



APS Teaching & Learning Policy



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Teaching & Learning Policy

Avonwood ethos & core values



At Avonwood we see it as our moral imperative for all children, regardless of background, to achieve their very best. We expect teachers to deliver lessons with that fulfil this expectation whilst living up to our ambition of **inspiring wonder and intellectual curiosity**.



We believe it is vital that all children have an understanding of their responsibility as global citizens and our eight Earth Charter principals are referenced throughout our curriculum and daily life. **We are honoured to be the only United Nations Earth Charter Primary School in Europe.**



Avonwood is an exceptionally positive, happy and inspiring place to learn. Children are excited to come to school to discover the rich learning experiences teachers have planned each and every day. **It is this carefully nurtured thirst for learning that we feel makes Avonwood such a unique, academically rich and special place to grow and learn.**

United Learning Framework for Excellence

This framework sets out the 5 principles which all United Learning schools work to. These represent our agreed view of the distinctive approach to education of our group of schools and the characteristics which lead to excellence when exemplified in the right way.

- 1. The best from everyone:** Our aim is to bring out the best in everyone. So we must expect the best from everyone, all the time. Every person is a special individual, capable of extraordinary things. Who can know the limits of any child's potential? So, we expect unreasonably – we constantly challenge children to do what they think they can't, to persist, to work hard and to be at their best.
- 2. Powerful knowledge:** Our most important purpose is to teach young people things they would not learn outside school, which free them to think and act more powerfully in their lives. Words and numbers are our most powerful ways of representing the world. Mastery of language and fluent mathematical skills are therefore our top priority. Worthwhile learning is often hard. Inspiring teaching is what gives access to difficult concepts and the thrill of intellectual discovery.
- 3. Education with character:** Beyond academic success, we also aim to develop character, compassion and service. Young people are expected to contribute to their school and to society; to try things which they think they cannot do; to persist in the face of difficulty; to become resilient in overcoming obstacles; to manage themselves; to work independently on things which challenge them; to work with others and in teams; to be courageous and caring; to lead.
- 4. Leadership in every role:** Our children are leaders of the future. We expect them to start today – taking advantage of structured opportunities to lead and taking responsibility for themselves and others. Every adult in the school is a leader. In every word, tone and gesture, they set direction and expectation. We expect every adult to take responsibility and the initiative to do what is right for the children.
- 5. Continuous improvement:** However good we are, we can be better. We always look at the evidence, and are rigorous in evaluating impact. We stop or change things which aren't working; we improve things which are. We aim for high leverage: high impact for low effort and low cost. We look for ideas for improvement inside the organisation and out; we observe one another; we steal good ideas with pride and look to make them better; we work together to improve.



The 4 Pillars of Teaching and Learning at Avonwood:

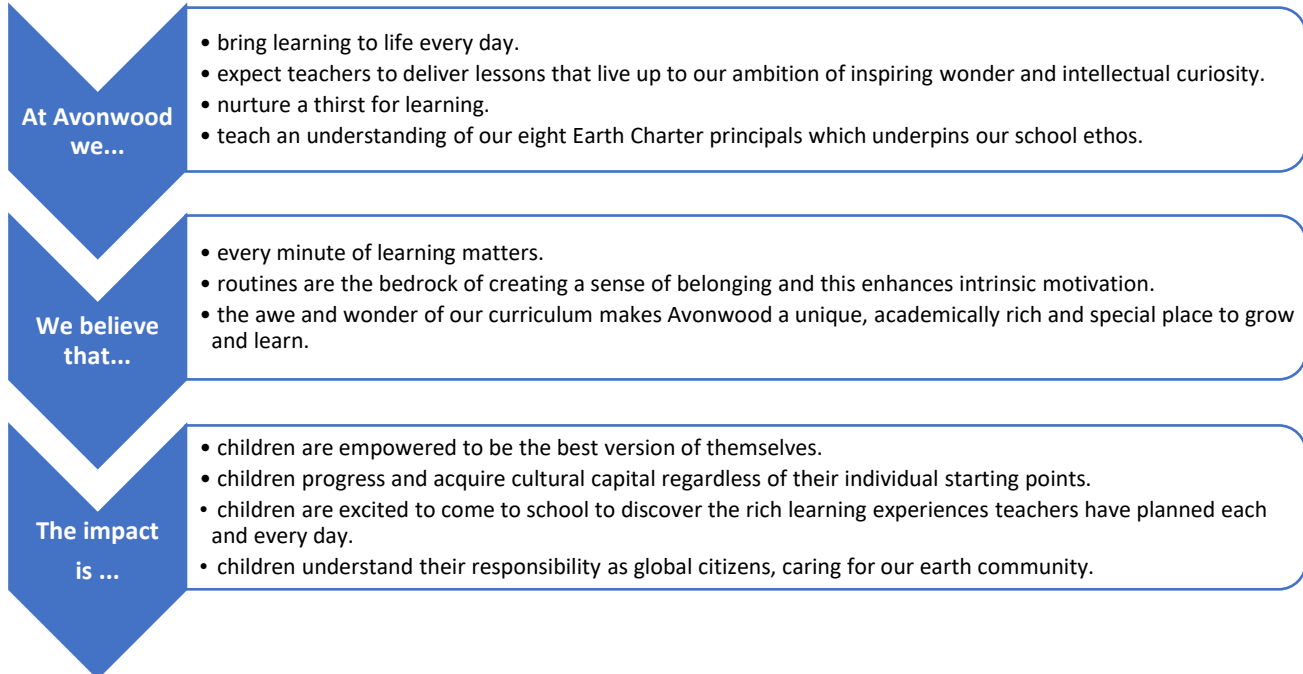
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Pillar 1: Behaviour for learning



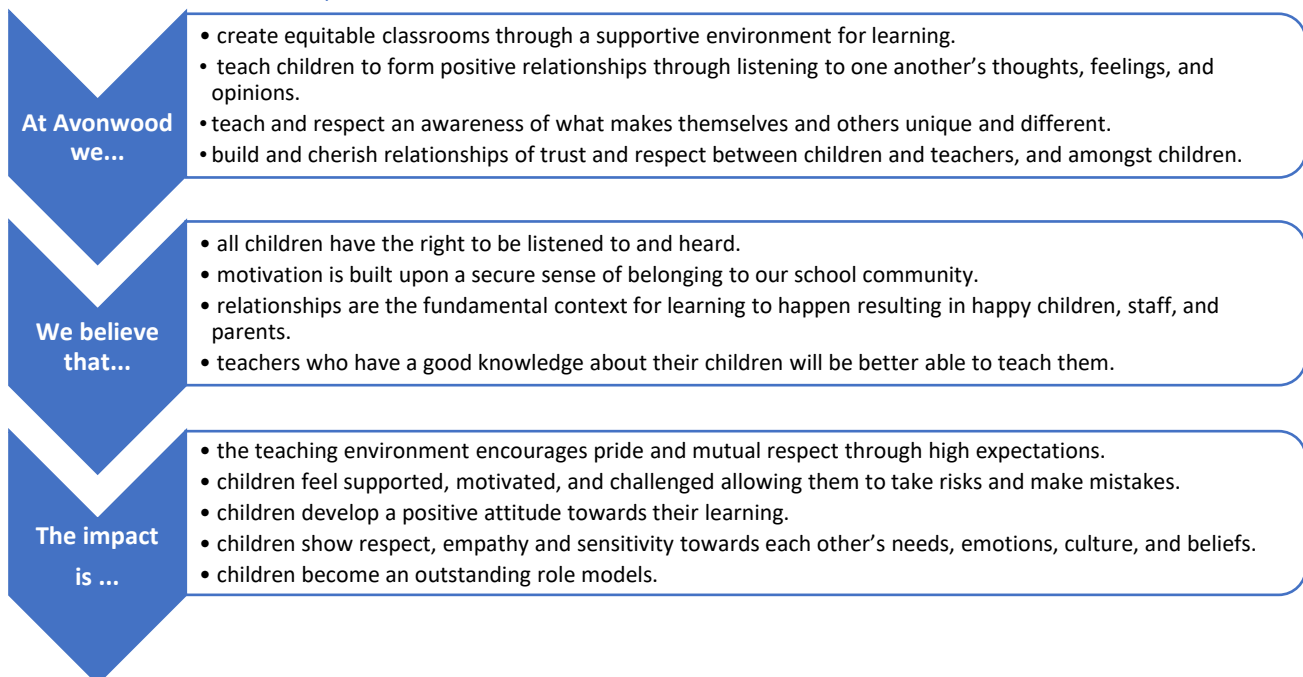
1.1 Every Moment Matters



References: Peps Mccrea, APS website.



1.2 Positive Relationships



References Great Teaching Toolkit p 22-26, APS website.



1.3 Self-regulation, Metacognition & Growth Mindset

At Avonwood we...

- nurture self-regulation so that children are ready to learn.
- develop pupils' metacognition skills by promoting thinking about learning through 'plan-do-review'.
- narrate our thinking and decision-making journey to develop our children's awareness of this process.
- celebrate 'marvellous mistakes' as a valuable part of the learning process.

We believe that...

- just like any 'muscle', the brain can be trained and that ability is not 'fixed' or 'set'.
- all children should be taught how to self-regulate.
- 'plan-do-review' are essential facets in the learning process.
- everyone should make informed judgements and challenge their own thinking about their learning.
- achievements should be recognised, celebrated and shared.

The impact is ...

- children are able to talk about their thinking and learning processes.
- children approach each new sessions with an emotional 'clean slate'.
- children recognise that effort is required to improve and progress.
- children enjoy being challenged through tasks that offer 'desirable difficulty'.
- children experience success as a learner, embracing growth mindset and a thirst for knowledge.

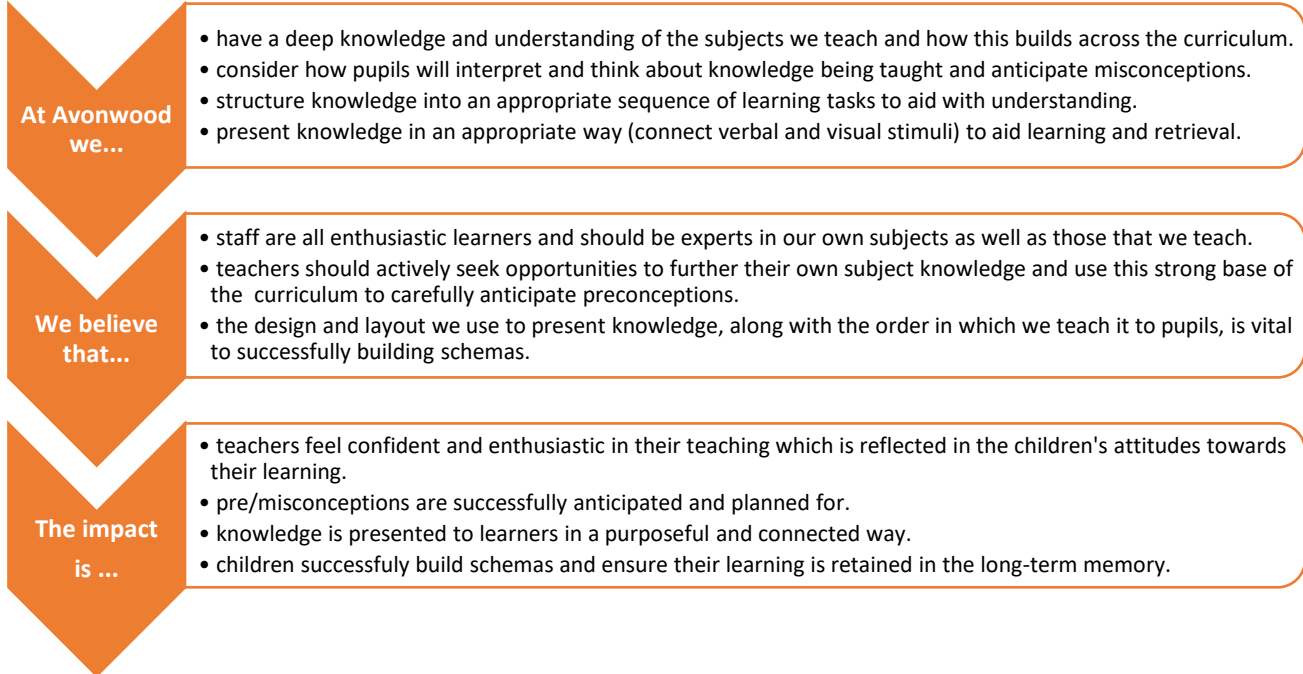
References: EEF guide on Metacognition, WalkThrus p82, Dual Coding With Teachers p224



Pillar 2: Understanding the content



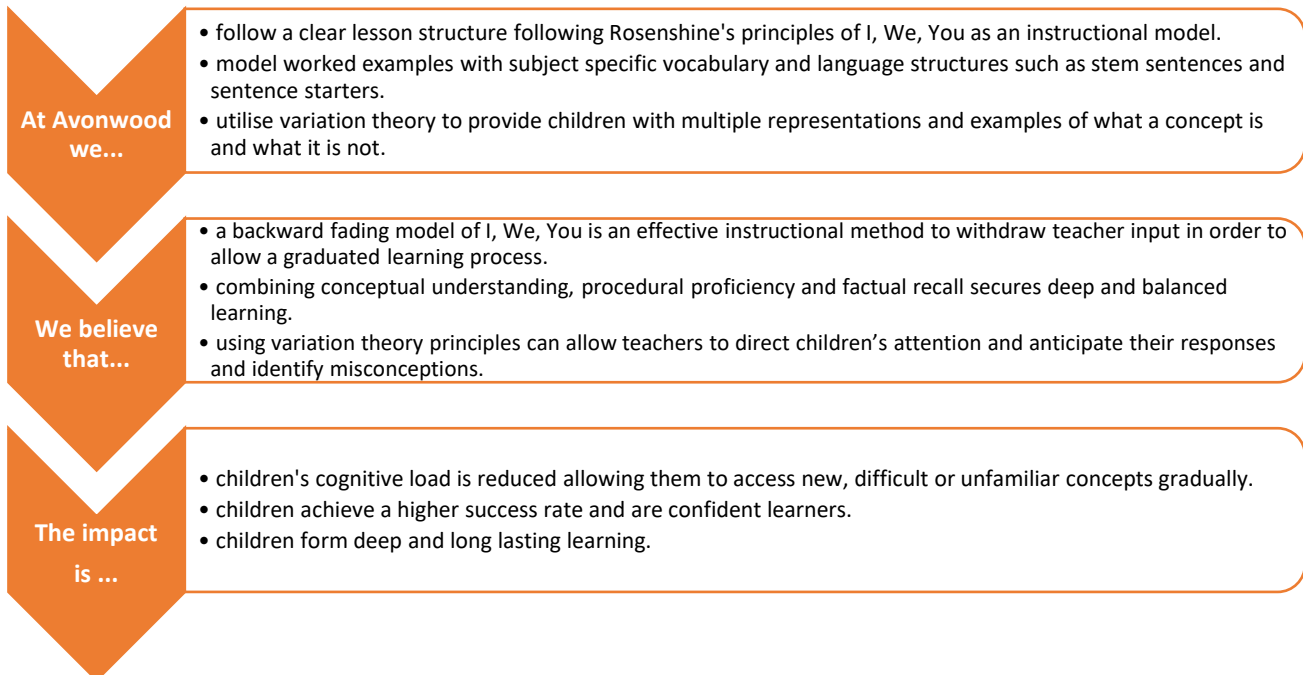
2.1 Knowing the Curriculum



References: Great Teaching Toolkit - p31, p37; What makes great teaching? (Sutton trust) - p2; Dual coding - p24; Why don't students like school? (Daniel Willingham) - p42



2.2 Explaining Clearly



References: Rosenshine, Cambridge Espresso



2.3 Anticipating Misconceptions



At Avonwood we...

- have a fluent knowledge and a flexible understanding of the curriculum which allows us to plan for and anticipate misconceptions.
- deliver small amounts of new material at any time and guide student practice of new material.
- regularly question and check for student understanding and facilitate discussion.
- provide varied explanations and multiple representations, analogies and examples.

We believe that...

- considering children's possible misconceptions at the planning stage equips teachers with pre-formed, clear explanations and a range of examples.
- providing guided practice after teaching small amounts of new material whilst checking for student understanding throughout can help limit the development of misconceptions.
- regular verbal feedback ensures that children do not inadvertently store partial information or a misconception in their long-term memory.

The impact is ...

- children make fewer errors and have a higher success rate.
- children have fewer long term misconceptions.
- where misconceptions arise they are swiftly attended to and dispelled with examples, supplementary examples and counter non-examples in line with conceptual variation.

References: Great Teaching Toolkit

2.4 Scaffolding Difficult Points



At Avonwood we...

- teach to the top by scaffolding access to appropriate and challenging learning objectives.
- identify areas of new learning that will need to be unpicked and explored thoroughly in a variety of ways.
- provide resources to scaffold support for all learners, using them as tools to success.
- build learning in small coherent steps, using appropriate scaffolds which can then be systematically removed.
- explicitly link difficult points and new learning to prior knowledge.

We believe that...

- careful scaffolding fosters confident, independent life-long learners.
- attending to difficult points will enable the children to acquire new knowledge and skills effectively.
- using concrete materials and visual images alongside verbal instruction supports deeper understanding.
- resources and manipulatives provide tangible experiences of abstract concepts and help all learners construct connected knowledge.

The impact is ...

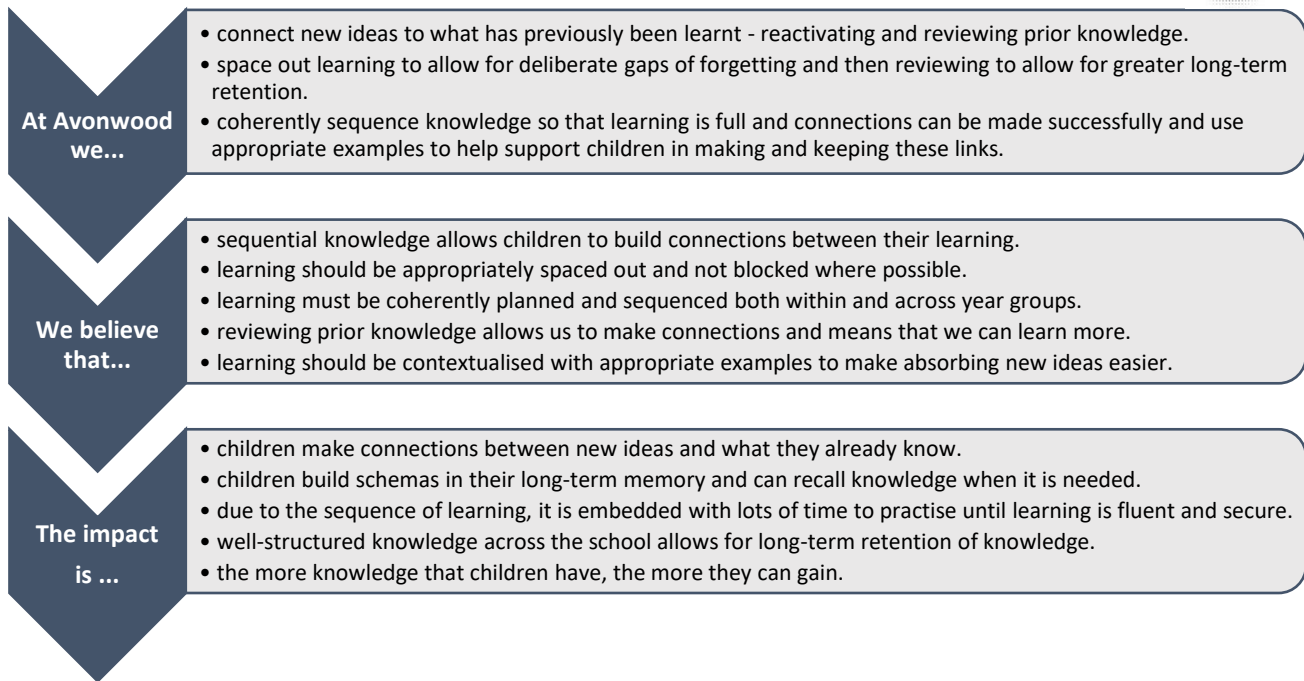
- children's cognitive load is reduced allowing them to access new, difficult or unfamiliar concepts.
- children experience success as a learner, promoting growth mindset and fostering a thirst for knowledge.
- children acquire transferable understanding having used concrete resources and are able to solve problems and apply their knowledge & skills when questions are presented in an abstract form.
- children build connected schemata and have the opportunity to master a subject.

References: Great Teaching Toolkit, WalkThrus, Dual Coding with teachers



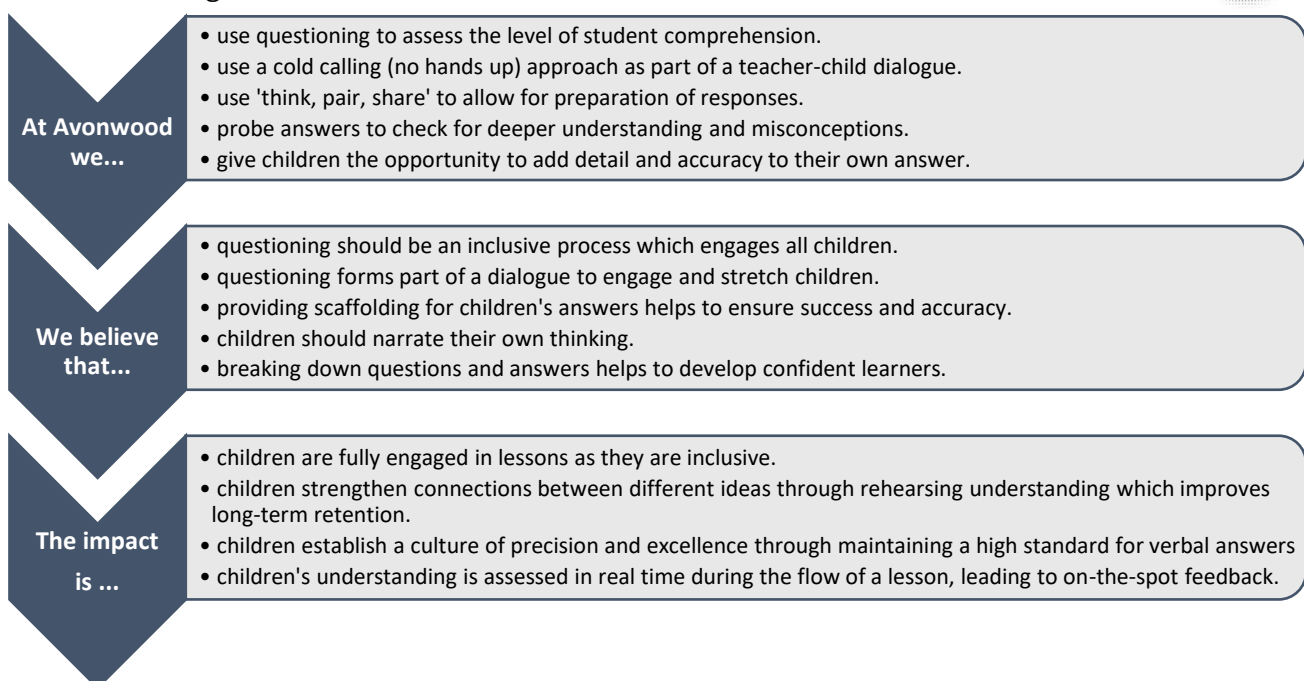
Pillar 3: Activating hard thinking

3.1 Connecting Knowledge



References: Great Teaching Toolkit p31, p33; Desirable Difficulties Perspective on Learning (Bjork and Bjork) p59; Curriculum to Classroom (Lekha Sharma) p18; Why don't students like school? (Daniel Willingham) p42

3.2 Questioning



References: Rosenshine p28, 29, 30, 33 and 34; Doug Lemov - TLAC Field Guide p155 and 369; Great Teaching Toolkit p35.



3.3 Checking for Understanding

At Avonwood we...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use effective questioning to check for understanding. • circulate around the classroom as children to monitor guided practice. • give children opportunities to rehearse thier learning. • use mini white boards to visually assess learning. • make the transition from guided practice to independent work when the 80% threshold is achieved .
We believe that...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ongoing assessment points should form part of daily practice. • monthly/ weekly/daily reviews should be used to inform teaching and learning. • retrieval practice helps reinforce the process transferring of knowledge from the long term memory into the short term working memory. • reteaching familiar material in order to dispell misconceptions is a key part of the learning process.
The impact is ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children are given opportunities to learn from thier mistakes and these mistakes will help them to learn. • through guided and independent practice children discover if they have got something right or wrong. • that implicit knowledge is made explicit children as children review their own understanding of a given concept. • children are able to see where they have made mistakes in the past and are able to rectify these. • teaching moves learning on at appropriate pace.

References: Roshenshine, Doug Lemov – TLAC, WalkThrus p 88-130



3.4 Promoting Purposeful Discussions

At Avonwood we...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • put discourse at the centre of all our teaching and learning. • sentence starters and frames to help children develop academic language. • use discourse to engage students and form connections in learning. • give children the opportunity to rehearse responses with low stakes. • use dialogic talk which is both reciprocal and cumulative.
We believe that...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • academic language structures assist children's learning. • recall is improved when information is said out loud. • children should have the opportunity to articulate their ideas freely without fear of embarrassment. • rich discourse and high levels of academic language are crucial in strengthening understanding. • building upon the ideas of others leads to more coherent lines of thinking and enquiry.
The impact is ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children take ownership over their learning through private and paired talk. • children's learned material is reactivated when asked to verbalise understanding, enabling memory consolidation. • children's confidence in verbalising ideas increases with structure and rehearsal time. • children have higher engagement due to rehearsal and low stakes. • children belong to an equitable classroom where they each have a voice.

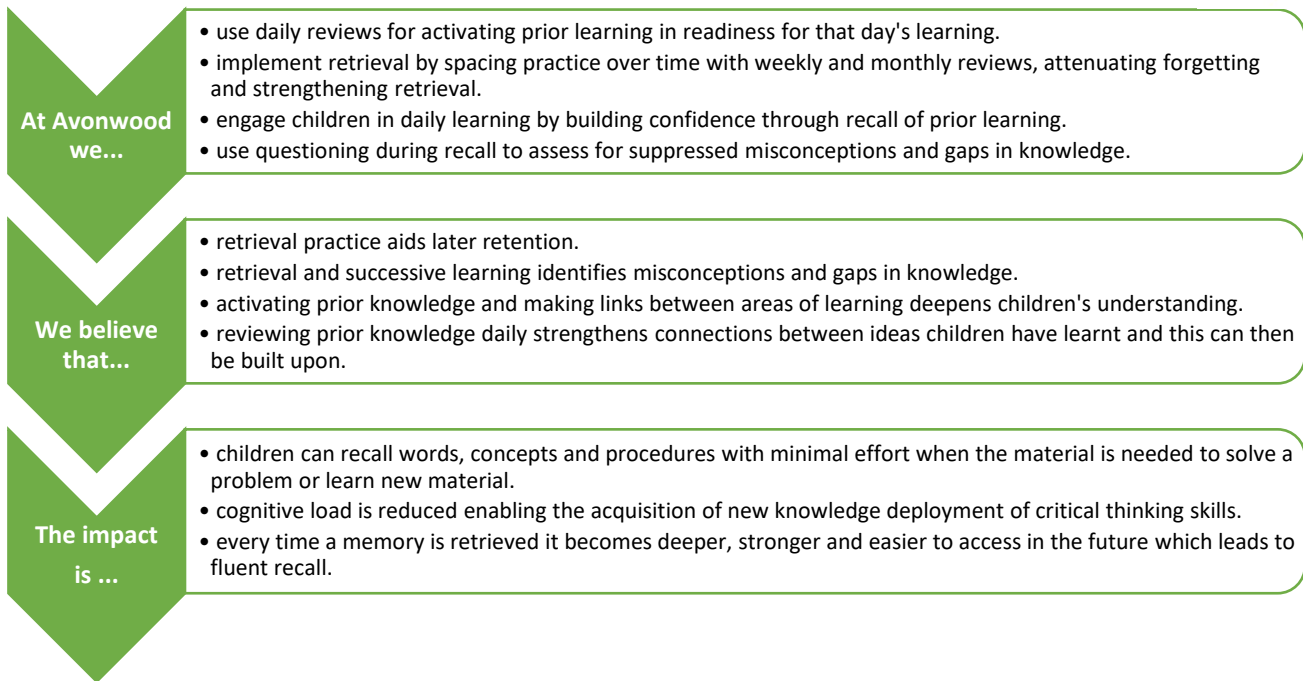
References: MARGE p30; STEM: Supporting Mathematics Discourse with Sentence Starters & Sentence Frames by Pam Buffington, Tara Knight, Peter Tierney-Fife; Private talk, public conversation by Mike Askew; Recognising helpful and unhelpful talk handout; WalkThrus p118.



Pillar 4: Optimising progress



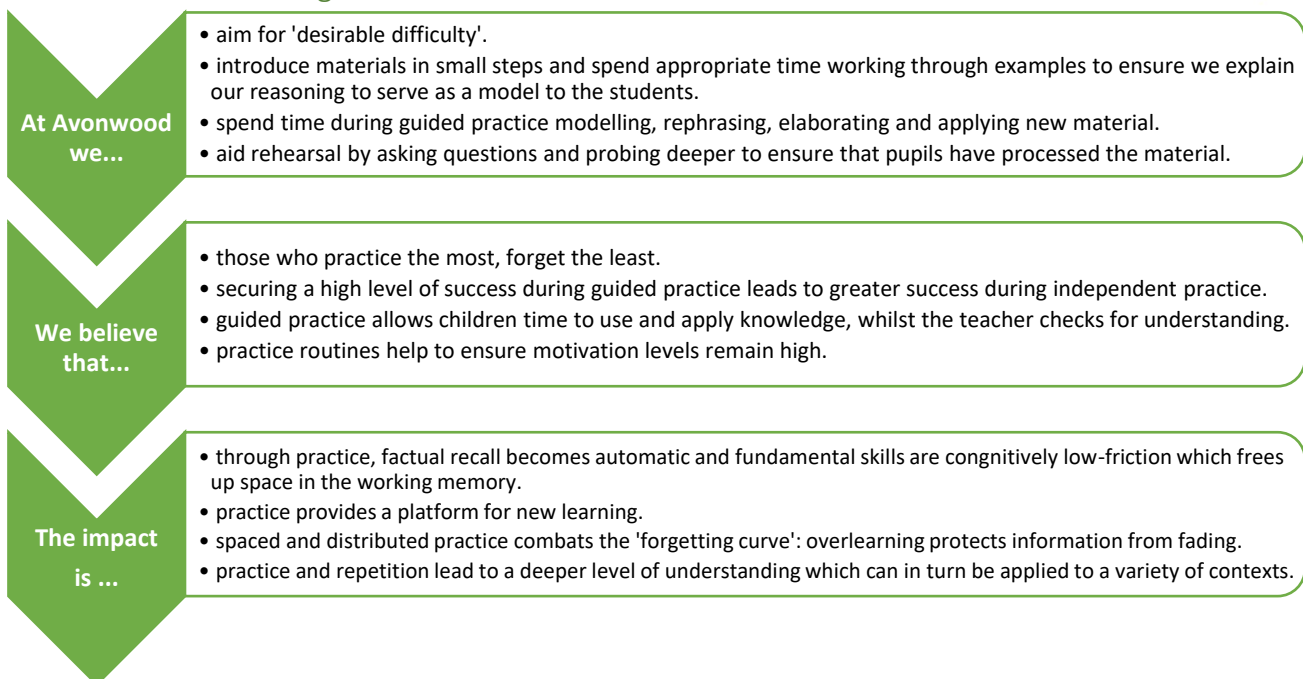
4.1 Activating Prior Knowledge



References: Rosenshine, Bjork & Bjork, John Dunlosky, Kate Jones.



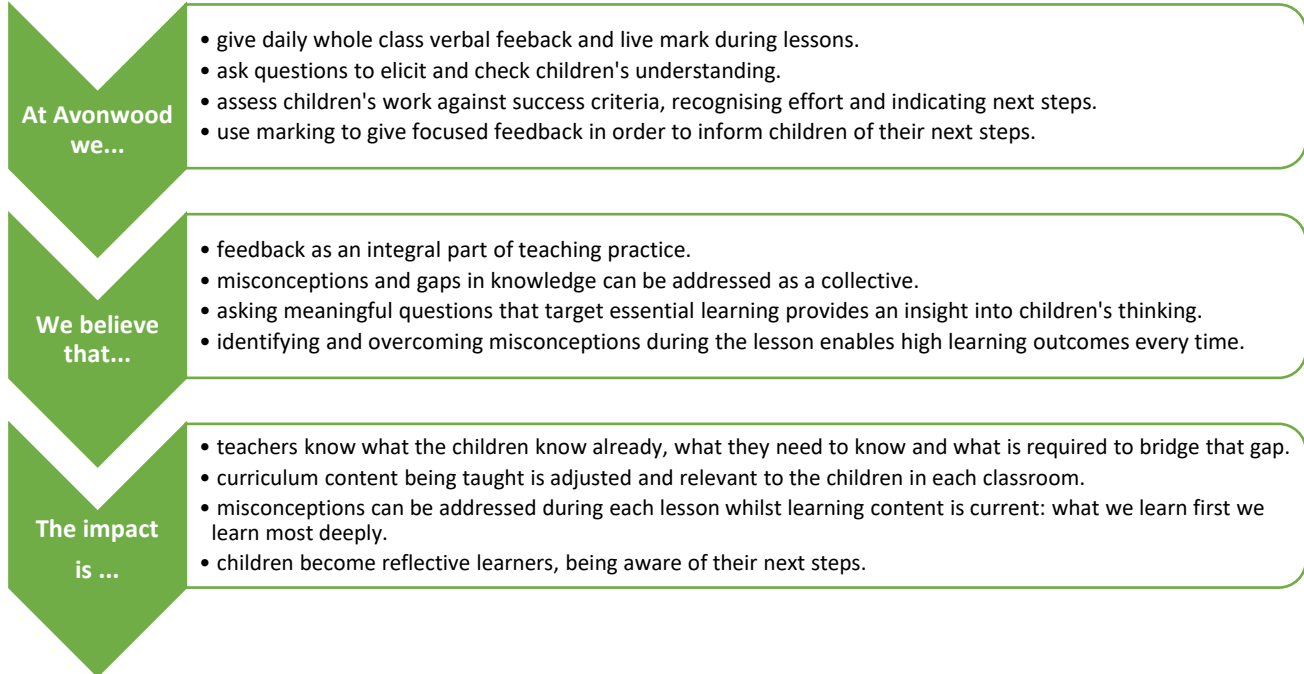
4.2 Practise Makes Progress



References: Rosenshine, Bjork & Bjork, Peps McCrea.



4.3 Actionable Feedback



References: John Hattie, *Great Teaching Toolkit* p30-36.