



Teaching & Learning Policy

Author/Reviewing member of staff	Mr P Barber & Mrs R Murray
Date updated	Autumn 2025
Reviewing Committee	Curriculum, Teaching & Learning
Date Policy Approved	
Date of next review	Autumn 2027



Contents

Aims	3
Responsibilities	3
Learning Values	3
We believe children learn best when:	5
Quality First Teaching	5
The following is shared with staff to support their understanding of adaptive teaching strategies:	7
Learning Objectives	8
Challenge	8
Explanation	8
Modelling (I do)	9
Guided practice with scaffolding (We do)	9
Independent, deliberate practice (You do)	9
Questioning	9
Whole class participation	9
Retrieval Practice	9
Teaching Assistants	10
Classroom Environment	10
Continuing Professional Development	10

Aims

The quality of the education that children receive at Westacre Middle School is based upon the quality of the teaching and learning we provide. This policy aims to summarise the key features of outstanding teaching that will provide opportunities for children to realise their true potential and match our school ethos;

Inspire. Challenge. Achieve.

Teaching at Westacre will link to our Curriculum policy, so will promote our three curriculum drivers of Aspirations, Communication and Diversity whenever possible.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all our teachers to provide the highest quality teaching and learning for all our children, following the expectations set out in this policy.

It is the responsibility of all our support staff to support teaching and learning for all our children with flexibility and resourcefulness, following the expectations set out in this policy.

It is the responsibility of all our year leaders to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their year teams, offering support where necessary.

It is the responsibility of all our subject leaders to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning within their subject (offering support where necessary) and share this information in subject review meetings with the Deputy Headteacher.

The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

The Governors have a statutory duty to monitor that the processes are in place and that the school is addressing pupil and teacher needs.

Learning Values

We encourage children to focus on developing specific learning attitudes. We call these 'The 6Rs.'

The 6Rs are:

- Reflection
- Readiness
- Responsibility
- Resourcefulness
- Reasoning
- Resilience



To help foster an atmosphere of independent learning and positive behaviour across school, we teach our pupils about the characteristics of successful learners through this 6Rs approach. Lessons in PSHE show children what it means to be responsible, resilient, ready, reflective, reasoned and resourceful learners. Through displays around school, individual and group celebrations and rewards, teacher feedback and a whole school consistent use of the language within this approach, Westacre pupils are fully aware of the skills and behaviours needed to help them be successful in their learning journeys here and into the future.

We recognise the importance of promoting and rewarding positive learning behaviours in school and do this through our 6Rs Learning Values system. Children are taught about resilience, reasoning, reflection, resourcefulness, responsibility and readiness, and are awarded R merits if they exhibit these well in class. Associated certificates based on earning specific numbers of merits are then handed out and celebrated, in whole school assembly whenever possible. Teachers offer regular verbal and written praise as part of our Feedback policy, and achievements of every kind are valued. Children who exhibit examples of Outstanding Learning, for their age and ability, will also be rewarded by having the opportunity to share their learning with other members of staff, such as SLT, year leaders and subject leaders.

In order to ensure a consistent approach to our 6Rs approach across school, all members of the school community will use the following shared language:

Learning Value	Resourcefulness, readiness, responsibility, reflection, reasoning and resilience are the six learning values that we aim to instil in all children. They are the characteristics of successful learners. These are promoted regularly in lessons and form part of our school vision and values alongside the monthly Living Values.
Merit	Reward given by any member of staff to an individual pupil in recognition of them exhibiting excellence with any one of the 6Rs learning values. They can also be referred to as an 'R merit'. Children are always to be made aware of which of the 6Rs they are receiving a merit for (either verbally or in writing if part of marking in books). Children will also receive one merit (for responsibility) if they complete all aspects of homework to the expected standard during a given week. All merits to be recorded in pupil's learning journal by member of staff giving merit initialling the next blank number on the 6R Merits grid.
6Rs Bronze Award	Certificate given to children in recognition of receiving 10 merits
6Rs Silver Award	Certificate given to children in recognition of receiving 25 merits
6Rs Gold Award	Certificate given to children in recognition of receiving 50 merits
6Rs Platinum Award	Certificate given to children in recognition of receiving 100 merits
6Rs Champion	Any child who receives 150 merits in a school year and, therefore, completes the merit grid in their learning journals. Individual prizes given out in final assembly of school year, including badges which can be worn with school uniform during the following school year.
6Rs Token	Slip of paper to be signed by teacher to confirm child has earned one of the above awards. Child then delivers this to Deputy Headteacher's office by the end of Friday to guarantee certificate being given in assembly the following Monday.
100 Club	Reward for children who earn a 6Rs Platinum Award (alongside children who achieve 100% attendance during a school year)
House points	System used to combine individual rewards for exhibiting excellence with the 6Rs and participation / achievement with house events. The following is a new system of points allocation to align both of the above aspects and make the system easier to understand: <i>Children gain 10 house points for their house when they earn a 6Rs Bronze</i>

	<i>Award</i> <i>Children gain 25 additional house points for their house when they earn a 6Rs Silver Award</i> <i>Children gain 50 additional house points for their house when they earn a 6Rs Gold Award</i> <i>Children gain 100 additional house points for their house when they earn a 6Rs Platinum Award</i> <i>Children gain 150 additional house points for their house when they become a 6Rs Champion</i> <i>Houses gain 10 house points for finishing 4th in a house event</i> <i>Houses gain 25 house points for finishing 3rd in a house event</i> <i>Houses gain 50 house points for finishing 2nd in a house event</i> <i>Houses gain 100 house points for finishing 1st in a house event</i> <i>Children may also gain extra house points for participation in certain house events, if deemed necessary by the organiser of the event</i> House points (from all of above) are recorded and totalled by the Deputy Headteacher and shared on the homepage of the school website, as well as regularly in whole school assemblies.
Termly house champion	House which earns the most house points in one term Prize for this is a non-uniform day (theme is the colour of the winning house) for staff and children in the winning house only
Overall house champion	House which earns the most house points by the end of the school year Trophy handed to house leaders & captains during end of year assembly

We believe children learn best when:

1. Learning activities are well planned, ensuring progress in the short, medium and long term
2. Teaching and learning activities enthuse, engage and motivate children to learn, and foster their curiosity and enthusiasm for learning
3. Assessment informs teaching so that there is provision for support, repetition and extension of learning for each child, so that they can reach their full potential
4. The learning environment is ordered, the atmosphere is purposeful and children feel safe
5. There are strong links between home and school, and the importance of parental involvement in their children's learning is recognised, valued and developed

Quality First Teaching

As part of effective everyday practice in the classroom, the following quality-first teaching strategies are used to support all learners throughout the entire curriculum at Westacre:

- Clear learning objectives for all lessons (in the form of a WALT with the phrase 'we are learning to' used / shared with the children) that are referred to regularly throughout the lesson
- Clearly, modelled process-driven success criteria that are referred to regularly throughout the lesson (with feedback provided in the form of self, peer and / or teacher assessment of each criteria given in each lesson used)
- Teacher feedback to promote progress (verbal and / or written) is given as per school feedback policy
- All adults in room engaging with pupils throughout every lesson, including the promotion of independent learning (linked to whole school focus on 6Rs independent learning skills)
- Active engagement of pupils is promoted, including through the use of oracy strategies
- Clear real-life / careers contexts / reasons are shared whenever appropriate

As part of high-quality teaching, the following adaptive teaching strategies are used to support all learners throughout the entire curriculum at Westacre:

- Use of I Do, We Do, You Do approach to ensure teacher demonstration is followed up by pupil-focussed practice, to provide ongoing assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills. This approach could be seen within a lesson, eg. Maths, or across a sequence of lessons, eg. English.
 - I Do – teacher modelling
 - We Do – pupil practice, collaborating with a writing partner where appropriate
 - You Do – independent practice
- Flexible groupings to ensure needs of all pupils are met, based on some form of prior assessment
- Scaffolding, when necessary
 - Visual: a task planner, a list of steps a pupil needs to take, model examples of work, images that support vocabulary learning
 - Verbal: *"Let's look at this together..." "What have you done before, that will help you with this task?" "Don't forget, your work needs to include..."*
 - Written: *a word bank, a writing frame, sentence starters*
- Questioning that deepens and develops pupil understanding e.g. "How do you know?", "Why do you think?", "How could you...?", "What do you know?", "What do you need to find out?", "What do you notice?", "How could you check?"
- Challenge that encourages children to think deeply and work just outside their comfort zone (cognitive demands are complex and abstract. Involve problems with multiple steps or more than one answer. Requires justification of answers.)

The above strategies are summarised by our ethos: 'Teach, Check, Respond'

The following is shared with staff to support their understanding of adaptive teaching strategies:

Before teaching		
Step 1: Anticipate learning barriers - different levels of prior knowledge - vocabulary - a particular production skill such as writing - a particular SEND - decoding written text - limited working memory - cultural experience - EAL - a common misconception - a lack of metacognitive knowledge or strategy (understanding of their readiness to learn) - inherent complexity of resources / information	Step 2: Plan to address them - read a text in advance - supply background knowledge - use pictures/videos to contextualise upcoming information - teach vocabulary - introduce a concept via discussion - teach necessary learning behaviour (e.g. metacognition resources) - improve accessibility (eg. clarity of resources, font size, proximity to speaker, visibility of whiteboard) - plan to scaffold - prepare a model to share with, for example, a visualiser (available in all classrooms) - plan targeted support from a TA or teacher	Step 3: Use assessment to elicit evidence of learning - questioning - low-stakes quizzes - retrieval tasks (e.g. Can We Stills) - tests - production tasks (eg. writing, setting up an experiment, painting, performing) - talk - hinge questions (a question used during a lesson to check understanding of class. It is usually multiple choice and includes incorrect answers based on common misconceptions) - labelling diagrams - answers on sticky notes or whiteboards <i>Assessment information informs subsequent planning and in-the-moment adaptations.</i> <i>Other considerations:</i> <i>How will you monitor responses?</i> <i>Does the assessment method itself create barriers? There's a trade-off between quality of information and practicality – be aware of this.</i>
<i>NOTE: Don't confuse barriers with desirable difficulty and remove all challenge!</i>		

During Teaching
Examples of in the moment adaptations: - adjust the level of challenge - change you language and questioning - clarify a task or provide additional steps to success - re-explain a concept or explain it in a different way - give additional examples and practice - allocate temporary focus groups - give additional scaffolding - provide a prompt - set an immediate goal - improve accessibility (e.. proximity to teacher, visibility of whiteboard) - incorporate technology - use additional manipulatives - encourage collaboration

Learning Objectives

A learning objective should describe what children should be able to do at the end of the lesson that they couldn't do before. Learning objectives help to clarify, organise and prioritise learning. They help teachers and pupils evaluate progress and encourage them to take responsibility for their learning.

As part of high quality teaching, the following consistent approaches are used at Westacre Middle School with regard to learning objectives:

- We share learning objectives in the form of a WALT with the phrase 'we are learning to' used / shared with the children.
- The objectives must be clear to pupils in child-friendly language.
- The first word in the WALT should be the key verb explaining what the children will be learning in the lesson. It should not be 'know' or 'understand', but instead active verbs such as 'state', 'explain', 'outline', 'list' or 'describe'. These verbs should link to previous staff CPD around Bloom's Taxonomy and Mastery Teaching.
- The WALT should not be confused with the learning outcome or the task that the children will complete in order to achieve the learning objective

Teachers should refer to the WALT regularly throughout the lesson, in order to help prioritise the learning, to support with their assessment and to engage the children in their own learning. Children also need to see the point of the objectives in the bigger picture; that is, how they relate to the last lesson's learning, the course they are following and the big overall goal. This means that teachers can't simply write the objectives on the board and hope that the children copy them down. It implies that learning objectives have been fully explained to the children in context; the pupils have engaged with them and can explain them to anyone.

For Maths, our learning objectives are taken from Can Do / White Rose long term planning, should be skill-based, small, manageable steps and are only ever one WALT per lesson.

For Reading, our learning objectives should come from Westacre's Reading skills progression map.

For Writing, our learning objectives come from the TAF sheets or our writing curriculum document.

Across the wider curriculum, learning objectives should link to the subject-specific skills progression maps or knowledge webs.

Challenge

We should have high expectations of all children all of the time. It is good for children to struggle just outside of their comfort zone. All pupils must be working harder than the teacher over time and should begin learning as soon as they arrive in the classroom and for the whole lesson

Explanation

Teacher instruction should be planned with awareness of demands on children's cognitive load, by presenting new material in small steps. E.g.:

1. Limit the amount of material pupils receive at one time.
2. Give clear and simple instructions and explanations.
3. Think aloud and model steps.
4. Use more time to provide explanation and provide many examples.
5. Re-teach as necessary.

Modelling (I do)

Teach to the top with expert instruction and modelling. To learn how to do something, children need to watch and listen to experts guide them through the process, step by step, before they make an attempt themselves. Modelling supports explanation and can help pupils to make abstract ideas concrete. E.g.:

1. Demonstrate the worked activity in front of class, eg using a visualiser
2. Think aloud to show the thought process.
3. Show it is ok to make a mistake and empathy, e.g. I found this bit challenging too.
4. Integrate quick fire questioning e.g. why am I doing this now?
5. Provide model answers

Guided practice with scaffolding (We do)

Worked examples and scaffolding used to all support children to demonstrate their learning e.g. sentence starters, key word definitions, procedural steps visible etc Effective class discussion and questioning can happen at this stage

Independent, deliberate practice (You do)

Children should be provided with the time they need to practise new material in a number of ways in order to master it. Scaffolding reduced or removed for majority of class. This is the component that will look the most different across curriculum areas, but all practice should be careful, deliberate and ideally just outside of children's comfort zone.

Questioning

The use of open and closed questioning is vital to teaching and learning. Questions are used to assess children's starting points, to deepen understanding and to check children's progress.

A range of question types should be used from literal to higher order. Children must always be given thinking time and a range of strategies are employed in this school to promote a 'no hands up' approach whenever appropriate: talk partners, think-pair-share, trios, countdown timer. We teach children how to raise their own questions and how to use a range of techniques to find the answers to questions that have been posed. Majority of questions should be done through cold calling, with targeted questioning used to support and challenge pupils. Whole class responses to questioning can be done effectively with mini whiteboards, hand gestures etc

Whole class participation

We recognise the importance of whole class participation on our classrooms. We understand that avoiding 'hands up' as the only route of participation helps avoid pupils having the chance to opt-out, improves afl across the class, reduces pupil anxiety (both academic and non-academic pupils) and improves overall class attention levels.

Therefore, our staff use a range of other strategies in classrooms to promote engagement for all. This includes partner talk, choral responses and targeted questioning.

Retrieval Practice

Retrieval is a learning strategy that should be used regularly in lessons to support students with retrieving material that they have previously learnt from their long-term memory. It should be low stakes, completed without access to prior learning and used in a spaced manner. When used at start of lesson as a "Can We Still" activity it can help to

recap prior knowledge needed for today's lesson and support teacher with understanding prior learning of the class. Regular engagement with our school's Knowledge Webs supports retrieval across the wider curriculum.

Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistants are deployed in the best way to meet the needs of our pupils and the School Development Plan. Generally, this involves in-class support during core subject lessons, with a focus on targeted interventions during the rest of the school day. Teaching Assistants need to be aware of the role they are undertaking throughout the school day and this can be achieved through teacher-TA discussions, sharing of lesson planning and appropriate CPD linked to our school interventions. While Teaching Assistants offer valuable support to pupils, the progress and attainment of all children remains the responsibility of their teachers.

Classroom Environment

We recognise the importance of the classroom environment and its contribution to learning. We have an inclusive classroom checklist that ensures a consistent approach in all of our classrooms. To support the sharing of best practice, we hold staff meetings in different classrooms each week and promote discussions about the learning environment in each room. Classrooms, as well as all other areas of school, will be kept tidy to ensure our children have access to an appropriate learning environment.

Continuing Professional Development

All staff, teaching and support staff, have an entitlement to equality of access to high-quality induction and continuing professional development. CPD priorities will be linked to the School Development Plan and to an individual's specific needs, identified through performance management observations and ongoing monitoring activities.

Westacre Middle School has an open door-policy, which allows for a positive, supportive culture with outstanding teaching and learning at its heart. This manifests itself in the following ways:

- Staff meetings – each classroom will host at least one staff meeting during the academic year and the host teacher should be prepared to share at least one outstanding aspect of their teaching or classroom environment.
- Drop in visits – as part of their CPD and Performance Management, teachers are encouraged to visit colleagues in order to discuss or observe aspects of outstanding teaching. All staff are aware of this, so should be welcoming and supportive to all such visitors.
- Ward rounds – new staff will be given the opportunity to visit colleagues delivering lessons in order to identify strong elements of teaching and learning. Any discussions and feedback to colleagues will be entirely positive. They will have no impact on performance appraisal.
- Learning Walks – members of the ELT will carry out a range of regular 'learning walks' across school in order to evaluate a particular aspect of teaching and learning. Notice may or may not be given for these visits, but feedback will be given in order to develop teaching and learning further. This may be in the form of individual, year group or whole school feedback, and will include strengths observed and areas for development. Learning walks could involve visits to lessons, discussions with pupils in or out of the classroom and book trawls. Subject leaders will also carry out their own subject-specific learning walks.
- Book trawls- Subject leaders, Year leaders and /or the SLT will take a selection of books from across the year groups at Westacre to help judge how well our provision matches the needs of our pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum. Any books included will be chosen by those carrying out the evaluation

- Pupil interviews- Subject leaders, Year leaders and /or the SLT will interview pupils from across the year groups at Westacre about their experiences of our Curriculum to help judge how well our provision matches the needs of our pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum
- Teaching & Learning Reviews – more formal lesson observations will be carried out on a termly basis. They will be conducted by each class teacher's performance management appraiser and another member of the ELT, who will use the school appraisal forms to judge teaching and learning over that lesson. Feedback will include strengths observed and areas for development. For more information, see Teacher Appraisal Policy.



Headteacher: Mrs D M Evans