



Teaching and Learning Policy

1. Introduction and Purpose

This policy outlines our shared vision for high-quality teaching and learning, guided by our school values and a relational approach. It ensures consistency, inclusion, and ambition in every classroom. The purpose is to support staff in delivering a curriculum that enables all pupils to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

2. Vision for Teaching and Learning

At the heart of our approach is a positive classroom culture rooted in strong, trusting relationships. We believe pupils learn best when they feel safe, respected, and ready to engage. Our teaching is grounded in evidence-informed practice, shaped by research into relational approaches, cognitive science, metacognition, and the development of well-connected, secure schemas. We recognise that every pupil is unique, and we are committed to adaptive teaching that responds to individual needs, including those with SEND. Every pupil is entitled to access high-quality teaching that builds knowledge, skills, and confidence over time, ensuring they can achieve their full potential.



Ready



Respectful



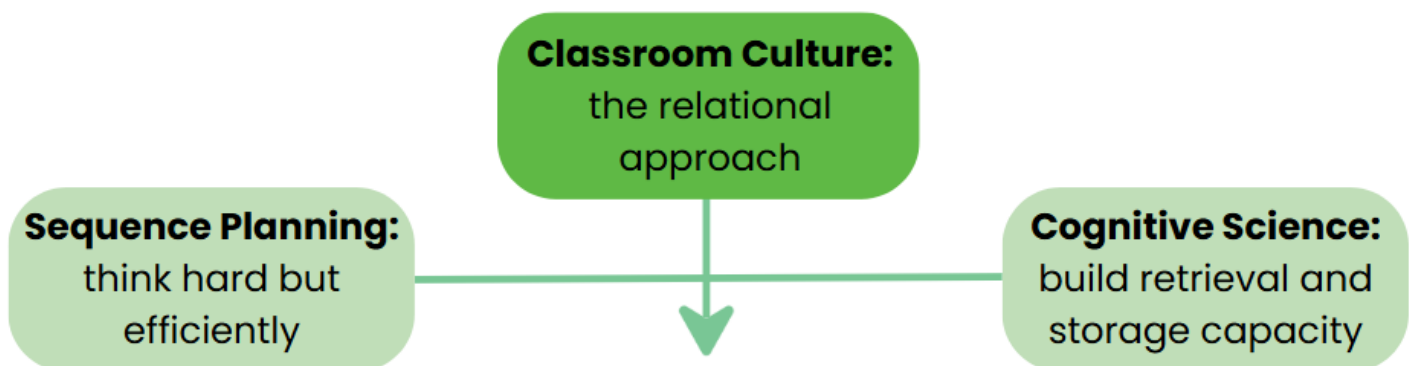
Safe

3. Aims of the Policy

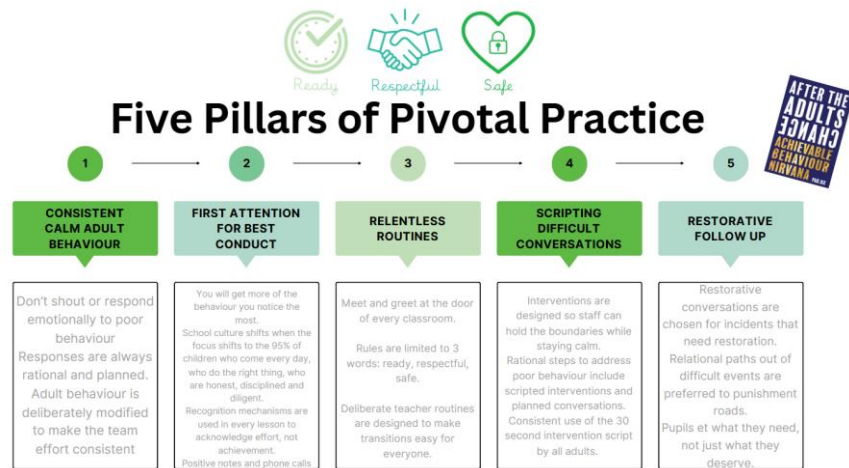
- Provide consistent, high-quality teaching and learning experiences rooted in positive relationships.
- Promote inclusive, adaptive practices and maintain high expectations for all pupils. Including those with SEND.
- Align curriculum delivery with evidence-informed strategies.
- Encourage reflective teaching, professional growth and collaboration.
- Support pupil's emotional, social, and academic development, ensuring they feel safe, respected, and ready to learn, while encouraging them to show respect and consideration for others.

4. Our Model for Teaching and Learning

Our teaching and learning approach is underpinned by three interconnected layers:

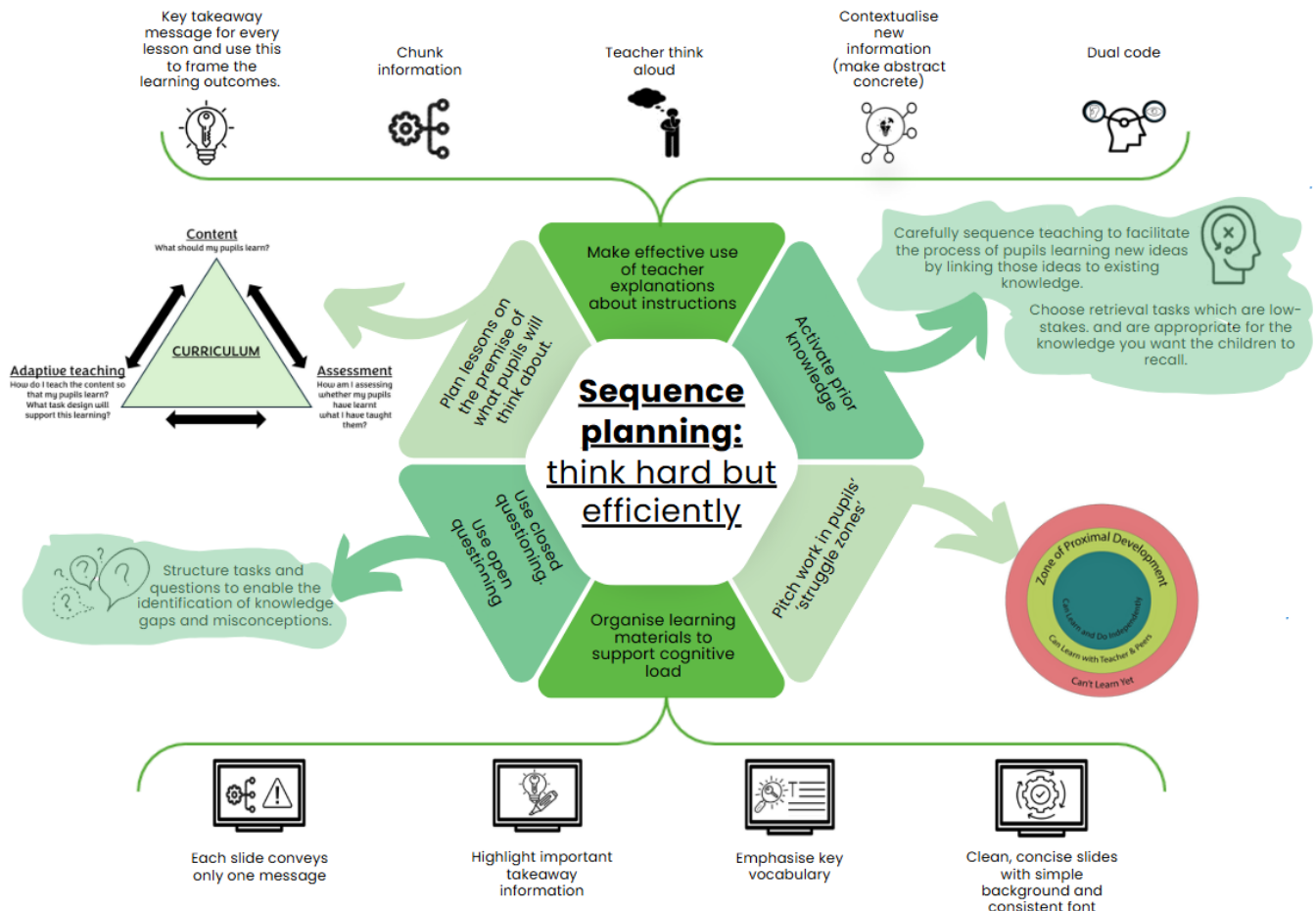


1. **Classroom Culture:** Built on the Paul Dix relational approach and the five pillars of Pivotal Practice, our classroom culture forms the foundation of all learning. Staff prioritise strong, positive relationships, consistent routines, and restorative interactions to ensure all pupils feel safe, supported and ready to learn.



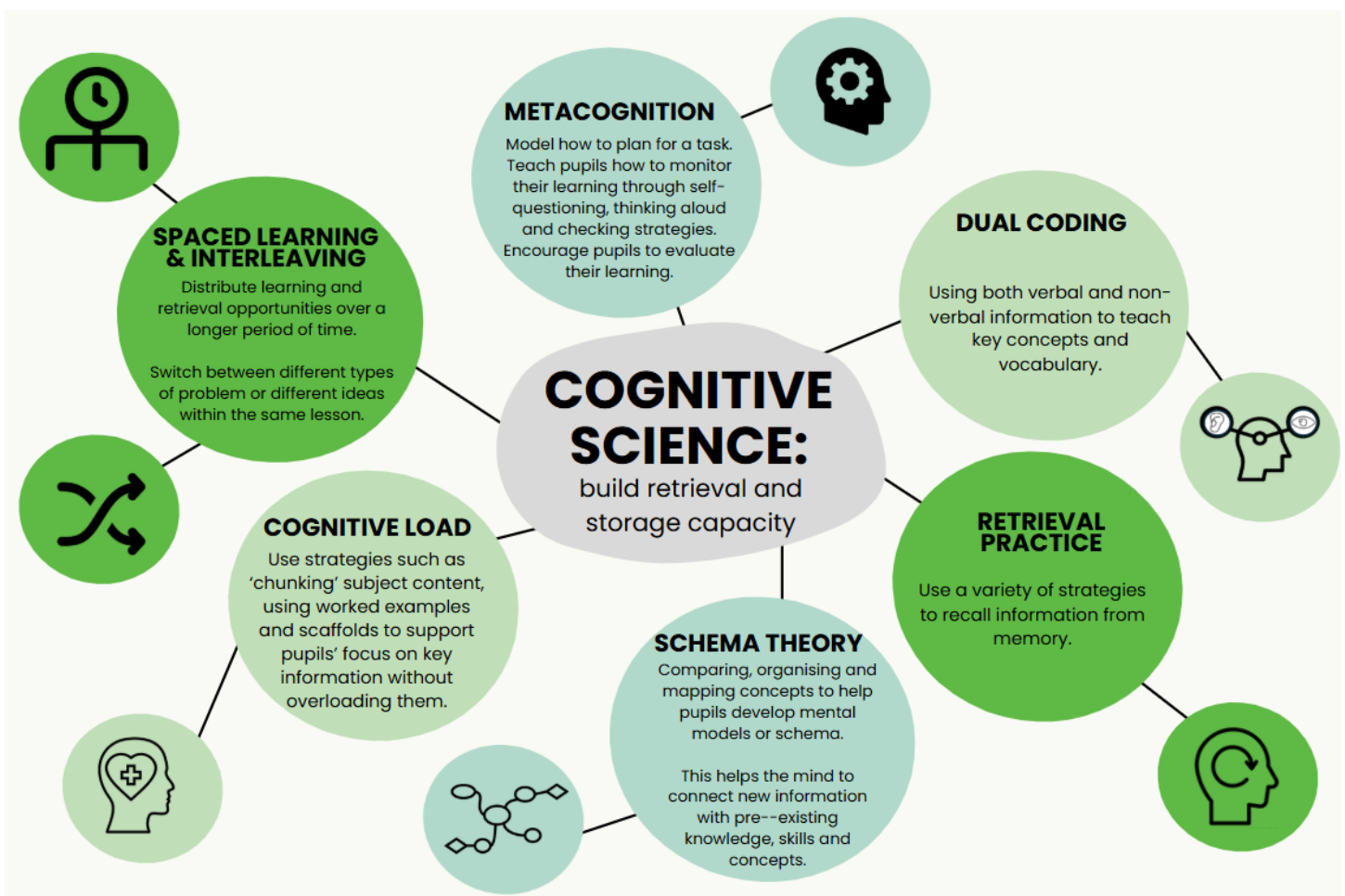
2. **Sequence Planning:** We use evidence-informed strategies to sequence learning thoughtfully. Teachers:

- Activate prior knowledge and build on it incrementally.
- Use effective teacher explanations to introduce new content clearly.
- Pitch work in the pupils' struggle zones to promote productive challenge.
- Organise learning materials to reduce cognitive load.
- Use closed questions to check factual knowledge and open questions to probe deeper understanding and uncover misconceptions.
- Plan lessons based on what pupils will think about—prioritising the depth and clarity of thought.



3. **Cognitive Science:** We integrate key principles of cognitive science to strengthen memory and learning:

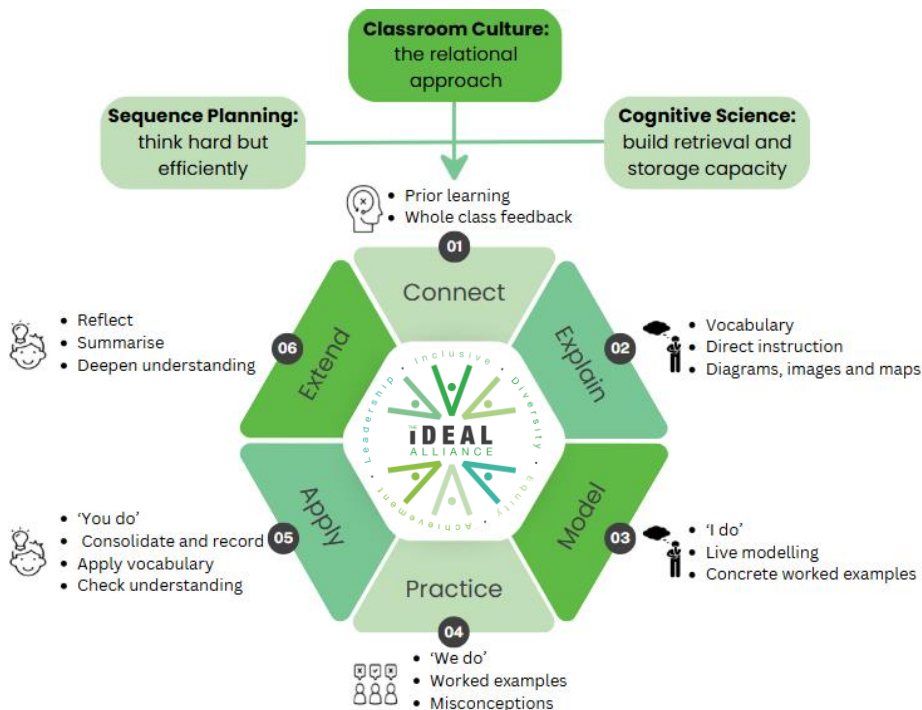
- **Cognitive Load Theory:** Lessons are carefully sequenced and chunked to minimize cognitive overload. Teachers manage intrinsic load through clear explanations, structured modelling and scaffolded tasks
- **Metacognition:** We develop pupil's metacognition by teaching them to **plan, monitor** and **evaluate** their thinking. Through modelling in a "think-aloud", guided questioning and self-assessment, pupils learn to take ownership of their learning and improve their strategies.
- **Dual Coding:** We use a range of visual supports, including Colourful Semantics, Widgit symbols and other visuals to reinforce learning and support understanding.
- **Retrieval Practice, Spaced Learning and Interleaving:** We encourage pupils to regularly recall, review, and apply knowledge through varied activities, helping to strengthen memory, enhance understanding, and improve long-term retention.
- **Schema Theory:** Help pupils connect new knowledge to existing mental frameworks, enabling them to build a deeper understanding and apply information more effectively.



5. Curriculum Planning and Delivery

Teachers plan with the end in mind, building lessons around what we want pupils to think about. Planning is sequenced and strategic, building on prior knowledge and considering cognitive load. Learning materials are structured to support working memory and long-term retention. Cultural capital is embedded and valued. Lessons are planned in the 'struggle zone' where challenge leads to progress. Graphic organisers are used to support schema development and structure thinking. Adaptive teaching is key – lessons are adjusted to meet individual needs in real time. Teachers use closed and open questioning to surface misconceptions and deepen understanding. Classroom culture is underpinned by the 5 Pillars of Pivotal Practice, focusing on respect, consistency, and relational behaviour management.

Our lessons follow a 6-stage structure to ensure coherence, clarity and challenge:



elaboration, variation or metacognitive reflection

Lessons are designed to make pupils think hard but efficiently and to be:

- **Cumulative** – building on prior knowledge over time.
- **Coherent** – logically sequenced and clearly structured.
- **Connected** – making links across topics and subjects.

We adopt and adapt principles inspired by current research to ensure learning is ambitious, inclusive, and knowledge-rich.

Connect – Link new content to prior knowledge to activate schemas.

Explain – Use clear teacher input and worked examples to introduce new ideas.

Model – Demonstrate the thinking strategies needed to succeed in the task in conjunction with: success criteria, scaffolds and dual coding using a “think aloud”

Practice – Scaffold guided practice using the ‘I do, we do, you do’ model.

Apply – Provide opportunities for independent application and problem-solving.

Extend – Deepen learning through

6. Assessment for Learning

Assessment is integral to informing future planning at the lesson, unit, and whole-school levels. Teachers use formative assessment techniques, including questioning, feedback, and observation, alongside low-stakes quizzing, interactive online quizzes, and peer assessments to gauge understanding. At key points, summative assessments provide an overview of progress. Regular data review cycles occur each term, where teachers, subject leads, and senior leaders analyse trends in pupil performance. This ongoing review informs the adjustment of teaching strategies, curriculum planning, and the identification of areas where targeted interventions are needed.

Feedback is timely, focused, and prioritised in verbal formats, live marking, and collaborative discussions between pupils and adults. Pupils annotate their work in purple to show where learning conversations—whether with an adult, peer, or independently—have led to changes in their work. This practice encourages metacognitive reflection on how feedback contributes to their learning progress. Hexagons are used in some subjects to apply SOLO Taxonomy, allowing pupils to visually demonstrate their knowledge and connections. Assessment highlights misconceptions, supports next steps, and encourages self-reflection, aligning with our marking and feedback policy.

7. Learning Environment

We foster classrooms that are inclusive, organised, and nurturing, where every pupil feels safe, respected, and ready to learn. Clear routines, visual supports, and calm spaces help minimise distractions and maximise thinking time. Displays, working walls, and resources—including graphic organisers, Widgit visuals and Colourful Semantics—promote independence and reinforce key knowledge and vocabulary. We also recognise that individual needs, lived experiences, and mental health can affect readiness to engage, and that some pupils may need their basic needs met before learning can take place.

To support emotional regulation and readiness to learn, we provide calm corners with sensory regulation tools, access to dark dens, and structured sensory circuits. Pupils are supported through the use of 5-point scales, weighted walks, and big body breaks to manage cognitive and sensory overload. These tools help pupils recognise and regulate their emotions, ensuring they feel settled and are ready to engage fully with learning.

8. Inclusion and Adaptive Teaching

Adaptive teaching is central to our approach. Teachers respond dynamically to pupil needs, adjusting pace, input, and scaffolding to ensure all pupils can engage meaningfully with learning. We recognise that some pupils require a stage-not-age approach and may access individualised learning pathways, nurture provision, or bespoke packages to support their development, communication and well-being.

SEND and EAL learners are supported through high-quality universal provision and, where appropriate, targeted interventions. Early communicators are supported through Makaton, PECS, and communication boards, ensuring they have a voice and can participate in the classroom community. We use Widgit symbols, graphic organisers, Colourful Semantics, and tailored resources to support communication, understanding, and independence. Vocabulary development is explicitly prioritised across the curriculum to ensure all pupils can access and express key concepts.

Our approach is underpinned by the belief that every pupil belongs, is valued, and is an active part of our school community. We hold high aspirations and have no ceiling on achievement for any pupil, balancing these

expectations with the understanding that pupils may need different levels of support, adaptation, and care to achieve their potential.

9. Professional Development

Professional development is strategic, continuous, and aligned with whole-school improvement priorities. CPD is planned around shared goals and delivered through a blend of in-school training, the National College, and external providers. Staff collaborate in learning teams to drive improvement, share practice, and foster a culture of professional dialogue. CPD supports reflective practice, deepens curriculum knowledge, and strengthens pedagogy to improve outcomes for all pupils.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

Consistency and quality are monitored through pupil profile meetings, learning walks, book looks, planning meetings, and pupil and parent voice. Leaders at all levels play an active role in quality assurance and driving improvement. INSETs and CPD are planned in response to identified priorities. Feedback loops from school councils, pupil voice and family engagement help inform ongoing development and ensure the approach remains responsive to the needs of the whole school community.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Class Teachers:** Plan and deliver high-quality, inclusive lessons, assess pupil progress, and adapt teaching to meet diverse needs.
- **Teaching Assistants:** Support adaptive teaching, facilitate pupil independence, and contribute to individualised learning plans.
- **Subject Leaders:** Drive academic standards, oversee curriculum development, and lead/organise CPD initiatives for staff.
- **Senior Leaders:** Monitor the quality of teaching and learning, lead professional development, and ensure alignment with school priorities.
- **Governors:** Provide strategic oversight, ensure accountability, and hold the school to account for its performance and development.

12. Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in curriculum or practice. It is the responsibility of the curriculum subject leads, alongside SLT, to ensure the policy remains relevant and effective.