



Teaching and Learning Policy

Spring 2026

At Sherborne St John C of E Primary School, our policies are designed to ensure that every child can **achieve** their full potential, **enjoy** their learning, and be **inspired** by their experiences. This policy is underpinned by our core Christian values of **Trust, Truth and Forgiveness**, which enable us to build a secure, loving and thriving environment for our entire school community.

In line with our vision, this policy seeks to:

- **Foster Trust:** Building strong relationships with one another and exploring our relationship with God.
- **Uphold Truth:** Inspiring integrity and the courage to stand up for what is right.
- **Practice Forgiveness:** Creating an environment of patience and understanding where we take responsibility for our choices and move forward together when things go wrong.

Rooted in the Christian faith and the teachings of the Bible, our school remains a caring community where every individual is safe in the knowledge that they are loved and valued by God.

Vision and Philosophy

At our school, we believe that high standards and inclusion are not binary choices; they are dependent on one another. We utilise **Adaptive Teaching** to ensure that every child-regardless of their starting point-accesses a rich, ambitious curriculum.

1.The Core Pillars of Great Teaching

Our instructional framework is rooted in **Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction**, focusing on the cognitive science of how students learn, retain information, and develop into independent experts. By bridging the gap between research and the classroom, we ensure that every lesson is engineered for maximum impact.

1a. Systematic Retrieval: Daily Review

We believe that *if nothing has been changed in the long-term memory, nothing has been learned.*

- **Daily Review:** Every lesson begins with a high-impact retrieval task. This strengthens the neural pathways to prior knowledge, making it easier to connect new concepts to what is already known.
- **Checking for Understanding:** Teachers use frequent, low-stakes questioning to verify that the review has been successful before moving forward.



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- **Feedback:** Retrieval must be self-marked or peer-marked immediately to highlight and correct misconceptions before the new lesson content begins.

1b. Adaptive Teaching (High Challenge, High Support)

We reject differentiation by task, which often lowers expectations for specific groups. Instead, we teach to the top and **ensure scaffolds are used to support those that need it.**

- **Universal High Objectives:** All pupils strive toward the same ambitious learning outcome¹.
- **Scaffolding Techniques:** Teachers provide temporary supports-such as sentence starters, knowledge organisers, word banks, or worked examples-which are gradually removed as pupil competence increases.
- **In-Class Intervention:** Teachers use live marking to identify pupils struggling in real-time, providing immediate verbal feedback or additional modelling rather than simplified worksheets.

1c. Expert Modelling & Metacognition

We make the invisible thought processes of an expert visible to the novice learner through the **Gradual Release of Responsibility** model.

- **I Do (Modelling):** The teacher thinks out loud while completing a task on the board, demonstrating not just the *what*, but the *how* and *why* behind expert decisions.
- **We Do (Guided Practice):** The class completes a high-quality example together. This involves heavy questioning, mini-whiteboard checks, and collaborative problem-solving to build confidence.
- **You Do (Independent Practice):** Pupils apply the modelled steps to a new context. This phase is only entered once the teacher is confident (via checking for understanding) that the success rate will be high.

1d. Checking for Understanding: High-Frequency Questioning

We move away from self-report questions (e.g., "*Is everyone happy with that?*") and instead use diagnostic techniques to gauge the success of the entire cohort in real-time.

- **Equity of contribution:** To maintain high engagement, teachers select students to answer rather than waiting for hands to be raised. They may also use 'task not ask' (*show or draw an adverb*) This ensures all pupils are cognitively active, able to show what they know and unable to opt-out.



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- **Mini-Whiteboards** This is our primary tool for an immediate all-student check. By asking for a 3-2-1-Show, the teacher can instantly see the success rate of the class and decide whether to re-teach or move on.
- **Process Questions:** Beyond asking for the answer, teachers ask "How do you know?" or "What was the first step you took?" to probe the student's metacognitive process.

2. Inclusion and SEND

Inclusion is not an add-on but the thread that runs through every lesson. We believe that what is necessary for students with SEND is often beneficial for all learners.

Quality First Teaching (QFT)

Our primary tool for supporting SEND students is high-quality, evidence-based classroom instruction.

- **The High-Challenge Mindset:** We maintain high expectations for all, ensuring students with SEND access the same rich curriculum as their peers.
- **Universal Design:** Lessons are planned with the most vulnerable learners in mind from the outset, using small steps to prevent cognitive overload.

Proactive Removal of Barriers

Teachers are responsible for adapting the *environment* and *resources* rather than the *objective*.

- **Adaptive Support:** Instead of simplifying content, we provide tools to bridge the gap. This includes visual timetables to reduce anxiety, word banks to support Tier 3 vocabulary, and assistive technology like speech-to-text or immersive readers.
- **Dual Coding:** We use visual aids (Widgit etc.) alongside verbal explanations (Dual Coding) to help students process information through two different channels, which is particularly vital for students with working memory or processing challenges.

The "Bottom 20%" Strategy

We are committed to closing the attainment gap by focusing intensely on our lowest-attaining pupils.



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- **Articulating Support:** Teachers must be able to clearly explain the specific pedagogical choices they are making to support these students during a lesson.
- **Fluency and Over-learning:** We provide the "Bottom 20%" with additional opportunities for retrieval and over-learning to ensure foundational concepts are secure before moving to complex application.
- **Live Intervention:** During "Independent Practice, teachers prioritise checking in with this group first to provide immediate, corrective feedback and prevent the practice of errors.

3. Feedback and Marking: High Impact, Low Workload

Our approach moves away from laborious "after-the-fact" marking toward high-frequency, responsive feedback that happens when it matters most: during the learning process.

The Power of Live Feedback

Research indicates that the shorter the gap between the task and the feedback, the greater the impact on student progress.

- **At the Point of Error:** Teachers use active monitoring to identify misconceptions as they happen. This prevents pupils from practicing mistakes and ensures they leave the lesson with a correct mental model.
- **Immediate Correction:** Using tools like Live Marking (brief, focused stamps or codes in books during the lesson), teachers provide verbal or written prompts that require the pupil to act immediately.

Systematic Feedback Loops

We utilise Rosenshine's principle of checking for understanding to provide whole-class feedback efficiently.

- **Whole-Class Feedback:** Instead of writing the same comment 30 times, teachers use a "feedback sheet" to note common errors. The next lesson begins with a dedicated "DIRT" (Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time) session to address these gaps collectively.
- **Self and Peer Assessment:** To build metacognitive skills, we train students to assess their own work against clear success criteria or 'Gold Standard' examples.

Manageable Summative Marking

Summative marking is reserved for key milestones and is designed to be purposeful rather than performative.



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- **Focus on "Next Steps":** Meaningful marking should not just tell a student what they got wrong, but exactly how to improve. We prioritise "actionable" feedback that requires a student response.
- **Workload Sustainability:** We prioritise teacher wellbeing by focusing on the *impact* of feedback on the learner rather than the *volume* of red ink on the page. If feedback doesn't result in student action, it is not effective.

4. Professional Development

To be a 'Great School', we must be a learning organisation where staff development is continuous, evidence-based and directly linked to student outcomes.

Evidence-Informed Practice

All staff are entitled to access high-quality educational research to ensure our methods are grounded in what works.

- **Research Literacy:** We utilize resources such as the **EEF (Education Endowment Foundation) Guidance Reports** and cognitive science research (e.g., Rosenshine, Willingham, Bjork) to inform our classroom decisions.
- **Curated Insights:** The school provides summaries and "deep dives" into current pedagogical trends, ensuring staff aren't just following fads but are implementing proven strategies.

Weekly High-Impact CPD

Professional development is a weekly commitment, not an annual event.

- **SIP Alignment:** Weekly CPD sessions are tightly linked to the **School Improvement Plan (SIP)**, ensuring that every teacher is moving in the same strategic direction.
- **Collaborative Learning:** These sessions prioritise "deliberate practice," where staff can model techniques for one another and refine their craft in a supportive environment.

Instructional Coaching

We believe that even the best teachers can get better. Our coaching model is designed to provide personalized, bite-sized improvements.

- **The Coaching Cycle:** Rather than one-off annual reviews, staff engage in regular Instructional Coaching. This involves a peer or lead teacher observing a short segment of a lesson and providing one "action step" that can be implemented immediately.



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- Low Stakes, High Impact: This model removes the "fear factor" of observation, focusing entirely on the granular habits that lead to better learning.

5. The Monitoring Cycle (Quality Assurance)

We maintain high standards through a robust, supportive, yet rigorous monitoring cycle. The aim is a "no surprises" culture of professional growth.

Method	Frequency	Focus
Learning Walks	Weekly/Fortnightly	Snapshots of engagement, environment, and adaptive teaching.
Book Looks	Termly	Evidence of progress over time, pride in work, and effective feedback.
Formal Observations	Once per Term	Deep dive into pedagogy and impact on pupil outcomes.
Pupil Voice	Termly	Can the children explain what they are learning and why?

Feedback Loop

Following any monitoring activity, staff receive **formative feedback**. This identifies "Strengths" and "Areas for Development" (AFDs). If an AFD is identified, a peer mentor or Lead Practitioner will provide coaching.

6. Procedures for Improvement and Capability



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While our culture is one of support, we have a duty of care to our pupils to ensure teaching is consistently good.

1. **Informal Support** If monitoring suggests a teacher is requiring attention, they enter a 4-week informal support period. This includes coaching, team-teaching and, if suitable, external CPD.
2. **Formal Review:** At the end of 4 weeks, progress is reviewed. If the expected standard is met, the teacher returns to the standard monitoring cycle.
3. **Formal Capability:** If, despite support, the quality of teaching remains a concern and impacts pupil progress, the **Formal Capability Procedure** will be triggered.
 - This involves formal meetings, set targets, and specific timescales (usually 4–10 weeks).
 - Failure to show significant, sustained improvement during this phase may lead to further HR proceedings in line with the local authority.

Appendix 1

Expected structure of an effective lesson

Appendix 2

Fundamentals of Effective Classroom Management