



James Bateman Middle School

Teaching and Learning Policy

Approved by: Mrs C Maguire

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Next review due by: March 2025

Our professional promise.

Learning at James Bateman is the number one priority for our pupils and for our staff; we are a learning organisation committed to improvement. We want our pupils not only to achieve their potential, but to exceed it.

We use evidenced-based educational research from around the world and combine it with the skills and knowledge of our talented and experienced staff. This ensures our pupils benefit from the very best education.

Our focus is on creating a learning culture and having the highest expectations for each of our pupils and staff. We seek to create successful learners and well-rounded individuals that will leave our school equipped to take the next steps.

To ensure this happens we ensure the staff have the highest quality professional development available. We closely and collaboratively monitor the performance of both the staff and the pupils with the overall aim of improvement, not judgement. Most importantly, we work as a team.

Our teaching and learning principles.

We have chosen the word 'principles' very deliberately. Teachers are professionals; highly educated, highly motivated and highly skilled individuals. We believe that they should be given the freedom to be innovative in their practice. In choosing *principles*, we have agreed as a whole staff, what the 'DNA' of excellence in the classroom looks like. Teachers are then free to interpret these principles using their professional expertise in combinations with professional development.

In keeping with our professional promise, the following principles have been developed using a wide range of research in conjunction with the skills and experiences our staff bring. Below is an a list of the key research/websites we've utilised in agreeing our teaching and learning principles.

- Visible Learning - Professor John Hattie
- Principles of Instruction – Barak Rosenshine
- Doug Lemov – Teach like a champion.
- <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/>
- <https://evidencebased.education/>
- <https://tinyurl.com/ywjak2vh>

The above list not exhaustive and the contribution from our staff is equally important.

Our 7 Principles of Teaching and Learning

Review and Retrieve previous learning

The teacher will spend time at the beginning of the lesson reviewing previous knowledge and understanding. The purpose of this is to strengthen the connection between previously learned material and new learning. Reviewing previous knowledge and understanding will help pupils to retrieve it so that it can be recalled and used effortlessly; this is vital in preventing cognitive overload when new learning is introduced.

This review may also give pupils the opportunity to practice skills so that they become fluent in their recall. This aspect of the lesson is also an opportunity for teachers to formatively assess pupils and address misconceptions

All lessons will start with a review, however reviewing learning should be integral to practice throughout the lessons/sequences of lessons to ensure pupils have understood key concepts.

Small Steps.

Our working memory is limited in its capacity to listen and comprehend many new things at once. When we try to learn too many things, too quickly, we call this cognitive overload; when this happens, nothing is learned well and it is forgotten quickly.

By ensuring that learning takes place in small steps, pupils' working memory is not overloaded. We also ensure that the each small step is committed to long term memory, ready to be recalled effortlessly at a later date. We often call this fluency.

When knowledge is learned in small steps, it also offers the teacher and pupils the opportunity to think more deeply. Teachers also design rich tasks that not only enhance fluency, but to add context and meaning to the learning. Learning in small steps also ensures that formative assessment is more accurate. Teachers can focus on what they need to assess more readily because they are assessing the retention of a small step rather than a large chunk of knowledge. If a small step is misunderstood, teachers will adjust their practice accordingly.

Questions and lots of them.

Questioning is the cornerstone of good teaching and learning. Teachers and pupils should be asking lots of them. Questioning helps teachers assess how well pupils are grasping new knowledge, whether than be 'Knowledge That' and 'Knowledge How'

Questioning helps the teacher to understand pupil misconceptions and it helps to challenge learners who quickly acquire lesson outcomes.

When questions reveal a misunderstanding and/or misconceptions, the teacher will reflect on their own practice and adjust to the needs of the pupils.

Modelling and Guided Practice

Modelling is essential in the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers will model new knowledge, skills and understanding to the pupils. Importantly they will model how to think, as well as how to do. Teacher will usually verbalise their thinking, allowing the pupils an insight into the thinking required. As a result of modelling, teachers will have a 'Worked Example' of the new learning.

Pupils will also have the opportunity to practice new learning under the guidance of the teacher, we call this guided practice and it complements the teacher modelling. The teacher will have a range of strategies in which to facilitate guided practice. The purpose of this aspect of lessons is to bridge gap between teacher modelling and independent practice, to allow the teacher to assess understanding and for the pupils to rehearse and refine their knowledge, skills and understanding. Crucially, this aspect of the learning helps to commit the new learning into the long-term memory.

To support this process, prompts and scaffolds maybe used. It is essentials that where this is the case, the teacher models how these can support learning. Prompts and scaffolds are considered a 'cognitive apprenticeship.' Where pupils complete tasks with prompts or models, it should be assumed that the learning has not been committed to long-term memory. Teachers should remove this assistance as pupil skill increases; it is only when pupils can practice their knowledge, skills and understanding 'unaided' that long term retention is possible.

Check for understanding – achieving a high success rate.

Teachers will always check for understanding. Research tells us that pupil responses must be $\geq 80\%$ correct before moving on to the next stage of learning. To support this, the teacher will ensure they have a range of strategies assess pupils' progress towards this aim; this includes asking pupils to summarise, pupil discussions, answers to questions and written responses.

Teachers will provided feedback on these responses and address any misconceptions. It is important to achieve such a high success rate so that when pupils are taking part in independent practice they have acquired the correct techniques and approaches. If the success rate is low, pupils will go on to practice incorrect techniques and approaches.

Independent Practice

Independent practice is practice without the direct guidance of the teacher. The task(s) should be based on the modelling and guided practice, although a variation can be applied. The main purpose of this aspect of the lesson is for pupils to commit new knowledge, skills and understanding to their long-term memory.

Teachers may see it appropriate for pupils to work in pairs or groups for this aspect of the lesson; where pupils support each other. Where aforementioned aspects of the lesson have been facilitated skilfully with the pupils, teacher intervention to address misconception should be minimal. During this aspect of the lesson teachers will be assessing the responses of the pupils, offering further advice where necessary and asking questions to further understanding.

Differentiation.

Differentiation of the task should be the exception rather than the rule. Wherever possible scaffolding should be used to help all pupils access age related knowledge, skills and understanding.

Provide Scaffolds

Scaffolds provide pupils with a 'cognitive apprenticeship' to support their thinking, offering an additional support on their journey to independence. These scaffolds can take many forms and the teacher will strategically design these based on the learning and the pupil(s). Scaffolds can take many forms, below are some examples, although the list is not exhaustive.

- Knowledge organisers
- Worked examples
- Prompts
- Additional support from adults
- Manipulatives
- Predicting and tackling common misconceptions

Scaffolds should be a temporary strategy with the intention of removing these when pupils gain more confidence with the learning. When tasks are completed with scaffolding, the pupil has not yet acquired the knowledge, skills and understanding to the expected level.

To summarise.

Our teaching and learning principles are just that, principles that will be interpreted by the teacher who knows the pupils best. The premise is simple, we have a consistent approach to teaching and learning but not a conformist view on how lessons are planned and executed. The principles do not represent a 'cycle of learning' and not all lessons will have all aspects. Teachers will expertly apply these principles based on the needs of the pupils.

This policy also supports the teaching standards as published in 2011 with particular reference to the following points taken directly from the standards:

- Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas, and promote the value of scholarship
- Take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues

The teachers at James Bateman are unrelenting in the quest to sustain and improve their practice.