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PLANNING THE PRIMARY NATIONAL CURRICULUM

A COMPLETE GUIDE FOR TRAINEES AND TEACHERS

SECOND EDITION
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Note: The contents listed in grey are sections of the national curriculum framework for England, key stages one and two.

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Principles of planning

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Principles 1 Generic principles of planning

This unit outlines some of the generic principles of planning, whatever the subject. It should be read in conjunction with the appropriate subject chapter in Section 2 of this book. Reference will also be made to the generic principles outlined in the framework for the national curriculum, found in Section 2 of this chapter.

Overview

Planning is the cornerstone to effective learning but it is also one of the most challenging aspects of teaching. Getting it right can be difficult but careful thought can help you avoid some of the common mistakes and improve the ways in which you support and promote learning in the classroom.

The Teachers’ Standards (DfE, 2013) define the minimum level of practice from the point of being awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and must be achieved by the end of any period of teacher training in order to qualify as a teacher and begin the induction period. Although the interconnected nature of the Standards makes it difficult to separate them out, there are clear Standards relating to planning and it is the achievement of these which will be the focus of this chapter.

The Teachers’ Standards which relate to planning are as follows.

- Plan and teach well-structured lessons.
- Impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time.
- Promote a love of learning and children’s intellectual curiosity.
- Set homework and plan other out-of-class activities to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding pupils have acquired.
- Reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching.
- Contribute to the design and provision of an engaging curriculum within the relevant subject area(s).

Planning effective lessons

It is important to remember that teaching does not necessarily equal learning and planning effectively requires careful thought to ensure what we do in our lessons/activities...
supports and promotes learning and enables children to make progress. This requires an understanding of how we develop as professionals; a good model to start with is the relationship between theory, research and practice.

A quick glance at the internet will provide many examples of activities which can be done in the classroom or even outside it. Many of these are exciting and fun but not all promote learning. While exciting and fun is a good starting point, learning is challenging and needs to be underpinned by a clear rationale.

Putting into practice effective planning requires us to think about the theories which underpin effective learning. It is likely that you will have studied learning theories such as behaviourism, constructivism and social constructivism but new theories of learning located in the neurosciences are emerging and influencing our thinking about how learning can best be supported in the classroom. These emerging theories are informed by current research in a range of different areas and subjects, enabling us to draw information from a wide spectrum and formulate new ways of thinking and working. It is important that you keep up-to-date with current theories and research as teaching is not formulaic; what works well in one situation, on one day with one group of children may not be so effective in another context. Therefore, your planning must be informed by current thinking and by your knowledge of the children you are teaching.

In order to explore the ways in which the Teachers’ Standards relating to planning can be achieved this chapter will focus on three aspects through which the relationship between theory, research and practice can be explored. These are:

- lesson content and structure;
- classroom organisation;
- teaching strategies.

For the purposes of this section we are looking only at short-term planning but Section 3 of this book explores planning structures which are longer term.

1. Lesson content and structure

There are many ways of planning lessons and it is likely that your training institution or school will have adopted a structure which suits their needs. As you look through this book you will see that the planning structure has been adapted to suit the needs of each subject area and that the format may look slightly different; however, you will also see that each example of planning has areas in common. As a trainee, you will usually need to follow very detailed planning structures which will help support you during what can be a very challenging and often stressful time. As you become more experienced your planning may become less detailed and more long term. Whatever planning format you use it is important to consider what should be included and why.

Organisational details

It is important to include sections where you can record the date and time of the lesson, the group you are teaching, the number of children, the subject or topic focus and the national curriculum reference or context of study. You may also include reference to prior learning or the context of your planning. All this provides easy reference to all the information about the lesson and allows you to annotate your plans should...
things change (as they often do in the primary classroom). Your planning files should be a working document and it is good practice to annotate your plans to show how you are responding to different circumstances and to children's progress.

Focus on learning

This is the most important part of any planning and must be done first. If you do not know what you are intending children to learn then you will not know what activities to choose.

Begin by identifying what you want children to learn. This should build on previous learning or identified areas of misconception. You will find that different schools call this different names ('learning objectives', 'intended learning', 'learning outcomes', etc.) but they all equate to one thing – what will children learn from your planned lesson or activity? For the purposes of this book we will use the phrase intended learning.

The focus of learning will, initially, be drawn from the statutory programmes of study in the national curriculum. These are learning outcomes rather than learning objectives and should be thought of as the learning children will need to have achieved at the end of the year or key stage. This means, in most cases, you will need to break these down into smaller steps to identify the progression within these ideas and the learning for each lesson. Consider the following:

- **Children will be taught to:**
  develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by: . . .writing for different purposes (English programme of study, Year 2, writing composition, DfE, 2013)

What learning does this identify? Could this be done in one lesson? What are ‘positive attitudes’ and what kinds of ‘different purposes’ are there for writing? Reading the non-statutory guidance is a very useful starting point as this provides further information about what and how these areas can be taught.

You will also notice that the national curriculum uses the phrase ‘children will be taught to . . .’ which sometimes means that we have to work harder to consider what children will learn from this teaching. Remember teaching does not always equal learning. Good subject knowledge is essential. This will enable you to break down large ideas and concepts into smaller steps and better understand progression in learning.

Let us imagine we want children to learn how to write a formal letter and that we decide to use the context of writing to the manager of a local supermarket asking her about the packaging of products. Our intended learning might read:

- **Children will learn to compose a formal letter**

It is usual for lessons to have no more than three objectives for learning although there may be occasions when you have more, particularly if the lesson is addressing more than one subject area. Your objectives may also include aspects which are not part of the national curriculum but reflect local needs, the needs of individual children or specific skills or attitudes you wish to develop. For example, you may wish children to learn to work as part of a team.

Once we have established what we want children to learn we need to consider how we will know when this has been achieved. In order to do this we need to
identify what constitutes success. Again there are many phrases used to describe this but for the purposes of this book we will use the phrase *success criteria*. Success in composing a formal letter may be identified if children:

- place their own address correctly
- date the letter correctly
- use a formal style of writing to convey meaning
- sign the letter correctly.

A good way to review the effectiveness of success criteria is to use the acronym we often use for setting goals – SMART:

- **S**pecific – to the children and to the intended learning.
- **M**easurable – in terms of progress against learning.
- **A**ttainable – for all children.
- **R**ealistic – within the time parameters and the learning challenge.
- **T**imely – clear outcomes within a given timeframe.

Good success criteria enable you to quickly make a decision about whether a child has achieved the learning intended and, if not, what aspect they are finding challenging. Avoid woolly statements like ‘continue to’, ‘experience’, ‘develop’ as it is difficult to identify when these have been achieved.

The third stage of identifying learning is to determine how you will assess what has been learned – we will call this the *assessment strategy*. In the example of intended learning from English it is obvious that the most sensible approach would be to collect in and mark children’s letters. However, it is important to remember that there are many strategies you could choose from and that not all evidence will be permanent. The evidence arising from some strategies, such as observation and questioning, will be more ephemeral. Remember that your lesson plan is a large part of your evidence for assessment as it details what constitutes success in learning and how this was assessed. We do not always need a product from children in order to record their achievements.

As you can see, there is a clear route through identifying learning.

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Intended learning → success criteria → assessment strategy
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It is important you get all these things in place before deciding how you will teach as each step impacts on classroom organisation and choice of teaching and learning strategies.

As you become more experienced you will be able to provide differentiated learning to accommodate individual needs of the children in your class. Sometimes these will be differentiated by outcome and may be identified by success criteria which begin ‘all children will . . .’, ‘some children will . . .’ and ‘a few children will . . .’. In other cases differentiation will be by task and your intended learning will be different for different individuals or groups of children.

*Lesson structure*

Once you have established intended learning it is likely that you have already thought of some ideas about how you might like to achieve this. You will have some
teaching approaches in mind and have some idea about how the lesson will flow. We will cover teaching and learning strategies in more detail later in this chapter but it is important also to consider the overall structure of the lesson.

Think about how your lesson will begin. Different learning will require different introductions but the important thing is to consider how you can engage children in the activity right from the start. Sometimes we call this the ‘hook’. As you look through the example lessons provided in the subject sections of this book you will see different ‘hooks’, all of which have been designed specifically to introduce an area of learning and engage children. Think carefully about the impact of the introduction to your lesson. For example, it is common for schools to begin lessons with children sitting on the carpet; while this has advantages, such as being able to gather children around a resource (e.g. an interactive whiteboard), it also presents some organisational issues. Many classrooms are not large enough for children to sit in a clear space and this can lead to behaviour management issues when children sit too close together or behind/between tables. It also takes time to move children to the carpet and move them back again, which may not justify the potential for learning. Finally, sitting on a carpet in a cold classroom may not be the most comfortable way to begin the lesson. Think carefully about how you could use a range of strategies to introduce a lesson in order to ensure children are engaged and on task right from the start.

Consider then how your lesson will progress. Will it follow the format of introduction, main activity and plenary or is there potential for doing shorter activities with mini-plenaries to clarify, monitor or assess learning? Not all lessons should follow the same format and the structure should be determined by the intended learning.

At each point you should think about three things.

- What will the teacher be teaching and why?
- What will the children be doing in order to learn?
- How long will it take to do both of these?

These questions enable you to think through the ideas about which strategies best promote learning, which learning theories underpin these and how best to engage children in their learning.

Timings are a really important thing to put on your lesson plans. They enable you to manage your time effectively and allow you to set clear expectations with time limits which can be communicated to your children. For example, ‘you have fifteen minutes to write one paragraph of your letter’. It is likely that, at first, your lessons will be either too long or too short as timings are quite difficult to judge with a new class. For this reason it is often useful to have extension activities planned just in case the children finish much earlier than planned.

**Vocabulary**

Your lesson plans should identify the new vocabulary you are intending children to learn. This is important as it is likely that the concepts or processes you are teaching will be associated with specific vocabulary and you will need to think about how to teach this. Be wary here of identifying all the words you or the children will be using and focus solely on the vocabulary linked to the intended learning. This does not restrict you to these words but does ensure these are a focus of the lesson and that you have thought through what they mean before you begin teaching.
Resources
Identifying the resources you will need for the lesson helps you to be prepared. Good lessons begin long before you start teaching and careful preparation ensures you are not rushing around at the last minute trying to collect what you need. The following areas are for you to consider.

- Which resources will best support the intended learning? This may mean ordering resources from an outside source (e.g. visiting speaker, health education unit) or booking resources within the school (e.g. the laptops, the hall/gym).
- Which resources do you need to make or prepare?
- Where do you wish to hold the lesson? Would it work best outside the classroom and, if so, where? If you are working outside, particularly off-site, you will need to follow your school’s risk assessment procedures and adhere to the recommended pupil:staff ratio.
- How will you organise the resources? Will they be accessible to children from the start or will they be given out or collected when required? How will this affect the extent to which children can be independent in their learning and how will it affect behaviour management in the classroom?
- Have you checked that all the resources you intend to use are safe for use within the classroom? Are there any children who may react negatively to some resources (e.g. some children hate puppets and others hate working outdoors)?
- Are there any resources which may exclude children, create barriers to learning or which promote or suggest stereotypes?

Homework
Your school will have a homework policy which you will need to adhere to. This will include details on how much and what types of homework each school administers. If your school does have a homework requirement then think carefully about how any homework given contributes to the learning of either this lesson or the sequence of lessons. Children are more likely to see the benefit of homework if they can see value in it and engage accordingly. Homework does not have to be a written record but could be an activity which involves the whole family, some research, watching a particular television programme or accessing a particular website. Be creative!

Evaluation
An important part of your lesson plan will be the evaluation. Planning is cyclical and your evaluation from the previous lesson should inform future planning. Most training institutions will have their own format but these will have two areas which will be common to all: children’s learning and the effectiveness of the teaching approach.

At first you will be required to complete very detailed evaluations of at least some of the teaching you do. This is important as it ensures you reflect carefully on your own teaching and the impact it has had on learning. It also contributes to the assessments you make of individual, group and class learning.

A common error in evaluations is that teachers identify all the aspects of their teaching which have had a negative impact on learning rather than also including...
aspects which have supported or promoted learning. It is often easier to identify what we do not do well than it is to identify our strengths, often because these come more naturally to us and are more intuitive. Make sure your evaluations are balanced and realistic. For example, if you are still in the early stages of delivering lessons it is unlikely that differentiated learning is going to be a strength at this time. Be honest in your evaluations. Are children misbehaving because they are badly behaved or because they are disengaged with you and your lesson? Look at how they respond to other adults in the classroom; do they respond differently and what do these adults do to engender this? Once you evaluate effectively you can use your reflections to inform your future planning and set yourself realistic targets for your own professional development.

2. Classroom organisation

Organising your classroom well can greatly impact on the effectiveness of your lesson. For the purposes of this book we will focus on grouping, seating arrangements, teacher role and additional support, all of which need to be considered in effective planning.

Grouping

Perhaps one of the greatest impacts on how we group children was the work of Piaget and Vygotsky through their theories of constructivism and social constructivism. Both these theories of learning stressed the importance of others in learning and this has led to a more collaborative approach in the classroom. However, research has given rise to a number of debates around grouping, namely whether group work works equally for children with different levels of attainment, gender or learning needs and whether all work should be collaborative.

The best way to address this is to be aware of the research relating to grouping in the classroom and to consider the best way to support learning. Individual learning opportunities have great value in the classroom and should be part of your repertoire of classroom organisation. However, grouping also supports collaborative learning very effectively but consider what type of grouping may work best (e.g. by attainment, friendship, interests, gender, etc.).

If you do group children, think about the size of the group. Often, group tables in the classroom mean group sizes can be as large as eight children, but is it possible for all these children to work collaboratively on the same project or do they tend to break into smaller groups?

Consider what role children will take in a group. Are children’s strengths being used effectively or are areas of weakness being developed? Do the same children always do the practical element of an activity and do others always act as scribes? Are all children engaged in the activity or do some metaphorically or physically remove themselves? One approach is to allocate roles which change according to the activity or the areas you want to develop within the group or for individual children.

Seating arrangements

You may find that classroom seating arrangements remain the same regardless of the activity but effective planning considers how best to arrange seating so that
it accommodates the teaching and learning approaches adopted. Obviously one of the factors which will determine this is whether you want children to work as groups or individually. Do not feel that you have to change your classroom every time you deliver a different lesson but experiment with different arrangements to see how they work for you. You could try the following.

- Horseshoe – useful for debates, discussions and practical music making.
- Small group tables – useful for practical activities which require small groups (up to 4) to work together.
- Large group tables – useful for collaborative activities where contributions from a number of children is effective.
- Rows – useful for individual working or more delivery mode activities.
- L-shape or F-shape – useful for enabling exchange across different groups of children but also allowing for pair or individual work.
- Open plan floor work with tables and chairs pushed to the sides of the room – useful for large practical activities which require space, circle time in PSHE and practical music making.

However you decide to organise your classroom the emphasis should be on learning – how will your chosen arrangement support children making progress?

Teacher role

Effective teachers need to manage the group of learners, the activities within the lesson and the learning simultaneously; not an easy role! Good teachers make this look effortless but they have worked hard to adopt roles which enable effective management of teaching and learning and transition seamlessly from one to another. Planning out how you might adopt different roles enables you to anticipate what might happen in a lesson. Roles you may adopt include:

- managing;
- modelling;
- coaching;
- facilitating;
- observing;
- assessing;
- prompting;
- questioning.

A useful approach is to have two columns in your planning – ‘What the teacher will do’ and ‘What the children will do’. This enables you to think through the roles you will adopt and how they may promote learning. One good question to ask when planning a lesson is ‘Who will work hardest?’ Should it be you or the children?

Additional support

Whether your additional adult support is a parent, a learning mentor, a teaching assistant or a learning support assistant, who may be assigned to a specific child or children, you need to plan how they will support specific individuals or
groups of children and you will need to ensure they are clear about their role and purpose within the classroom. There is great debate around this issue, most commonly around whether additional support should be assigned to low attaining or high attaining groups. There are advantages and disadvantages to both but any approach will only be effective if your adult support understands the learning intended and how best to support children in achieving this. This means that you must share your planning with them and prepare any assessment structures (including key ideas and questions) you wish them to use.

Remember also that support is not confined only to lower or higher attainers; there is a danger that we ignore those middle attainers who could achieve more if given appropriate support.

3. Teaching strategies

There are many teaching strategies we could use and to mention them all is way beyond the scope of this book; however, there are key elements which are central to current thinking in education and one way to break this down is to think of three elements.

- **Content** – what will be taught.
- **Approach to teaching and learning** – how it is taught and learned.
- **Rationale** – the underpinning philosophies, values and theories of why it will be taught.

Whilst the ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ may vary for each subject, something which will be explored further in the following subject-specific chapters in Section 2 of this book, there are some generic ideas and this section will focus on the following:

- Promoting a love of learning.
- Inclusion.
- Dialogic learning.
- Literacy and numeracy.
- Information and communications technology.

*Promoting a love of learning*

We often hear that children have a ‘natural curiosity’ but is this necessarily true and is it true they are curious about all things? The answer is probably ‘no’; not all children are interested in what we want them to be interested in and not all children love learning. Think about your own learning; is it easy and comfortable or is it challenging and sometimes uncomfortable? Do you need time to assimilate new learning or is it instantaneous? A large part of choosing effective teaching strategies is about determining what will engage children and how they will enjoy learning to learn.

When choosing a teaching strategy the central premise should be that it will promote learning. This means that every decision you make about ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ should be underpinned by clearly thought through principles on how this will enable children to learn more effectively. Think about what engages you in learning new things. Is it the way it relates to you personally, your interests, your
expertise? Is it the way in which it is presented to you, the ideas used, the choice of media? Is it the level of challenge? This does not suggest that we should only use teaching strategies which are within the children’s zone of interest but knowing our children well does enable us to tailor activities to their specific needs and to respond to personal or community interests or issues. This may mean bringing in expertise from the local community or using the local football pitch as a context for learning, it may mean using social networks or blogs to share findings or it may mean using stories as a way of exploring historical contexts.

Recently, greater emphasis has been placed on enabling children to learn how to learn with significant success. These ideas build on current research around how we learn and aim to equip children with the thinking skills, behaviours and attitudes of learning. Work by Guy Claxton, Natasha Serrett and Mary Budd Rowe are good starting points when thinking how you will create opportunities within your planning for children to develop these skills (see further reading). For example, learner independence can be encouraged by creating space within a lesson for independent enquiry and resilience can be developed by providing children with strategies to manage distractions. Encouraging, ordering and recording thinking can be encouraged by a variety of approaches and you may find reading work around De Bono’s six thinking hats (De Bono, 2009), mind mapping (Buzan, 2003), the habits of mind (Costa, 2008) and taxonomy of learning (Bloom, 1956) useful starting points.

Essentially, the possibilities are endless in terms of teaching approaches but consider how the strategy itself promotes learning. A useful starting point is to think about the following.

- Differentiation.
- Active learning.
- Creativity.
- Out of classroom learning.
- Peer education.
- Co-operative and collaborative learning.
- ICT in education.
- Learning to learn.

It should be noted, however, that there are common pitfalls associated with choosing teaching strategies. First, the strategy itself becomes the focus rather than the learning it should facilitate. For example, the use of interactive whiteboards became a common teaching approach when the government funded their installation in all primary classrooms; however, the extent to which they were used effectively varies enormously from school to school. As a display resource they can be a fun way of presenting something (as long as we avoid the ‘death by PowerPoint’ route) but making the transition to effective learning can be more challenging. How can we use the ‘interactive’ element more effectively? Second, there is also a danger that the level of resource preparation required in certain approaches greatly outweighs the overall learning gain leaving teachers planning and preparing for hours on end with no significant outcome. Third, some approaches are more easily (and comfortably) used by some teachers and not others. For example, when drama-based approaches such as ‘hot seating’ are used well they can be very effective but, used badly, they can quickly lose the interest and engagement of the children.
Inclusion

The national curriculum is very clear about inclusion in that it identifies that teachers should:

• have high expectations of all children;
• adhere to the appropriate equal opportunities legislation and roles and duties of the profession;
• ensure there are no barriers to learning and provide access to learning under the SEN Code of Practice where appropriate.

In your planning you will need to ensure that you adhere to government, local and school policies regarding inclusion and that you are sensitive to the needs of children in your class. This will mean considering how you will provide appropriate challenge in your lessons for all learners, how you will organise and manage resources (including supporting adults), how you will ensure all children can communicate learning effectively, how you will engage and support children, how you will group children and what contexts for learning you might use. Reference to the Teachers’ Standards (DfE, 2013) outlines further how you will be expected to meet the needs of all your learners.

Dialogic learning

Dialogue has long been seen as an important factor in education; however, many educators have recently begun to look more critically at the extent to which effective dialogue is actually a part of our classrooms. Research has shown that classroom talk tends to be dominated by teachers and that interactions are more likely to be teacher–pupil–teacher rather than encouraging pupil–pupil dialogue. The importance of dialogue in learning and the different types of talk have been explored by a number of authors but the work of Alexander (2008 and 2010), Mercer (1996) and Mortimer and Scott (2003) are useful starting points when considering how you might promote dialogic learning in your classroom.

Improving dialogue in the classroom is not just a matter of using specific teaching approaches; it requires thought about classroom organisation and ethos, groupings, peer and adult support, development of the interpersonal skills required for collaboration and discussion and learning context. A study by Baines et al. (2009) provides a useful insight into the complexity of this; however, there are some teaching approaches you can incorporate into your planning to achieve a more dialogic classroom which include:

• small group work;
• paired talk;
• open questions – make sure you write them on your plan;
• wonder walls;
• no hands up policy (use lolly sticks to target specific children or use strategies such as ‘phone a friend’);
• whiteboards to record ideas for discussion;
• prompts for discussion (e.g. concept maps or cartoons);
• different audiences or initiators (e.g. hot seating, role play, puppets).
Critically, you must ensure the timings in your planning allow for ‘wait time’ when asking questions or encouraging discussion. You should also consider how you will manage more open discussions which can go somewhat off track!

Look down your lesson plan – how much time do you anticipate you will be talking, how much time do you anticipate children will be talking, how much time do you anticipate there will be no talk at all? When do children get thinking time in your lesson?

**Literacy and numeracy**

A key element of the national curriculum is that every opportunity should be used to develop children’s numerical and literary skills, even if these are not the primary subject focus of the lesson (see Principles 2, Points 4 and 5). This means that you should use opportunities to exploit this and teach two or more subjects through one lesson or activity. Not only is this good practice in terms of demonstrating the relationship between areas of learning, it also leaves time to explore other areas of interest or local importance. Further exploration of this is provided in Section 3.

Achieving this is often relatively easy if a little thought is given during the initial stages of planning. As can be seen from the earlier section on dialogic learning, spoken language can be developed in a variety of ways. For example, in music the emphasis is on oracy, with children encouraged to ‘show me’ rather than ‘tell me’ through the dominant language of sound. In the same way reading and writing can make use of the variety of contexts and genres provided through other subject areas. Identifying the vocabulary you are teaching has already been discussed earlier in this chapter. Identifying mathematical links can be more easily achieved in some subjects, for example science, than others and therefore you should not try and force links where they do not exist. The important element is to consider where you would like to locate new teaching in literacy and numeracy; is it best taught within a literacy or numeracy lesson and then practised and demonstrated in a lesson which focuses on a different subject area or is there scope for teaching more than one subject in a single lesson? Consider extended projects which enable you to build on ideas developed through a number of different activities which have a core focus.

**Information and communications technology**

The revisions to the national curriculum saw a change in name from information and communications technology (ICT) to computing. This saw a shift in focus within the curriculum to teaching specific computing skills with a greater emphasis on using and applying digital technology across the curriculum. Planning in each subject will need to reflect on the use of ICT, in its broadest sense, to ensure children have the opportunity to develop their understanding and application of ICT within the real world.

There are many examples in the non-statutory guidance of how ICT can be used effectively to support and promote learning across the curriculum. The rate of technological development is often difficult to keep abreast with but your planning will need to reflect new technologies and new ways of learning. ICT should engage learners and enhance learning opportunities if it is to be incorporated in your planning to best effect.
Further reading
Claxton, G. *Building Learning Power*. [online] Available at: www.buildinglearningpower.co.uk
Principles 2 The framework for the national curriculum

4. Inclusion

Setting suitable challenges

4.1 Teachers should set high expectations for every pupil. They should plan stretching work for pupils whose attainment is significantly above the expected standard. They have an even greater obligation to plan lessons for pupils who have low levels of prior attainment or come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Teachers should use appropriate assessment to set targets which are deliberately ambitious.

Responding to pupils’ needs and overcoming potential barriers for individuals and groups of pupils

4.2 Teachers should take account of their duties under equal opportunities legislation that covers race, disability, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment.

4.3 A wide range of pupils have special educational needs, many of whom also have disabilities. Lessons should be planned to ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving. In many cases, such planning will mean that these pupils will be able to study the full national curriculum. The SEN Code of Practice includes advice on approaches to identification of need which can support this. A minority of pupils will need access to specialist equipment and different approaches. The SEN Code of Practice outlines what needs to be done for them.

4.4 With the right teaching, that recognises their individual needs, many disabled pupils may have little need for additional resources beyond the aids which they use as part of their daily life. Teachers must plan lessons so that these pupils can study every national curriculum subject. Potential areas of difficulty should be identified and addressed at the outset of work.

4.5 Teachers must also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Monitoring of progress should take account of the pupil's age, length of time in this country, previous educational experience and ability in other languages.

4.6 The ability of pupils for whom English is an additional language to take part in the national curriculum may be in advance of their communication skills in English. Teachers should plan teaching opportunities to help pupils develop their English and should aim to provide the support pupils need to take part in all subjects.

5. Numeracy and mathematics

5.1 Teachers should use every relevant subject to develop pupils' mathematical fluency. Confidence in numeracy and other mathematical skills is a precondition of success across the national curriculum.
5.2 Teachers should develop pupils’ numeracy and mathematical reasoning in all subjects so that they understand and appreciate the importance of mathematics. Pupils should be taught to apply arithmetic fluently to problems, understand and use measures, make estimates and sense check their work. Pupils should apply their geometric and algebraic understanding, and relate their understanding of probability to the notions of risk and uncertainty. They should also understand the cycle of collecting, presenting and analysing data. They should be taught to apply their mathematics to both routine and non-routine problems, including breaking down more complex problems into a series of simpler steps.

6. Language and literacy

6.1 Teachers should develop pupils’ spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.

Spoken language

6.2 Pupils should be taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using Standard English. They should learn to justify ideas with reasons; ask questions to check understanding; develop vocabulary and build knowledge; negotiate; evaluate and build on the ideas of others; and select the appropriate register for effective communication. They should be taught to give well-structured descriptions and explanations and develop their understanding through speculating, hypothesising and exploring ideas. This will enable them to clarify their thinking as well as organise their ideas for writing.

Reading and writing

6.3 Teachers should develop pupils’ reading and writing in all subjects to support their acquisition of knowledge. Pupils should be taught to read fluently, understand extended prose (both fiction and non-fiction) and be encouraged to read for pleasure. Schools should do everything to promote wider reading. They should provide library facilities and set ambitious expectations for reading at home. Pupils should develop the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation. They should be taught the correct use of grammar. They should build on what they have been taught to expand the range of their writing and the variety of the grammar they use. The writing they do should include narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations: such writing supports them in rehearsing, understanding and consolidating what they have heard or read.
Vocabulary development

6.4 Pupils' acquisition and command of vocabulary are key to their learning and progress across the whole curriculum. Teachers should therefore develop vocabulary actively, building systematically on pupils' current knowledge. They should increase pupils' store of words in general; simultaneously, they should also make links between known and new vocabulary and discuss the shades of meaning in similar words. In this way, pupils expand the vocabulary choices that are available to them when they write. In addition, it is vital for pupils' comprehension that they understand the meanings of words they meet in their reading across all subjects, and older pupils should be taught the meaning of instruction verbs that they may meet in examination questions. It is particularly important to induct pupils into the language which defines each subject in its own right, such as accurate mathematical and scientific language.