculum Overview)

The school's yearly curriculum overviews ensures coverage of the 2014 National Curriculum. We have entitled our curriculum *Learning today for life Tomorrow*, demonstrating our commitment to preparing all children for their future.

Principles of the Curriculum

Our school curriculum aims to equip children with the highest standards of academic, physical, social and emotional skill that will enable them to adapt to an ever changing society, realise their dreams and ambitions and fulfil God's plan for each one of them.

Our curriculum will encourage, develop and promote:

- Spirituality
- Independent learning behaviour
- Confidence and self-belief
- Philosophical thinking
- Good communication
- Performance skills
- Healthy sporting attitudes
- Responsibility and Stewardship
- Social justice and equal opportunity
- Sustainable living
- Personal health, fitness & safety
- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Creativity
- Transferable skills

3.2 Planning and Teaching for Mastery and Depth

Why are we no longer using levels?

Tim Oates, Chair of the Expert Panel responsible for the review of the National Curriculum, explains the problem with 'Levels' was that teachers and pupils would look at a piece of work and feel that it fits a particular Level descriptor, but the problem with this is was that there may be some real weaknesses in the child's

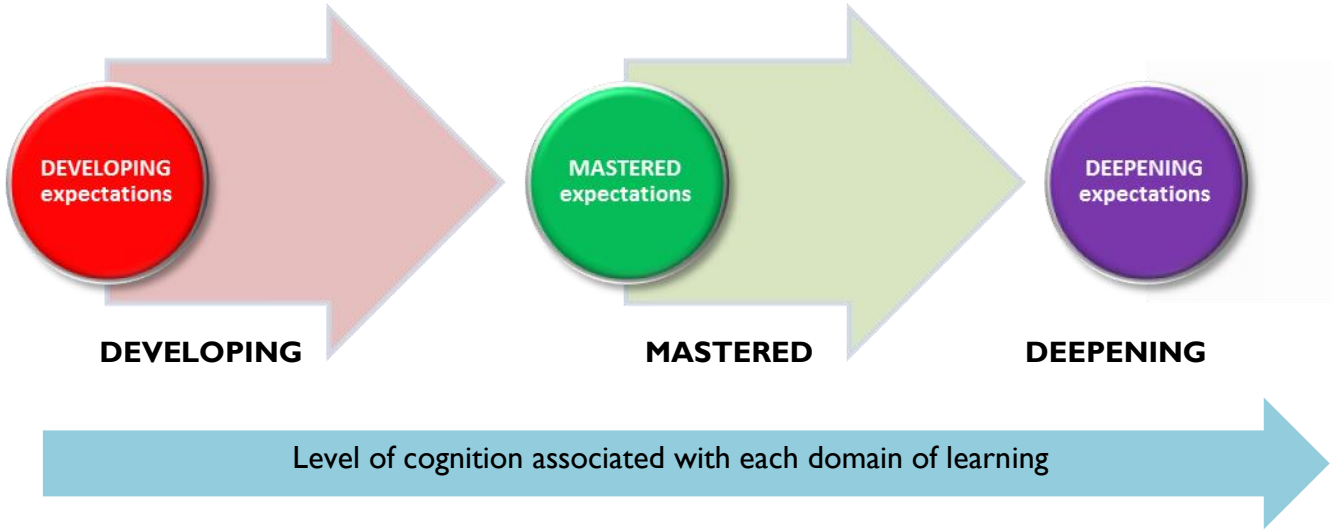
attainment, some key things that they haven't acquired in sufficient depth, and that gave the misleading impression that they were ready to move on. Therefore, it is more appropriate to look at learning under the domains of *Developing*, *Mastered* and *Deepening*.

What is Mastery?

To break learning into a series of 'I can…' statements is to miss the fundamental principles of mastery learning. 'I can…' suggests that something has been achieved whereas there are different levels of 'I can…' A child may be able to do something, but **to have truly mastered something means that they can apply that learning to different contexts**, and to have depth of understanding means that a child is using non-standard, non-routine, rich decision-making. The content is the same but the cognition has changed - there is a much higher cognitive demand.

For us, Mastery is not: *I can… Achieved, Exceeding, Independent, Secure...*

Therefore we have 3 stages of Learning:

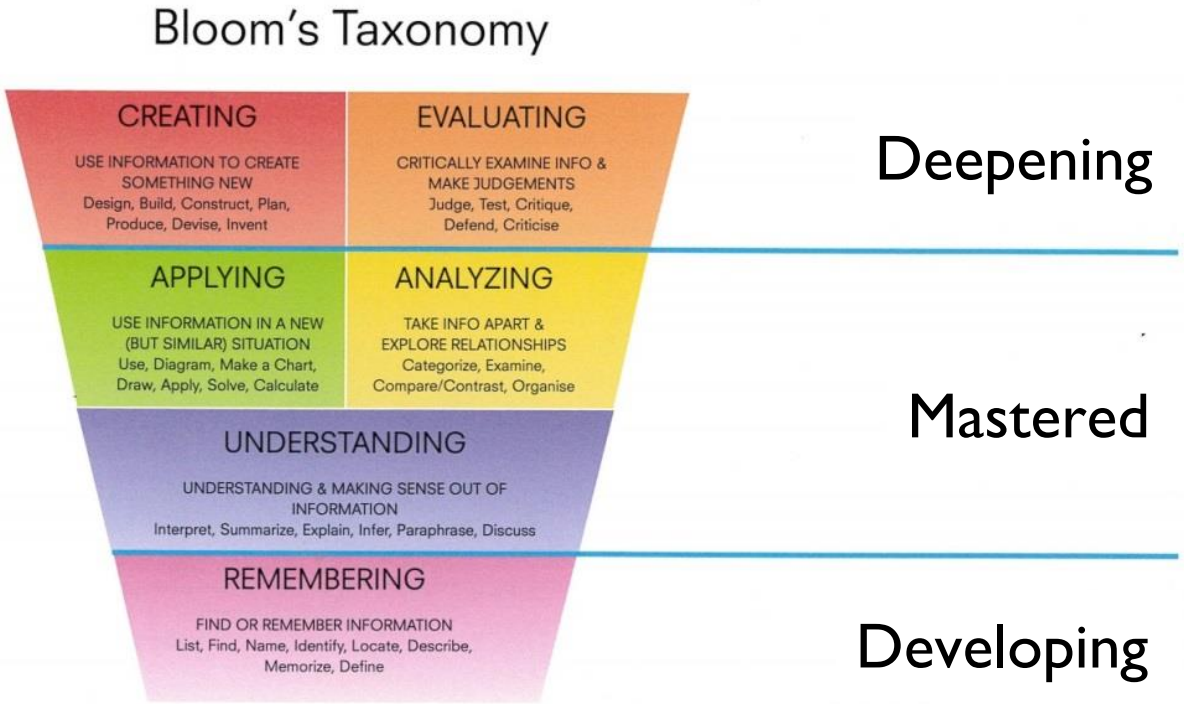


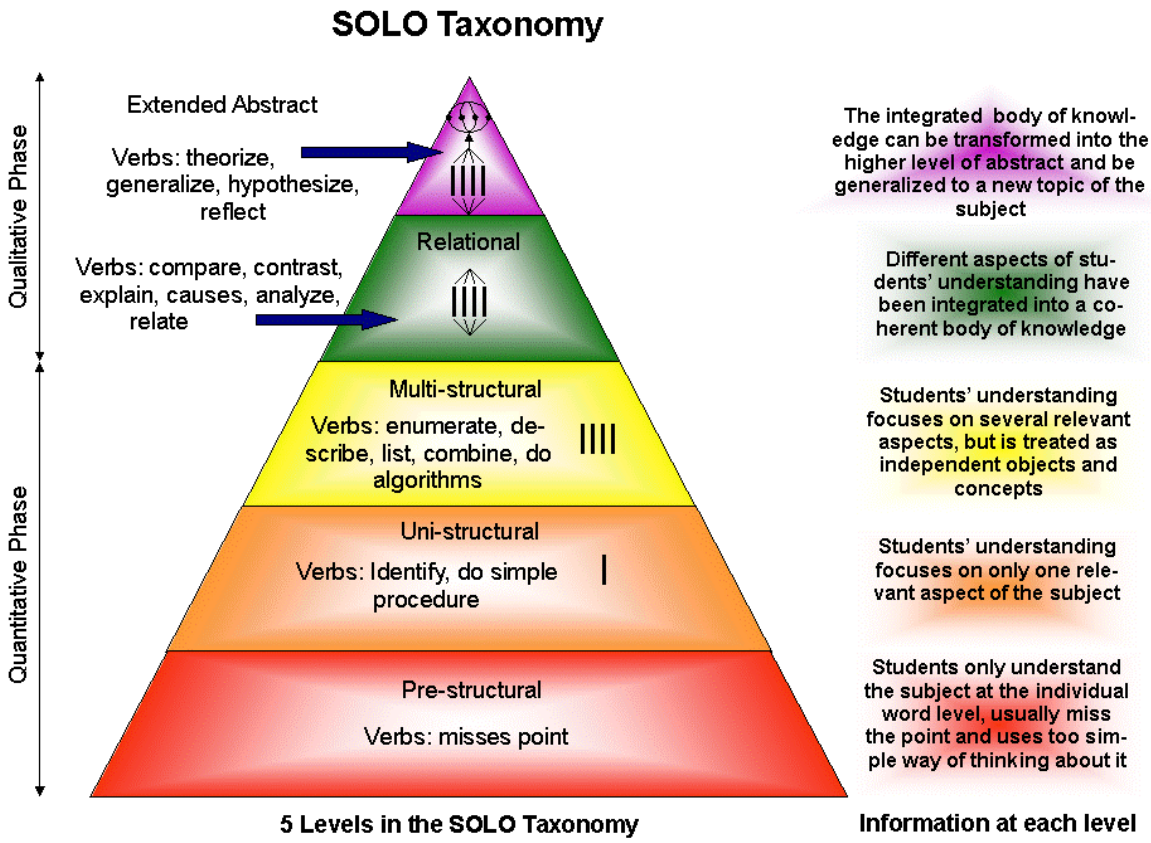
We use the term 'Master**ed**' rather than 'Master**ing**' as pupils need to have completely mastered an objective before they can begin to deepen their understanding further. Pupils can continue to develop and deepen their understanding, but to have Mastery is more definite.

Understanding the *Types of Learning* and the *Style of Teaching* associated with each domain

Types of Learning

For each domain, there is a predominant type of learning. These are in no way fixed, but there is a predominance within each. This can be seen in different Taxonomies such as Bloom's Taxonomy and Solo Taxonomy.





Style of Teaching
As well as a predominant type of learning associated with each domain, there is also a Predominant teaching style associated with each.

It must be understood that the learning DEVELOPS OVER TIME with styles of teaching to support each stage. As with styles of learning, these are also not absolute, but once again there is a predominance.

Modelling → Practise → Coaching

Developing Domain:
Modelling - Showing children how to do it in a certain way. Children are provided with the success criteria, showing them the steps which they need to take in order to be successful.

Mastered Domain:
Practice – Intelligent practise. This domain involves decision making. Children decide whether something is a good idea or not. It is activity lead as children choose how to approach the particular activity with only a reminder of the necessary success criteria. This way, the steps to success become habitual.

Deepening Domain:
Coaching – Asking children how they would/could do it and why they would do it that way. There is much discussion in this domain. Coaching to work through problems nurtures inventive thinking. The success criteria is learner generated. It's new for the particular activity.

To support teaching in each domain, based on Bloom's Taxonomy, are verbs which can be used to prompt children.

DEVELOPING	MASTERED	DEEPENING
list, describe, locate, right, find, state, name, follow, complete, recall, ask, use, match, report, measure, list, illustrate, label, recognise, tell, repeat, arrange, define, memorise	apply, solve, explain, classify, unfair, categorise, identify, organise, modify, predict, interpret, summarise, observe, estimate, compare	select, choose, decide, justify, debate, argue, recommend, assess, discuss, prioritise, determined, create, invent, compose, plan, construct, design, imagine, propose, device, formulate

Planning for Mastery

Interconnecting
To cover all the expectations, and to make learning more meaningful, topics can be interconnected. For example, in Maths, measures may be taught only through the teaching of the 4 rules of number.

Fluency
To become fluent in the fundamentals of a subject, children should experience varied and frequent practice with increasingly complex problems over time. Through this, pupils will develop conceptual understanding and the ability to recall and apply knowledge rapidly and accurately. Susan Jo Russell, principal scientist at the Education Research Collaborative, suggests that fluency consists of three elements:

Efficiency - this implies that children do not get bogged down in too many steps or lose track of the logic of the strategy. An efficient strategy is one that the student can carry out easily, keeping track of sub-problems and making use of intermediate results to solve the problem.

Accuracy depends on several aspects of the problem-solving process, among them careful recording, knowledge of number facts and other important number relationships, and double-checking results.

Flexibility requires the knowledge of more than one approach to solving a particular kind of problem, such as two-digit multiplication. Students need to be flexible in order to choose an appropriate strategy for the numbers involved, and also be able to use one method to solve a problem and another method to check the results.

So fluency demands more of pupils than memorising a single procedure – they need to understand *why* they are doing what they are doing and *know when it is appropriate* to use different methods.

Reasoning
Children must be able to demonstrate their understanding through reasoning. This may be by following a line of enquiry, conjecturing relationships and generalisations, or developing an argument, justification or proof using technical language.

Problem solving
To possess proper mastery of an area of learning, that knowledge needs to be applied to different situations, therefore, children must be given frequent opportunity to solve problems by applying their learning to a variety of routine and non-routine problems with increasing sophistication.

Longitudinal learning
Children 'forget' learning, and so need to be reminded several times. Each time they are reminded, they remember the learning that bit more. Therefore, it is important that learning is frequently revisited.

Interleaving
Interleaving makes things deliberately difficult, thereby meaning that the learning is more firmly encoded in children's memory. With interleaving, all aspects of a concept are taught at the same point. For example, if teaching about volume, how to calculate the volume of a cube, a wedge and a sphere are all taught at the same time, rather than teaching one concept (cube), getting the child to practise calculating that, then moving on to

the next stage (wedge). The child is taught all three together, then practises finding the volumes of all three. This is called *Retrieval Practise* (Rohrer & Taylor, 2007). However, this approach may prove too problematic for those children who are struggling to understand the concept, and so a non-interleaving approach would be adopted. Interleaving requires staff to decide what to teach when children are 'forgetting' other content.

Testing

Research shows that rather than re-learning, re-testing, where children have to recall something again, is more powerful. Obviously, feedback is needed to guide retrieval during the next re-test. Re-testing, rather than re-studying, refocuses the learning, thereby making it clear exactly what needs to be focused on. If child is able to self-identify where they went wrong, it is even more powerful. However, some children may need to things pointed out and misconceptions corrected.

Testing is a part of teaching – helping children learn rather, than to testing teaching. Testing experiences need to be low risk, frequent and designed to use variation and distracting difficulties - common errors and hinge questions which demonstrate whether the children's learning is concrete

PERSONALISATION AND PRECISION LEARNING

Precision learning model:

Flexi-grouping – In order to personalise learning, we do on have set groups. Staff use flexi-grouping where children a in different groups depending on their need., These groups may vary from day to day, and even within a lesson.

Layered inputs – It is rare that all children in a class will require the same input, therefore, learning more often takes place with layered inputs, where staff provide input for children at different times during the lesson.

Break away groups – During an input or task, particular children may need to move to a task which is more suited to their current domain of learning. In this instance, they may choose, or be told to, break away in order to undertake more suitable learning.

Pre-teaching – Some children may benefit from being taught a concept prior to a lesson. This enables the child to more successfully access the learning during the lesson or it may mean that they are able to work with greater independence.

Depth	Cognitive challenge	Predominant teaching styles	Type of success criteria	Nature of progress	Support	Typically pupils will…
Developing	Low level cognitive demand. Involves following instructions.	Modelling Explaining	Steps to success	Acquiring, Refining	High	Name, describe, follow instructions or methods, complete tasks, recall information, ask basic questions, use, match, report, measure, list, illustrate, label, recognize, tell, repeat, arrange, define, memorise.
Mastered	Higher level of cognitive demand. Involves mental processing beyond recall. Requires some degree of decision making.	Reminding Guiding	Remember to include	Applying, Practicing	Medium	Apply skills to solve problems, explain methods, classify, infer, categorise, identify patterns, organize, modify, predict, interpret, summarise, make observations, estimate, compare
Deepening	Cognitive demands are complex and abstract. Involves problems with multi-steps or more than one possible answer. Requires justification of answers.	Coaching Probing Deep questioning	Child generated	Deepening Extending	Low	Solve non-routine problems, appraise, explain concepts, hypothesise, investigate, cite evidence, design, create prove.

3.3 Assessing Learning

Sean Harford, National Director for Schools, makes it clear that any system a school adopts should be effective at assessing pupils' progress through a school's curriculum and should only aim to support their achievement. It needs to have an impact on their learning. There is no specific frequency or type of feedback or marking which is required, but it must help to deepen pupils' understanding. The amount and type depends upon what is needed for the pupil in order to support their learning. Therefore, any assessment, whether it is in the form of marking, feedback or data, is used to support individual pupils with their learning.

We believe the **assessment for learning** is crucial in providing information to be used as feedback in order to modify the teaching and learning activities in which children are engaged

During the lesson:

Children are provided with feedback that enables them to know the extent to which they have been successful in their learning. We view this feedback **as a two way process – from the pupil to the teacher and from the teacher to the pupil**. We believe both are essential.

Feedback from the children is encouraged – they are helped to identify

- where they are experiencing difficulty
- why they might be experiencing difficulty
- what help they might need to overcome the difficulty

Prompt questions are used to guide them in this self-assessment of their learning.

Feedback given to the children is always intended to be positive and formative as to how they might improve in their learning.

3.4 Marking & feedback.

Our Feedback and Marking Policy follows 4 simple principles:

CORRECT DIRECT RESPOND REFLECT

CORRECT:

Over time children develop bad habits that if not addressed become engrained. It can also be tempting for teachers to correct mistakes for the children but research shows that by pointing out the mistakes and correcting them for them, there is no improvement in the habit.

It is therefore our policy to highlight common misconceptions and bad habits in the margin, thereby requiring the children to find the mistake and self-correct it. We will use a consistent set of symbols for the most common errors (see below) and anything else that requires improvement should be highlighted by a pink line in the margin. Areas of pink should also be corrected or improved by the child.

Key for Correction of Common Mistakes or Errors

FS	**Full stop missing**
CL	**Capital letter missing**
-CL	**Remove capital letter**
SP	**Correct common spelling or spelling pattern that should be known by that age**
P	**Consider punctuation**
//	**Paragraphing**
^	**Something missing**
?	**Does not make sense**
“ ”	**Speech mark error**
	I like this!
	Needs improvement

DIRECT:
This principle addresses the importance of quality feedback and its impact on improving children's learning. Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset Theory highlights the detrimental effect on learning brought about by praise like "fantastic; great work; that was really clever," and the importance of praise based on effort. Her research has shown that praise linked to reassuring learners about their intelligence or talent is detrimental to their view about their abilities. It reinforces (fixed mindset) ideas that their achievements are a consequence of IQ or other finite innate ability. Praise that acknowledges process related activities such as practice, study, persistence and good strategies are proven to instil and develop a growth mindset in learners.

Furthermore, Hattie's *high currency teaching strategies* which have significant impact are; the setting of challenging goals, active learning activities based around the application of knowledge, formative evaluation of how well students are progressing towards those goals, and rich feedback to learners about their errors and how they can mitigate for them. All of these, when examined through the lens of Dweck's research into the impact of mindsets, illustrate the incredible value of instilling and supporting growth mindsets in learners through constructive feedback/direction.

It is therefore essential that all written and verbal feedback gives clear direction to children on how their work could be improved. There may be a short comment on the effort or on what has been done well, but most of the feedback should consist of direction on how to improve. The system of '3 Stars and a Wish' would not fulfil this obligation, but 'A Star and 3 Wishes' would. Staff are not required to use this system and are free to use whatever system gives clear direction on how to improve. Direction must however be specific. For example, a comment like "Use more complex sentences" would be better with some direction on one or two specific ways to create complex sentences. E.g. "Try using a subordinating conjunction to create a complex sentence".
It is not expected that all pieces of work have direction of this kind as it is unmanageable. It is therefore our policy that verbal feedback/direction is given to pupils in any teacher-led group activity, but any work carried out independently should have constructive feedback/direction. It may also be necessary where the work has been supervised by a teaching assistant. Any work which has received verbal feedback should be indicated with a Ⓥ even if carried out in a feedback session.

RESPOND:
Children must be given the opportunity to respond to the teacher's marking. This should happen in the following ways:

1. Making the suggested corrections (as outlined by the key above)
2. Improving anything highlighted in pink
3. Writing a short response to the teacher's comment
4. Trialing any suggestions made by the teacher

Children may also be encouraged to comment on anything highlighted in green.
Teachers must also find every possible opportunity to respond, in turn, to the children's comments.

REFLECT:
It is important that children are given the opportunity to reflect critically on their work. This may be in response to any feedback from the teacher, but it is also commonplace to encourage the children to evaluate their work against set criteria, often referred to as *Success Criteria*. There can, however, be an over-emphasis on success criteria, and so, at St Thomas More's, there is only an expectation that these criteria are used by children, peers and staff to critically assess their work towards the end of a unit. This takes the form of **self-assessment, peer assessment and staff assessment**.

Self and Peer Assessment
Checklists should be built up with the children over the course of lessons and displayed on Working Walls. This should then be used by the children to reflect upon their work, but they must be subsequently encouraged to make the changes or additions they need to in order to fulfil these criteria, in conjunction with the feedback they have achieved already. In order for self-assessment and peer assessment to be a useful tool to improve their work, children need to be taught how to effectively assess work and how to make the necessary changes. The elements within success criteria must be taught to a degree that children have a sufficiently deep

understanding of the elements within success criteria in order to make suitably critical judgments about a piece of work.

Staff Assessment
If children are using these success criteria, then staff must validate these judgments and comment on the accuracy of children's evaluations. Staff may also wish to complete the checklist as a form of feedback on a piece of work.

3.5 Resourcing

We have a 'no excuses' culture to resourcing a lesson. Teachers are expected to have the right resource ready at the right time. Governors are committed to ensuring that funding is there so that teachers can plan engaging lessons and curriculum enrichment with confidence, but this must be planned, ordered and prepared in time for the lesson. So that this can be budgeted for, it is vital that staff liaise with Phase and Subject Leaders so that they can produce an accurate budget proposal for the forthcoming financial year.

3.6 Groupings of learners

Our curriculum allows for a wide range of groupings of pupils. This includes individual work, partner work and group work. These groupings may be of similar ability, mixed ability or pupil choice. *Flexigrouping* should be used to reflect the on-going assessment for individual pupils' needs, thereby personalising learning for pupils.

3.7 Inclusion

For more specific detail on classroom organization, refer to the Staff Handbook.
For specific detail on pupil behaviour, refer to the Behaviour Policy

We believe that

- all pupils are the responsibility of the class teacher – and the class teacher will regularly work with all learners
- all of our teaching staff will know who the pupils are with particular identified needs and have put any specified or appropriate action plans into effect (See SEN Policy).
- all Teaching Assistants will have clear roles and briefs to support pupils with learning effectively – rather than simply being present, scanning and supporting in an ad hoc manner.
- Teaching Assistants are given opportunities to teach small groups as appropriate.
- expectations of **all pupils** are very high.

At times it may be necessary for pupils/groups to receive an intervention programme outside of the classroom. It is the responsibility of the **class teacher** to proactively take an interest in, and monitor the effectiveness of, this intervention and know the impact it is having on learning.

To ensure that St Thomas More's is an inclusive school we have a list of classroom non-negotiables to ensure that the classrooms cater for all children. For a more detailed list of the expectations for learning environments, see section 4, *Principles For Effective Practice*.

Every classroom will have:

- Working Walls - exemplar pieces of work, key vocabulary etc
- Displays which support learning and celebrate work
- Tool Kits – rulers, tape measure, sand timers, number lines, number squares, unifix, numicon, alphabet line, sound charts, dictionaries etc
- RE display
- Prayer Corner
- Book Corner which inspires reading

3.8 Behaviour Management **(See Behaviour Policy)**

We believe there must be a calm and positive learning environment throughout our school. We believe that pupils benefit from consistent behaviour management strategies where expectations are very clear. If a child's behaviour is repeatedly of concern, then actions must be taken to support that child. It is not acceptable to repeatedly sanction the child.

4. Principles of Effective Practice

At St Thomas More's we believe in setting high standards for our typical performance baselines. We achieve this by setting out expectations for key aspects of Teaching & Learning so that everyone is aware of what is expected. All staff then use the principles to inform their typical practice every day so that standards are maintained over time. The standards in the following pages help staff to be clear about what is expected in these key aspects. However, these should not be seen as definitive lists, as effective practice must result in impact on pupil progress and even where all aspects of good practice might be observed, this end result is of paramount importance.

4.1 Learning Environment

Outstanding
Classroom environment is consistently stimulating
Classroom environment is consistently neat and tidy
Children can find necessary equipment easily layout is well organised and well thought out
English Working Walls and Maths Walls are regularly updated and used within lessons
Variety of innovative tools to help pupils
Displays are stimulating, creative, exciting and interactive
All displays include appropriate vocab & key questions
Both pupil work and information is used in displays and work on display is mainly mounted
A range of children's work, in a variety of subjects, including Homework, is celebrated
Work in progress, Quick Fire Maths and Readership Award progress is evident
RE display has key questions for the unit, key vocabulary , children's work and encourages reflection
Prayer table has correct Liturgical colour cloth, is uncluttered but with relevant focal artefacts
Reading corner is inviting, promotes reading and stimulates children to read
Spirituality is evident around the classroom and reflects the values of the teacher, children and school
There is a sense that children have a voice within the classroom and take pride in their environment

Good
Classroom environment is regularly stimulating
Classroom environment is regularly neat and tidy
Equipment is easy to find, even for an outside observer
English Working Walls and Maths Walls are used within lessons
Variety of tools to help pupils (e.g. Number lines, High Frequency Words, Phonics, Models, Images)
Displays are creative and interactive
Most displays include appropriate vocabulary & key questions
Displayed work has a balance of information and pupil work and work is mainly mounted
A range of children's work, in a variety of subjects is celebrated
Quick Fire Maths and Readership Award progress is evident
RE display has key questions for the unit, key vocabulary and children's work
Prayer table has correct Liturgical colour cloth and has focal artefacts
Reading corner is inviting and promotes reading
Spirituality is evident around the classroom
Children are expected to care for their environment
Reading corner present

Requires Improvement
Classroom environment is sometimes stimulating, neat and tidy
Children can find equipment and it is clearly labelled
English Working Walls and Maths Walls are present but do not relate to current learning
Only are few tools to help pupils are evident (e.g. Number lines, HFW, Phonics, Models, Images)
Displays are basic but include key questions and sometimes include appropriate vocabulary
Evidence of use of displays, although there may be an overreliance on either info or pupil work
There is some evidence of children's work being celebrated
RE display has key questions for the unit and key vocabulary
Prayer table has correct Liturgical colour cloth
There is no Reading corner present

Inadequate
Classroom is neatened and tidied when observations are imminent
Equipment is visible though kept in a messy fashion
English Working Walls and Maths Walls are not evident
Tools to help pupils are not evident
Displays are basic, work is not mounted and there is little evidence of children's work being celebrated
RE display does not have key questions for the unit or key vocabulary
There is no Reading corner present

4.2 Planning

Outstanding
Planning clearly shows differentiation and how learning for individuals and groups is tailored to individual needs
Sub groups, including pupil premium children, are explicitly planned for and are featured on the planning
The teacher demonstrates excellent AfL and planning changes instinctively based upon teacher assessment
This is annotated onto planning to show how planning has been adapted to ensure needs are being met
There is evidence of flexible groupings being used daily with names of children annotated onto planning
Lesson structure varies to suit individual learning needs which maximizes learning for all pupils
Learning Objectives and success criteria are precise, succinct and break the learning down effectively
Planned activities are suitably challenging for all pupils whilst fully supporting the learning intentions

Good
Planning shows differentiation and there is provision for individuals and groups of children
The teacher demonstrates good AfL and planning is adapted based upon teacher assessment
This is annotated onto planning to show how planning has been adapted
There is evidence of flexible groupings being used with names of children annotated onto planning
Lesson structure varies to maximize learning for all pupils
Learning Objectives and success criteria are precise, succinct and attempt to break the learning down effectively
Planned activities are challenging and match the learning intentions

Requires Improvement
Planning shows differentiation for different groups of children
Planning demonstrates some understanding of AfL and is adapted based upon teacher assessment
Annotations made onto planning
Learning Objectives and success criteria are clear and attempt to break the learning down for the learners
Lesson structure varies to suit the needs of the class
Planned activities match the learning intentions

Inadequate
Planning shows minimal differentiation for different groups of children
There is little evidence that the teacher's planning has been informed by AfL from previous lessons
There is little or no annotations on planning to show how planning has been adapted
There is no variation in lesson structure
Learning Objectives and success criteria are evident
Planned activities may not always match the learning intentions

4.3 Books

Outstanding
Marking is diagnostic and thorough, referring directly to the learning for the lesson by both teacher and learners
Feedback helps pupils move forward in their learning and are consistently acted upon by the pupil
Verbal feedback is at times indicated in books
Rapid progress is evident
Learning Objectives are evident for every piece of work
Regular evidence of the use of success criteria
These are reflected upon by most pupils, peers and teacher, through a variety of assessment techniques
Expectations are consistently high in both presentational features and learning expectations
Books are exceptionally well-presented with any worksheets trimmed and stuck in neatly

Good
Marking refers directly to the learning for the lesson where annotated questions and comments help pupils move forward in their learning and are acted upon by the pupil
Progress is evident in pupils' work
Learning Objectives are evident for the majority of work
Regular evidence of the use of success criteria
Success criteria is reflected upon by most pupils, peers and teacher, through a limited repertoire of assessment techniques
Expectations are mainly high in both presentational features and learning expectations
Books are well-presented with any worksheets trimmed and stuck in neatly

Requires Improvement
Marking refers to learning with questions and comments attempting to help pupils move forward
Pupils often act upon comments made by teachers/peers
Some progress is evident in pupils' work
Learning Objectives are evident for some work
Some evidence of the use of success criteria
There is limited evidence these success criteria are reflected on by pupil/teacher
The teacher identifies poor presentation and their expectations for learning (e.g. spellings) in some books
Books are well-presented with any worksheets stuck in neatly

Inadequate
Marking has minimal reference to the learning for the lesson and some comments fail to move the learning forward
Pupils do not respond to feedback
Errors are not addressed by pupils and little progress is evident
Learning Objectives are sometimes evident and reflected upon by the pupil and teacher
The teacher identifies poor presentation and their expectations for learning (e.g. spellings) in some books
Expectations for presentation in books is low
Worksheets are not stuck in neatly

4.4 Learning

LESSON STRUCTURE			
Inadequate	**Requires Improvement**	**Good**	**Outstanding**
a) Objectives are not communicated clearly at the start of the lesson	a) Objectives are communicated at the start of the lesson with some degree of clarity	a) Objectives are communicated clearly at the start of the lesson	a) Objectives are communicated clearly at the most appropriate point of the lesson. Teacher establishes that the whole class understands what learning is to take place.
b) Materials are ill prepared	b) Most materials are ready	b) Materials are ready	b) Appropriate materials are ready
c) The lesson lacks structure	c) There is generally a clear structure to the lesson	c) lesson structure varies and is adapted to suit learners' needs (eg split inputs)	c) lesson structure is flexible and is adapted to suit learners' needs
d) there is no or little reviewing at end of lesson	d) There is consideration to reviewing at the end of the lesson	d) The learning is reviewed at the end	d) Learning is reviewed at appropriate points and actions resulting from this implemented
e) No provision for those with IEPs or and Pupil Premium children is incorporated in the teacher's planning	e) Some provision for those with IEPs and Pupil Premium children is incorporated with the teacher's planning	e) The learning needs of those with IEPs and Pupil Premium children are incorporated with the teacher's planning	e) The learning needs of those with IEPs and Pupil Premium children are incorporated and integrated with the teacher's planning

SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING			
Inadequate	**Requires Improvement**	**Good**	**Outstanding**
a) Teacher lacks knowledge of the subject content covered in the lesson	a) Teacher has a satisfactory knowledge of the subject content covered in the lesson	a) Teacher has a good knowledge of the subject content covered in the lesson	a) Teacher has a thorough knowledge of the subject content covered in the lesson
b) Subject material was inappropriate for the lesson	b) Subject material was generally appropriate for the lesson	b) Subject material was appropriate for the lesson	b) Subject material was clearly focused and appropriate throughout the lesson
c) Knowledge is not made relevant and interesting for the pupils	c) Knowledge is sometimes made relevant and interesting for pupils	c) Knowledge is made relevant and interesting for the pupils	c) Knowledge is made relevant and very interesting for pupils through different teaching styles

LEARNING			
Inadequate	**Requires Improvement**	**Good**	**Outstanding**
a) The lesson does not link to previous teaching or learning	a) The lesson is loosely linked to previous teaching or learning	a) The lesson is linked to previous teaching or learning	a) Previous teaching is deepened as a result of lesson
b) The ideas and experiences of pupils are often ignored	b) The ideas and experiences of pupils are only occasionally drawn upon	b) The ideas and experiences of pupils are drawn upon	b) The ideas and experience of pupils are drawn upon and new threads followed
c) Activities and questioning techniques lack variety	c) The variety of activities and questioning techniques are limited	c) A variety of activities and questioning techniques are used	c) The diverse range of lively activities and searching questioning techniques used
d) Instructions and explanations are rarely clear and specific	d) Instructions and explanations are quite clear and specific	d) Instructions and explanations are clear and specific	d) Instructions and explanations are clear and specific and are checked to ensure all pupils understand
e) The teacher does not involve all pupils or listen to them and respond appropriately	e) The teacher involves most pupils, listens to them and responds appropriately	e) The teacher involves all pupils, listens to them and responds appropriately	e) The teacher involves all pupils, listens to them and responds appropriately. They prompt and encourage the most timid or disaffected pupils to want to be part of the class
f) Standards of effort, accuracy and presentation are rarely encouraged	f) Acceptable standards of effort, accuracy and presentation are encouraged	f) High standards of effort, accuracy and presentation are encouraged	f) High standards of effort, accuracy and presentation are encouraged and expected
g) Inappropriate methods of differentiation are used	g) Appropriate methods support for pupils with some challenging activities	g) Appropriate methods of support and challenge for all pupils	g) Innovative methods of support and challenge for all pupils

BEHAVIOUR & SAFETY			
Inadequate	**Requires Improvement**	**Good**	**Outstanding**
a) Pupils are not praised regularly for their good effort and achievement	a) Pupils are sometimes praised regularly for their good effort and achievement	a) Pupils are praised regularly for their good effort and achievement	a) Pupils are self-motivated
b) Little action is taken to address poor behaviour	b) Some action is taken to address poor behaviour	b) Prompt actions if taken to address poor behaviour	b) Minimal/No poor behaviour
c) Each stage of learning is demonstrated and children are seldom required to think independently	c) opportunities for pupils to work independently are sometimes missed	c) Children are encouraged to be independent through structured support and modelling	c) Teacher facilitates learning, allowing children to take the lead

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING			
Inadequate	**Requires Improvement**	**Good**	**Outstanding**
a) The teacher needs support to assess pupils' understanding through objective questions	a) Pupils' understanding is tentatively assessed throughout the lesson by the use of teachers questions	a) Pupils' understanding is assessed throughout the lesson by the use of teachers questions	a) Pupils' understanding is continually assessed throughout the lesson
b) Mistakes and misconceptions are not recognised by the teacher and used constructively to facilitate learning	b) Mistakes and misconceptions may be recognised by the teacher and sometimes used constructively to facilitate learning	b) Mistakes and misconceptions are recognised by the teacher and used constructively to facilitate learning	b) Mistakes and misconceptions are quickly recognised by the teacher and used constructively and objectively to facilitate learning
c) The teacher needs support using methods to assess pupils written work	c) Pupils written work is assessed fairly regularly	c) Pupils written work is assessed regularly and accurately	c) Pupils written work is objectively and constructively assessed regularly
d) No feedback is given	d) Feedback relates only to the task rather than the learning	d) Feedback given is pertinent with evidence of this feedback being acted on	d) Feedback given is pertinent with improvements evidenced in subsequent pieces of work

PROGRESS			
Inadequate	**Requires Improvement**	**Good**	**Outstanding**
a) There are times when the pupil is not engaged in the lesson and progress is limited	a) Pupils are engaged in the most part throughout the lesson and make satisfactory progress	a) Pupils remain fully engaged throughout the lesson and make progress	a) Pupils are constantly and constructively engaged throughout the lesson and make excellent progress
b) Few pupils understand what work is expected of them during the lesson	b) Most pupils understand that work is expected of them during the lesson	b) Pupils understand what work is expected of them during the lesson	b) Pupils clearly understand what work is expected of them during the lesson
c) The pupil outcomes of the lesson do not match the objectives set at the beginning	c) The pupil outcomes of the lesson loosely match the objectives set at the beginning	c) Pupil outcomes of the lesson are consistent with the objectives set at the beginning	c) The pupil outcomes of the lesson are consistent with the objectives set at the beginning and pupils are aware that they have been achieved
d) The teacher and pupils work at a pace that does not meet the needs of the whole class	d) For most of the time the teacher and pupils work at a good pace	d) The teacher and pupils work at a good pace	d) The teacher and pupils work at a good pace that is adjusted to meet the needs of individual
e) Pupils cannot explain their thinking, work or responses	e) Pupils are able to give some explanation of their thinking	e) Progress is demonstrated through pupils' reasoning and explanations	e) Progress is demonstrated through pupils' reasoning and clear explanations

RESOURCING			
Inadequate	**Requires Improvement**	**Good**	**Outstanding**
a) Time is poorly utilised and the learning is not maintained throughout the lesson	a) Time is utilised in a satisfactory way and the learning is maintained for most of the time available	a) Time is well utilised in an effective way and the learning is maintained for the full time available	a) Time is effectively utilised and the learning is maintained for the full time available and beyond
b) An erratic pace is maintained throughout the lesson	b) A satisfactory pace is maintained throughout the lesson	b) A good pace is maintained throughout the lesson	b) An excellent pace is maintained throughout the lesson that is adjusted to meet all needs
c) Any support available is under used or not used effectively e.g. Teaching Assistants	c) Fair use is made of any support available e.g. Teaching Assistants	c) Good use is made of any support available e.g. Teaching Assistants	c) Effective use is made of any support available e.g. Teaching Assistants, with these people being instrumental in moving children's learning on
d) Few or inappropriate learning resources are used e.g. IT	d)Some appropriate learning resources are used e.g. IT	d) Appropriate learning resources are used e.g. IT	d) Innovative and well-selected learning resources are used e.g. IT

4.5 TA Support

Organisation of Support
Before lesson, check: Support is indicated on teacher's planning
Expected outcomes for targeted pupils are indicated in planning
There has been liaison before lesson between TA and class teacher
TA has seen (and preferably been involved with) planning
TA understands lesson objective
Appropriate resources reflecting needs of pupils have been prepared and are available
TA is aware of IEP and class targets

Facilitating learning and promoting independence
TA ensures pupils understand learning objective
TA ensures pupils understand learning activity
TA provides appropriate scaffolding for learning whilst ensuring high levels of independence
Appropriate and relevant language is modelled and explained by TA if necessary
Tasks are modelled if necessary
TA uses appropriate questioning techniques

Helping pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills, increase their understanding and work at appropriate pace
TA checks that pupils are activating prior knowledge
TA provides appropriate scaffolded support
TA encourages independence
TA uses ICT where appropriate
TA ensures that tasks are adapted and resources selected to match pupils' individual needs
TA provides high expectations of achievement in given time and facilitates this when necessary
TA uses appropriate strategies when pupils encounter difficulties
TA ensures that there are opportunities for pupils to work independently
TA ensures that there are opportunities to work collaboratively in pairs/groups and to feedback

Helping pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills, increase their understanding and work at appropriate pace
TA provides opportunities for speaking and listening
TA checks pupils can explain what they know/can do during & at end of lesson

Advancing and adapting learning to suit the needs of pupils
TA demonstrates clear subject knowledge
TA knows the next steps in the learning
TA is confident to adapt teaching to meet the needs of the pupils
Correct and appropriate vocabulary is used by both the TA and the pupils

Helping pupils sustain concentration, motivation and appropriate behaviour
TA ensures that pupils demonstrate good on-task behaviour
Pupils respond to reminders to remain on task/work at an appropriate pace
TA helps to motivate pupils so that they show interest in their tasks through questions, responses, discussion with peers/adults
TA uses positive language, encouragement and specific praise where relevant

Informing pupils and teacher about progress and how pupils can improve their work
Pupils listen to feedback from TA and respond appropriately
TA ensures that pupils are aware of their targets and feedback is directed to achievement of targets
TA records and feeds back to class teacher on progress of pupils, including pupils' errors and misconceptions
Achievements of pupils are celebrated

60th Anniversary

1957 - 2017