Ravensfield Primary School Teaching and Learning Policy 2023

Essentials of teaching and learning

Ofsted define learning as 'an alteration in long term memory.' Footnote 4 of July 2019 inspection guidance says: 'if nothing has altered in long-term memory nothing has been learned.'

In the same guidance progress is defined at 'knowing more, including how to do more and remembering more.'

The guidance also states that 'knowledge is generative (or sticky') ie the more you know the more easily you can learn.'

This policy is heavily influenced by the latest research and evidenced based finding which have shown to help pupils know more, remember more and do more. This includes contributions made to understanding learning from sources such as:

- Rosenshine principles
- Daniel Willingham (Willingham's simple model of memory and author of books such as Why Students don't like school)
- Tom Sherrington (his Walk thru books)
- Kate Jones (her books on Retrieval and Practice)
- Oliver Lovel (his book Sweller's cognitive load theory)
- Shimanura's MARGE model

This policy is also influenced by understanding around emotional development and emotional well being gained from Thrive Practitioner training. In essence, where children feel safe, cared for, secure and trust those around them, they are able to 'take the risk' to learn, to get things wrong, to be resilient.

Of these influences, perhaps the most prevalent for this policy could arguable be Willingham's model of memory. See below.

This model shows that learning happens when children remember. The environment has many distractions within it and a teacher must direct pupils' attention to the things that need to be remembered/learnt. In giving their attention to this, learning can be brought into the working memory. This has a finite capacity. Through regular effortful thinking to practice and retrieve this information across time, learning will transfer into the long term memory. This is infinite. More practice and retrieval ensures that this learning in stored in the long term memory. The brain does not 'prune it away' as it's regularly used and therefore recognised by the brain as 'useful.' The result is what Ofsted term 'an alternation in long term memory' ie learning.

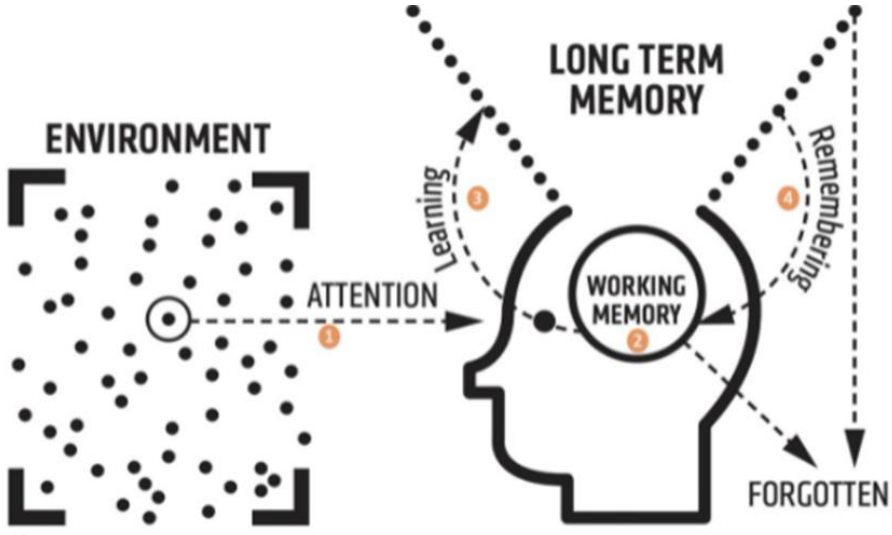

Fig 2. Willingham's simple model of memory

Classroom Environment

Willingham explains that the environment is the only part of the model over which teachers and teaching assistants have control. It is the only sources of leverage over learning and behaviour. Every other element in the model from attention to learning and remembering can be indirectly controlled by ensuring the teacher makes precise, purposeful adjustments to the learning environment.

Fitting the classroom to the pupil; Enabling Classrooms (produced by Tameside LA)

At Ravensfield we use the Thrive Approach for the holistic development of the children in our care. The way a child behaves in the classroom relates to the way in which the teacher meets the pupils' needs. We use PLACE. We are Playful, Loving, Accepting, Curious and Empathic. If the child smiles, laughs, cares for others and loves learning, it is due to the way in which the teacher successfully makes the brain function and develop pupils' love for learning.

It is also the case that where children are not ready to learn, forget things or fail as learners it is potentially due to the way in which teachers and/or the environment have closed down the pupils' brains and desire to learn. (Behaviour Relational Policy)

At Ravensfield, we strive to provide the right type of environment where pupils' minds have been opened and optimal learning takes place. As a consequence, children will flourish. High expectations and unlimited optimism in what children can achieve is consistent throughout the school – creating a positive, enthused, engaging 'memory friendly' classroom/school- based culture.

Key features within our classrooms are

• Positive exchanges predominate
• There is no tension between pupils and teachers
• Positive relationships which underpin emotional development and effective learning
• Familiar and consistent routines designed to make effective use of all learning time and free up working memory and cut down on anxiety
• Speech and dialogue which are key processes within learning
• Teacher talk which is precise, focussed and to the point (it does not crowd pupils' ability to focus and free up working memory)
• Teachers who expect full participation from all pupils and use methods which support this
• Non-verbal cues which allow effective use of time in lessons
• Modelling which is a central pedagogical approach to learning: it is explicit and allows teachers to 'lend their thinking brain/thinking out loud'
• An understanding that mistakes are an integral part of the learning process
• That effort is rewarded within learning
• Effective learners taking responsibility for their own learning
• Adults giving immediate feedback to impact on learning
• Lessons 'chunked' to free up working memory to keep children focused
• Images (not photographs) used to engage, free up working memory and engage the right side of the brain
• Rehearsal of key learning allows learning to pass into the long term memory.
• Repetition of learning (ie the drip drip effect; a little and often over time)
• Semantic links made to allow children to 'hook onto previous learning' to help transfer new learning into long term memory
• Rhyme and rhythm helps to transfer learning into long term memory
• Multi-sensory learning where children say, hear, touch, sounds and words to help transfer learning into long term memory
• Visual cues such as sound buttons, circles, red and green words, different coloured words help children to focus on specific learning when spelling, reading and writing
• Enthusiastic delivery keeps children engaged

- Meta-cognition (self-assessment through the use of strategies such as ticking each correct letter in a word to help children focus on the specific mistake made to address in the future)

What we do not do…

- Think it is always the teacher's job to impart learning
- Dominate lessons by talking at children for extended periods of time (in principle teacher talk will last the child's age + 1 minute)
- Believe that some children are not capable or good at learning
- Put a limit a child's potential with pre-conceived low expectation
- Allow poor routines to waste time
- Allow our children's behaviour to trigger our own disregulation
- Shout at our children (although we may use a stern tone of voice)
- Focus on getting it right first time – it promotes fixed mindset and limits learning

Classroom Practice in line with Neuroscience and the science of learning

Rosenshein principles.

In line with neuroscience around learning, the school is increasingly using Rosenshein's Principles. It is recognised that these principles are particularly useful when transferring information from working to long term memory. They can be applied to teaching and learning throughout the curriculum and that some lend particularly well to certain subject areas. Alongside this teaching and learning policy, subject policies (will) refer to principles which teachers may like to particularly consider then teaching.

The 10 Rosenshein principles we are learning to use are:

1. Daily review
2. Presenting new material using small steps
3. Asking questions
4. Providing models
5. Guiding student practice
6. Checking for students understanding
7. Obtaining high rates of success
8. Providing scaffolds for difficult tasks
9. Independent practice
10. Weekly and monthly reviews

Tom Sherrington's Walkthrus.

Instructional coaching (often using Sherrington's Walkthrus to support CPD) offers practitioners the opportunity to hone skills around effective teaching and reflect on these 10 principles which the most 'effective' teachers use.

Practice and Retreival.

In classrooms teachers and teaching assistants have a growing awareness of what learning is and the teaching strategies which can be deployed to maximise learning. The can include opportunities for practice and retrieval which can include:

- Cued recall (picture, key words etc)
- Free recall
- Verbal recall
- Multiple choice questions
- Use of mini white boards for 100% participation
- Self quizzing, online quizzes and

- Retrieval grids
- Knowledge organisers
- Entrance/exit tickets
- Past exam questions
- Flashcards
- Spaced practice
- Elaboration

Learning is more than just neuroscience and the science of learning, emotional development and wellbeing also effect learning. I to the science of learning, this policy draws on emotional wellbeing and emotional development via Thrive.

Classroom Practice and the Reptilian brain

In line with the principles of the Thrive Approach, we know that effective learning take place when physical and emotional needs are met. Children need to have their needs met, feel safe and special.

Stressful conditions activate the reptilian brain and close down the brain's higher order functions. Children go into 'fight, flight or freeze.' In a classroom context this would include time when there is a lack of self-esteem, a feeling of insecurity or isolation, fear of failure or disparagement, personal worries or a sense of injustice. We use VRFs to attune, validate, contain and soothe a child in order for them to become ready to learn.

To ensure we set the right culture for our pupils we must ensure that:

• Pupils feel they belong in the classroom
• Pupils' learning space meets their learning need
• The right conditions for learning are established with regards to physical comfort
• All children feel valued and welcomed – safe environment is established quickly and maintained
• There are clear systems and routines – children understand what, when, why, who and how
• Teachers are absolutely certain about what they expect from children through setting the right achievable goals and targets (Our Rules and expectations)
• Opportunities exist to bring a sense of identity and belonging, creating a clear understanding of the pupils' roles within our team (attendance, punctuality, modelling good behaviour, classroom, school loyalty)
• Children feel physically and emotionally safe as a result of the effective use of praise. In our most positive learning environments the positive exchanges outnumber the negative (5 – 1 ratio...at least)
• Opportunities exist to develop both the social and emotional intelligence of pupils. Pupils are allowed opportunities to talk about their feelings and be taught how to manage them. Children are taught how to build relationships and deal with conflict. Classrooms are free of sarcasm and insults and are places that are fair and consistent (after school provision and residential)

Classroom Practice and The Limbic system

The limbic system is in the mid brain and governs learning, memory and emotions. At Ravensfield we recognise the importance of this part of the brain. It is responsible for character building. It creates a sense of values and establishes our beliefs. It attaches truth to what we learn and helps us to develop a sense of self. Our longer term memory is situated within the limbic system. Research shows that emotions are fundamentally important in learning and the more powerfully emotions are connected to the information we need to learn, the quicker it will become embedded in our memory and the easier it becomes to recall facts and figures. High levels of teacher talk will not enable the limbic system to develop deeper learning and that is why at Ravensfield we ensure our teacher dialogue is used efficiently and effectively.

At Ravensfield we will...

• Engage
• Excite
• Enthuse
• Involve pupils in activating prior knowledge through activities such as prediction exercises and the making and sharing of mind maps, when introducing new learning

• Scaffold learning through high quality dialogue, role play, discussion groups, activities, interactive scaffold tasks. Working and speaking with other pupils develops a shared consciousness through group interactions and a borrowed consciousness from other more expert pupils
• Make regular intended reference to the learning objective and success criteria throughout the lesson
• Ask questions to check pupil understanding
• Use stimuli such as humour, music, colour or an element of surprise to engage learners

Classroom Practice and Brain Lateralisation

Although it is not strictly neurologically accurate, it can be a useful metaphor to consider that the brain is divided into two hemispheres joined by a bridge of fibres (known as the Corpus Collosum) which allow both sides of the brain to work together.

Each hemisphere serves a variety of different functions and processes information in different ways. For most people, the left hemisphere deals with linguistic issues. It is analytical and is therefore used extensively in problem solving activities or when sequential processing is required. If the left brain is analytical, logical, precise and time sensitive then the right brain sees the bigger picture, processing things in a holistic way: it thrives on rhythm, music and learns well from images and pictures. It is also more emotional. The left brain will more readily process the learning objective; the right brain will more readily engage with the context in which the learning happens. We promote the connections by:

• Explicitly linking learning within and across curriculum areas
• Encouraging pupils to make links within and across the curriculum
• Using a raft of approaches to stimulate thinking for example looking at the bigger picture as well as step by step
• Ensuring that teaching sequences will include a variety of resources/activities to keep teaching sequences 'fresh', engaging, memorable and meaningful - using music, images, the arts etc

To effectively teach and motivate children at Ravensfield, we will follow four key principles.

1. Learning is best when there is an emotional involvement that involves the heart as well as the head. This can come from the context and content of the lesson, providing children with reasons why they are learning.
2. Learning should always be an interactive process. To build cognitive structures and concepts, we need to use new experience from earlier learning.
3. Explicit reflection on learning through meta-cognitive processes. Children should be encouraged to reflect on what they already know, and what they need to learn next. They should also develop their own strategies for accessing this learning. Children need to have a variety of problem solving techniques that they can apply in a range of contexts.
4. Learning should always be seeking to promote independent pupils who achieve well as a result of carefully structured learning experiences - centred around a clear learning objective supported by appropriate, simple and succinct success criteria.

Teachers' checklist to ensure key learning takes place (These will be used during learning walks)

At Ravensfield, there will be consistency across the year groups in the following areas:

• Expectations-based on prior attainment (for higher attainers, ARE, lower prior attainers and SEN pupils)
• Pedagogical Content Knowledge
• Decontextualised Learning objectives
• Success criteria
• WAGOLL
• Modelling
• Vocabulary
• Positivity and relationships
• Praise of effort
• Participation/active learning
• Feedback

A lesson structure ***within a carefully planned sequence*** could be…

1. Introduce the L.O. and its place within the teaching sequence – assess what the children understand by the LO
2. Clarify context
3. Ascertain prior knowledge – independent task - this may be related to the previous lesson within the teaching sequence
4. Refer back to LO
5. Build success criteria - independent task/teacher input
6. Teacher input - eg modelling/creating/sharing a WAGOLL
7. Recap – refer to the LO, success criteria and identified good practice.
8. Leaving 20 – 25 minutes for independent tasks
9. Plenary-recap and assess. Refer back to success criteria and LO

Teacher Checklist.

Lesson Structure	Classroom Environment
Decontextualised learning objectives allow children to understand with clarity the purpose of the lesson and how it relates within a sequence	Children have adequate working space and the right high- quality resources to enable them to present their work with ease.
Learning Objectives are referred back to throughout the lesson to ensure children are clear as to what they are learning.	Seating and tables are used flexibly to support working in different contexts and for different purposes
Ascertaining prior knowledge-allows teachers to identify gaps in children's knowledge and address these quickly.	Curriculum displays include statements and questions to highlight the key learning points. Working walls for English and Maths offer relevant support to the current learning. They may include key vocabulary, lesson objectives, modelled work, success criteria for example
Engaging pupils in the process of identifying prior knowledge helps them to make links more quickly, activates prior learning ready for new learning to be 'build upon', helps children to make links and peaks their interest.	The layout of the classroom and provision and access to resources supports both independent and collaborative learning
Success Criteria (The knowledge, understanding and/or skills required to allow the children to achieve their L.O) are used to make it clear how to succeed. The success criteria can be given to pupils but is especially powerful when build WITH children	Metacognitive displays remind children of strategies that make them effective learners
WAGOLL (what a good one looks like)-sharing, creating, modelling a WAGOLL helps pupils see how to succeed and understand clearly the expectations	There are positive affirmations and interactions that raise self-esteem. These could celebrate children achieving their targets, moving towards their targets.
Modelling is clear and to the point. • I WE YOU structure • Use of iPevo	There are displays of high quality finished work that reflects pride and perseverance, originality and creativity, independence and collaboration, and building on prior learning are displayed in a sensitive manner
All adults model the spoken and written language and vocabulary needed to effectively support pupil learning.	Diversity is celebrated in all forms. For example, resources including books and visual images reflect the family lives of pupils and their community
Questioning is used effectively (open, closed, deeper thinking using how and why) Key questions, prompts and scaffolds are available to support children's dialogue and thinking about learning.	An attractive and well –maintained classroom book/Thrive corner is accessible in all classrooms where children have access to a wide variety of books including topic based books and/or access to time to self-regulate.
When asking questions of their classes, teachers use a range of partner discussion and feedback methods to ensure full participation such as choral, popcorn, word wave, choose two, paraphrase	Space is well used to promote seamless working and the classroom is clean and tidy to promote a sense of pride.
Signals for 'team stop', taking turns and movement around the classroom, focus routines which make prompt use of time and maintain a calm, work-focused atmosphere.	Clearly labelled first aid and Inhaler cupboard, Fire Safety and Evacuation Procedure displayed, Computer Safety Poster and IWB Health and Safety poster on display
Reference is made to the children's personalised targets to keep these a point of focus in learning.	All classes display alphabet and upper and lower case letters and an appropriate timeline of historical events
Pupils are appropriately challenged based on their prior attainment.	A class timetable and a visual timetable must be displayed in every classroom.
There is use of displays to reflect and support on going learning through techniques such as working walls	Adaptations as needed for specific children
Plenaries are used effectively to draw together lessons, recap on learning and feedback. They can happen at any point through the lesson.	KS1 – Mood Meter or Emotional check-in KS2 – use Feelings Register

Lessons are adapted to ensure that pace of learning is not lost if children find the learning easy, or misconceptions or gaps are quickly addressed.	Author of the half-term – selection of books, image and brief bio of the author
TA support is well directed and impacts on learning and is active in the classroom	
All adults respond to any dysregulation using VRFs to enable the modification of behaviours which interrupt learning.	