Moving forwards, making a difference
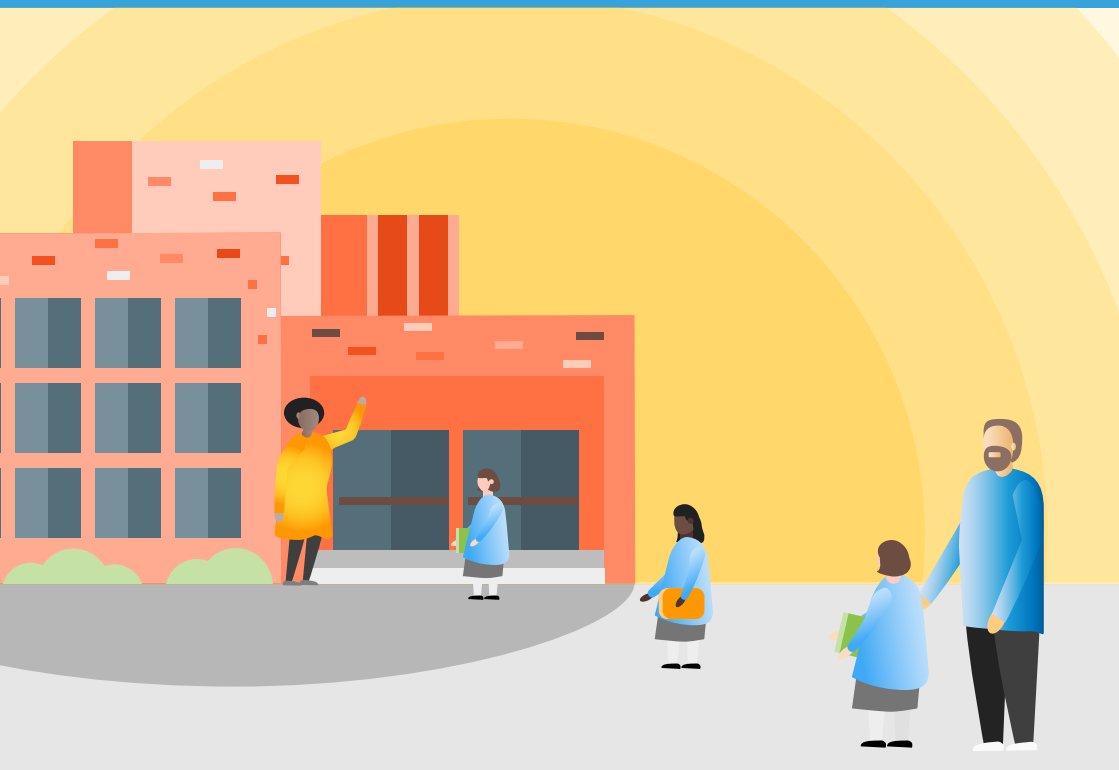A planning guide for schools 2022–23

Education
Endowment
Foundation

About the Education Endowment Foundation

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is an independent charity supporting teachers and school leaders to use evidence of what works—and what doesn't—to improve educational outcomes, especially for disadvantaged children and young people.

Contents

Foreword

Instability caused by the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) completely transformed teaching and learning in schools. Throughout this time, teachers and school leaders have had to find new ways to conduct lessons, assess learning, and maintain relationships with the children in their care.

The pandemic brought with it a period of huge disruption, but also real innovation—with all school staff working tirelessly, despite their responsibilities expanding well past the norm, to meet the needs of their pupils.

As educators well know, the challenge isn't over yet: as I write, pupil and staff attendance remains inconsistent due to illness, and the lasting impact of partial school closures on academic attainment and wellbeing continues to be felt in classrooms across the country.

So, as the new academic year approaches, how can schools make sure that their plans are given the best possible chance of getting pupils back on track to achieving their potential?

This guide is designed to support teachers and school leaders in identifying and addressing the key areas for development in their setting. It offers practical advice and signposts evidence-informed resources on a variety of areas of teaching practice, from ensuring high quality teaching to removing non-academic barriers to attainment.

It is our hope that this resource enables school leaders to take stock of their priorities, and examine effective approaches to addressing them, to make a meaningful difference to pupil outcomes and move learning forwards.

Professor Becky Francis
Chief Executive
Education Endowment Foundation

Selected key findings

COVID-19-related disruption has negatively impacted the attainment of all pupils, particularly those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

- *There is evidence that the attainment gap between socially disadvantaged pupils and their classmates has grown.*

- *There is some evidence that in primary schools, younger year groups (Key Stage 1 pupils) have been the most significantly affected, with lower attainment than previous cohorts across all subjects.*

- *Most evidence shows that despite some recovery by summer 2021, on average, pupils were not performing as well in both maths and reading as pre-pandemic cohorts.*

- *Aside from the impact on attainment, which this report focuses on, teachers have frequently reported concerns around the effect on pupil wellbeing. There is also emerging evidence that suggests the pandemic has had a negative impact on children's mental health.*

**EEF (2022): The Impact of COVID-19 on learning**

The Impact of
Covid-19 on Learning:
A review of the evidence

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Read about the 'Impact of COVID-19 on Learning' in our newest report here:

eef.li/impact-of-covid

Introduction

Moving forwards

As we move forwards, teachers and school leaders will continue to use their expertise to ensure that the children in their care achieve the full extent of their potential. High quality teaching—every day, for all pupils—can and will make a positive difference.
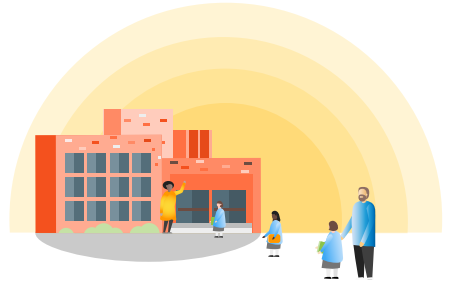
What does this guidance cover and who is it for?

This guide offers practical insights to help school leaders plan for the ongoing recovery of all pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds whose learning we know has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

Drawing on the EEF's tiered model, the guide is designed to support school planning. The guide aids school leaders in determining how best to focus time, effort, and resources by identifying evidence-informed strategies with the greatest potential to support pupil attainment. Alongside these strategies, the planning guide includes an array of school case studies and expert insights from school leaders, teachers and teaching assistants.

The planning guide content, and its signposting to high quality evidence sources, may also be relevant for:

- **governors and parents or carers** looking to support and challenge schools;

- **policymakers and system leaders** that implement initiatives at a regional scale; and

- **education researchers** in conducting further research on the features and nature of educational initiatives and effective implementation.

The tiered model for school planning

Meaningful school planning is not quick. It is a complex process that takes time, thought, and sustained effort.

Narrowing down on key priorities is the first essential step in this process.

The tiered model for school planning is designed as a starting point to enable busy school leaders to consider where best to invest time, energy, and resources for the benefit of their particular pupils.
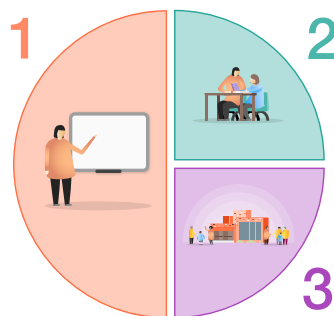
1. High quality teaching

The evidence tells us that high quality teaching is the most important factor when it comes to improving attainment outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Schools should focus on developing teaching practice over a sustained period to drive meaningful change in their setting. School plans to maximise teaching quality may include:

- high quality daily teaching: the 'five-a-day' approach;

- improving literacy and mathematics outcomes;

- using diagnostic assessment to address learning gaps; and

- securing effective professional development.

2. Targeted academic support

For pupils in need of additional support, research suggests that providing targeted academic support finely tuned to the needs of individual pupils offers potential benefits.

School planning should therefore be open to the idea of planning interventions to complement high quality classroom teaching.

3. Wider strategies

Wider strategies address non-academic barriers to success at school that have a significant influence on attainment.

Approaches to wider strategies that are likely to support learning include:

- improving attendance; and

- improving behaviour and re-establishing routines and relationships.

1. HIGH QUALITY TEACHING

Much school planning for the forthcoming academic year will rightly focus on ensuring high quality teaching, every day, for all pupils.

Recent evidence suggests some promising 'best bets' when it comes to developing, planning, and sustaining high quality teaching. These include:

- high quality daily teaching: the 'five-a-day' approach;

- improving outcomes in reading and mathematics;

- using diagnostic assessment to address learning gaps; and

- securing effective teacher development.
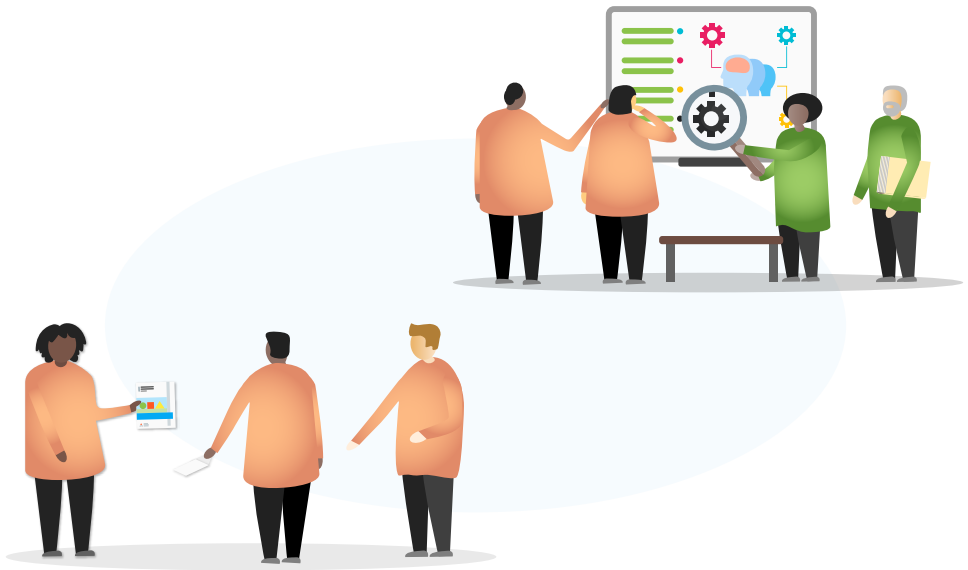
High quality daily teaching: the 'five-a-day' approach

Teaching is complex but there are certain key elements that can be integrated into daily practice to enhance its quality. The 'five-a-day' approach identifies these evidence-based 'best bets', which research evidence suggests can have a positive impact across phases and for all pupil groups, including those with SEND. The five elements of the approach are summarised below:

1 Explicit instruction

Teacher-led approaches with a focus on clear explanations, modelling and frequent checks for understanding. This is then followed by guided practice, before independent practice.

2 Cognitive and metacognitive strategies

Managing cognitive load is crucial if new content is to be transferred into pupils' long-term memory. Provide opportunities for pupils to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning.

3 Scaffolding

When pupils are working on a written task, provide a supportive tool or resource such as a writing frame or a partially completed example. Aim to provide less support of this nature throughout the course of the lesson, week or term.

4 Flexible grouping

Allocate groups temporarily, based on current level of attainment. This could, for example, be a group that comes together to get some additional spelling instruction based on current need, before re-joining the main class.

5 Using technology

Technology can be used by a teacher to model worked examples; it can be used by a pupil to help them to learn, to practice and to record their learning. For instance, you might use a class visualiser to share pupils' work or to jointly rework an incorrect model.

The testimonials below are drawn from the EEF's SEND Evidence Review and *'Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools'* guidance report and are likely to be particularly beneficial for pupils with SEND.

> " *Taking the 'five a day' approach means all children can be taught the same curriculum and content; all children are getting the same opportunities. No child is going to feel different or that they can't achieve if they're doing the same thing as everybody else.* "
>
> **Jess James, teacher at Ashfield Junior School**

> " *Across our schools we have found the 'five a day' evidenced-based principles to be invaluable in supporting and enhancing our teaching practice. The five teaching approaches are as relevant for our children with profound, severe, and complex learning needs as they are for our children who are working within age-related expectations. Each of the approaches can be easily tweaked to meet individual need and the 'five a day' research has ignited professional dialogue amongst our staff team.* "
>
> **Jacky Tattershall, Assistant CEO, Nexus Multi Academy Trust**

The 'five-a-day' approach may be especially helpful as schools look to address lingering knowledge gaps or longstanding misconceptions which might have been picked up as a result of disruptions to learning.

- Explicit instruction can ensure that all pupils have a secure understanding of previously learned content upon which to then build new knowledge.

- Flexible groups temporarily bring together pupils with a specific knowledge or skill gap—such as the ability to structure extended writing—to receive additional support.

- Scaffolding homework tasks—by providing, for example, apt worked examples or recording supporting guidance to be accessed via technology—can support pupils who may be struggling to learn independently at home.

These evidence-informed strategies support all learners, including those with SEND, particularly when underpinned by strong teacher-pupil relationships. They can help best mediate the curriculum, and maximise time on learning, so that all pupils can receive a broad and balanced curriculum.

Schools may utilise resources such as the Teaching and Learning Toolkit or the evidence summary of Cognitive Science Approaches in the Classroom. Any new teaching approaches, or curriculum adaptations, should be informed by the best available evidence and implemented with care, taking into account how manageable such changes prove for busy teachers.

> *Independent study is the shift of responsibility in the learning process from the teacher to the pupils. This is essential to support pupils to solve problems and questions independently. However, emotional barriers, including lack of self-esteem, or barriers due to gaps in prior knowledge or skills, can strongly impact pupils' confidence in independent learning.*
>
> *Within Billesley Primary School, the approach to the scaffolded support given to pupils is linked to the EEF's seven-step model for teaching metacognitive strategies. Teaching follows the 'I do/we do/you do' model to allow pupils to practice the taught material alongside their teacher. Guided practice benefits both the pupils and teachers as it increases pupil confidence and allows teachers to support and monitor learning.*
>
> *The aim of the scaffolding process is for teachers to gradually reduce support. This will ultimately help pupils progress towards independent learning with confidence in their abilities due to the scaffolded support offered by the teaching staff.*
>
> **Emily Atkinson, teacher at Billesley Research School**

To support high quality teaching, access our range of guidance reports:

eef.li/guidance

Key questions to consider...

— *Are teachers and school leaders using the 'five-a-day' approach to promote good teaching for all pupils, including those with SEND?*

— *What are the necessary 'five-a-day' teaching practices that would best support pupils in your school context?*

Using diagnostic assessment to address learning gaps

Diagnostic assessments provide opportunities to reflect on pupils' thinking, strengths, and weaknesses. They can give useful insights into learning, adding to the richness of the information teachers hold about their pupils.

When used effectively, diagnostic assessments can indicate areas for development with individual pupils or across classes and year groups. Some methods can also help teachers isolate the specific misconceptions pupils might hold.

Regardless of what form they take, it is important that teachers know why they are conducting assessments prior to using them. It should be clear what information the assessment is being designed to produce and how this information will inform subsequent decision making.

With the information diagnostic assessments provide, teachers may:

- decide to adjust the level of challenge of activities;

- reteach specific concepts or topics;

- adjust curriculum content in the medium or long term;

- provide pupils with feedback through which they can address their own areas for improvement; or

- decide which pupils may need additional, targeted academic support.

> *Triangulation of diagnostic information has highlighted that some of our pupils have not retained the powerful knowledge and skills required for all pupils to thrive in some of our foundation subjects. This has made us reflect on the progression and coherence of the curriculum, and therefore the high-quality teaching, of several foundation subjects.*
>
> **Jess Paul, Headteacher of Tanners Brook Primary School, HISP MAT**

Diagnostic assessment	Purpose	Practicalities
Hinge questions	These targeted questions, at a pivotal point, offer immediate indicators of learning and can identify misconceptions	Multiple choice questions work well with plausible 'distractors' for wrong answers. They can lead to valuable class discussion.
Quizzing	Low stakes quizzing can offer curriculum-sensitive insights into pupils' learning.	Short answer quizzes do not assess complex understanding, but they can offer a quick identification of knowledge gaps or related issues.
Pre-topic 'mind map'	Mind-maps (or concept maps) before a new topic can both establish crucial prior knowledge but also generate curiosity for the learning ahead.	Pupils can benefit from pre-specified graphic organisers, such as mind-maps, to trigger prior knowledge and allows for adaptive teaching.

For more details you can find the full EEF resource on Diagnostic Assessment here:

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Diagnostic_Assessment_Tool.pdf

Key questions to consider…

— *What assessment tasks will give us the best diagnostic information about the prerequisite knowledge, skills, and competencies we want our pupils to develop?*

— *Are assessments used to diagnose issues at both an individual pupil level and at a cohort or class level?*

— *Are assessments being used to inform judicious adaptations to the curriculum?*

Improving literacy and mathematics outcomes

Literacy and mathematics outcomes are vital for school success. Essential skills such as reading can unlock access to the entire school curriculum. For instance, reading fluency can support increased comprehension when reading historical sources, tackling local case studies in geography, or reading poetry in English. While mathematics is a crucial subject domain in its own right, mathematical ability is also important to enable pupils to access other curriculum areas such as science and geography.

The EEF's Impact of COVID-19 on Learning and School Starters reports have highlighted clear evidence that pupils' learning in both literacy and mathematics has been adversely impacted by the many challenges posed by the pandemic. Some research also shows that disadvantaged pupils have fared worse than their classmates, causing a historic gap in attainment to further widen.

We can only speculate as to the causes of the negative impact on learning, but we can identify priority areas for the school year ahead. In our guidance reports we make a range of evidence-based recommendations that help break down the complexities and various priorities for both literacy and mathematics development. Some consistent recommendations across reports are listed below.

Literacy	Mathematics
Develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and wider understanding of language.	*Use diagnostic assessment to build on pupils' existing mathematical knowledge and understanding.*
Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject.	*With a clear rationale, use manipulatives and representations to aid pupils' mathematical understanding.*
Teach reading comprehension strategies through modelling and supported practice.	*Explicitly teach pupils problem solving strategies, comparing different approaches where appropriate.*
Support pupils to develop their reading fluency.	*Develop a rich network of mathematical knowledge for pupils, for example, emphasising the connections between mathematical facts, procedures, and concepts.*
Teach the writing process (for example, planning, revising, and editing) explicitly through modelling and supported practice.	*Develop pupils' independence so that they can plan, monitor, and evaluate their mathematical thinking.*
Develop pupils' handwriting, spelling, and sentence construction skills through extensive practice.	*Use tasks to address pupils' misconceptions, providing examples and non-examples where appropriate.*
Target teaching and support by accurately assessing pupils' needs.	*Use high quality structured interventions to provide targeted support.*
Use high quality structured interventions for those pupils who are struggling with literacy.	*Support pupils with maths at points of curriculum transition: for example, there is a dip in mathematical attainment between primary and secondary school.*

In mathematics, 'Number' underpins those vital areas of mathematics that many of our pupils may have missed because of the pandemic – such as 'money' and 'measure'. As a result, we have focused our curriculum planning and teaching efforts carefully on the representation of number through manipulatives - using 'Ten Frames', 'Rekenreks', and 'Numicon sets' etc.'

Hydeh Fayaz, Assistant Headteacher at St.Matthews' Research School

The key focus across our early years provisions is the development of early communication. During the pandemic we've seen first-hand the impact of school closures on some of our youngest children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Through professional discussions with practitioners across the trust, we have observed the impact on their early communication skills. We know it is imperative we address this to remove barriers to learning.

We're aware that there is no quick fix and have explored EEF evidence within the Preparing for Literacy guidance report. Our approach will be to develop the whole early years workforce around what quality interactions look like, drawing from the ShREC approach.

Children who need additional support will be targeted during continuous provision to ensure we have a consistent and high quality approach across early years to impact on outcomes. This will give those pupils who need it the additional opportunity to have high quality interactions with skilled professionals.
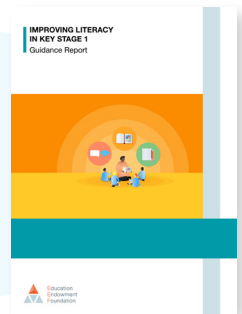
Sarah Stock, Director of Newcastle Research School

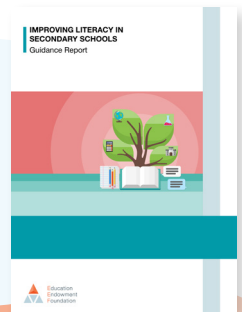**The EEF's Literacy and mathematics reports**
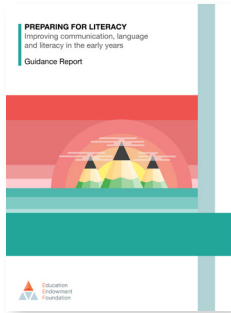
Preparing for literacy

eef.li/literacy-early-years

Improving literacy in key stage 1

eef.li/literacy-ks1

Improving literacy in key stage 2

eef.li/literacy-ks2

Improving literacy in secondary schools

eef.li/literacy-ks2-ks3

Improving mathematics in the early years and key stage 1

eef.li/early-maths
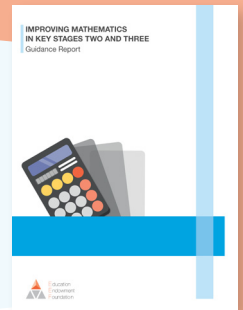
Improving mathematics in key stages 2 and 3

eef.li/maths-ks2-ks3

Key questions to consider...

— *What are the specific literacy or maths issues that need to be addressed? For example, for young readers, is it a decoding issue, vocabulary knowledge, reading fluency, or something else?*

— *What are the existing literacy or mathematics practices and supports already established in school? Are these well targeted to best support pupils adversely impacted during the pandemic?*

Securing effective professional development

Effective professional development is vital to support, develop, and sustain high quality teaching. As schools move forwards into the next academic year, professional development programmes are an important focus for school plans.

The EEF's Effective Professional Development guidance report identifies some 'best bets' on how to maximise the impact of the professional development opportunities that schools choose to invest time, energy, and resources in. The guidance identifies essential building blocks, or mechanisms, which increase the likelihood that professional development will make a difference to classroom practice.

These mechanisms fall into four key groups that, taken together, are known as the 'balanced approach' to professional development design.

These four groups are:

- building knowledge;
- motivating teachers;
- developing teacher techniques; and
- embedding practice.

When professional development activities include at least one mechanism from each of these four groups, the evidence suggests that it is more likely to bring about lasting change.

Schools should only address a small number of professional development priorities at a time, making sure that staff training exemplifies the balanced approach outlined on the following page.

Initial training will be supported through instructional coaching over two terms along with a professional learning community every four weeks in which the teachers engage with evidence and discuss their own learning.

James Siddle, Director of Kyra Research School

We spent a number of staff meetings exploring the 'Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning' guidance report, unpicking the guidance before trialling and then evaluating methods and practices. Staff contributed heavily to the content of our newly written Feedback and Marking Policy. Our next step is to ensure that this is embedded throughout school.
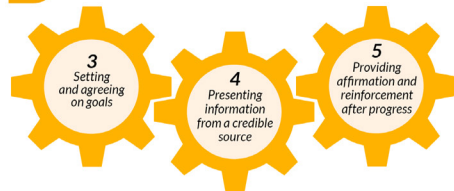
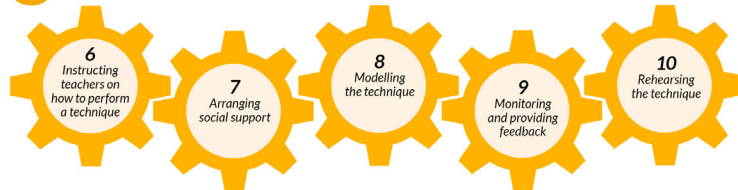**Steve Wheeldon, Principal at Wilbraham Primary**

A BUILDING KNOWLEDGE

1 Managing cognitive load

2 Revisiting prior learning

B MOTIVATING TEACHERS

3 Setting and agreeing on goals

4 Presenting information from a credible source
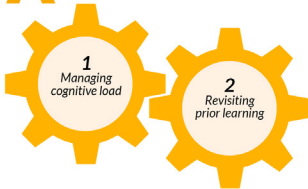
5 Providing affirmation and reinforcement after progress

C DEVELOPING TEACHING TECHNIQUES

6 Instructing teachers on how to perform a technique

7 Arranging social support

8 Modelling the technique

9 Monitoring and providing feedback

10 Rehearsing the technique

D EMBEDDING PRACTICE

11 Providing prompts and cues

12 Prompting action planning

13 Encouraging monitoring

14 Prompting context-specific repetition

EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Guidance Report

Education Endowment Foundation

More information on effective professional development can be found here:

eef.li/epd

Key questions to consider...

— *Does any proposed professional development focus align with school priorities? Does this professional development address the most important needs of teachers and pupils at this time?*

— *Is there capacity to sustain this professional development for the time necessary to embed changes to classroom practice?*

2. TARGETED ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Most pupils will benefit solely from a focus on high quality, whole-class teaching. However, some children may require extra, targeted support that is tailored to their specific needs to get their learning back on track.
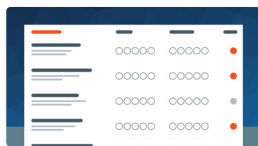
Additional interventions could involve revisiting foundational knowledge, practicing basic skills, or pre-learning upcoming content. Key to success will be making sure that interventions complement and strongly link to the curriculum being covered in-class, with the content being set by teachers where possible.

The TARGET model, drawn from insights from a range of EEF interventions and programmes, offers a helpful summary of typical active ingredients of successful targeted academic support.

Timing	Intervention sessions are often brief (e.g. 15–60 mins) and regular (e.g. 2–5 per week).
Assessment	Assessments are used to identify pupils, guide areas of focus and to track pupil progress.
Resourcing	The intervention has structured supporting resources and lesson plans, with clear objectives and possibly a delivery script.
Give it time	Careful timetabling is in place to enable consistent delivery. Sessions are typically maintained over a sustained period (e.g. 8–20 weeks).
Expert delivery	Interventions are delivered by a qualified teacher, or if they are unavailable, a trained teaching assistant. The intervention programme is followed precisely and suggested delivery protocols are followed.
Teacher links	If not delivered by the classroom teacher, the intervention deliverer and the teacher/s communicate regularly and make appropriate connections between out-of-class learning and classroom teaching.

In the academic year ahead, schools will be considering what tutoring strategies are feasible and best fit the needs of their pupils. The EEF's [Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#) features three specific strands on different approaches to implement:

One to one tutoring	**+5** months	Short, regular sessions over a set period of time (up to ten weeks) appear to result in optimum impact. Evidence also suggests tuition should be additional to, but explicitly linked with, normal teaching.
Peer tutoring	**+5** months	This includes a range of approaches in which learners work in pairs or small groups to provide each other with explicit teaching support. Use it to review or consolidate learning rather than to introduce new material.
Small group tuition	**+4** months	Small group tuition is most likely to be effective if it is targeted at pupils' specific needs. Diagnostic assessment can be used to assess the best way to target support

> *This year, we've used intervention sessions to focus on improving basic numeracy and reasoning skills to improve pupils' knowledge, attitudes, and confidence in maths. We use diagnostic data to identify pupils for intervention (twice-weekly small group sessions lasting 50 minutes). The duration of the interventions is dependent on the needs of each individual pupil.*
>
> **Jennifer Celestain, Teaching Assistant, Pimlico Academy**

> "We identified a group of pupils who are particularly vulnerable using in-school data, lesson observations, and symptomatic indications such as behaviour logs and attendance data. We hypothesised that reading was a significant barrier for them in accessing the curriculum and diagnostic assessments were carried out; these highlighted that these pupils had low reading ages.
>
> Teachers have been guided to support these pupils in class using recommended strategies to improve reading comprehension and fluency. Alongside this, we've used in-school tuition to deliver targeted academic intervention and our Literacy Research Lead has developed a bespoke programme to improve their reading ability.
>
> We will also continue to monitor and evaluate our targeted academic support and ensure that we pick up on any similarly vulnerable pupils in our incoming cohort."
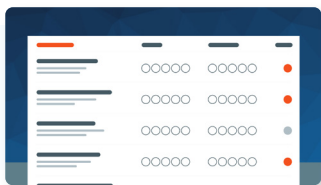>
> **Kate Freezer, Assistant Headteacher for Aspirations and Outcomes, Notre Dame High School, Norwich**

Further reading

Sources of actionable evidence to support
targeted academic support include:

The EEF Toolkit

eef.li/toolkit

**Special Educational Needs
in mainstream schools**

eef.li/SEND

**Making Best Use of
Teaching Assistants**

eef.li/teaching-assistants

Key questions to consider...

— *Does your planned targeted academic support draw on the principles highlighted within the
   'TARGET' model?*

— *Are pupils missing important curriculum content when undertaking interventions and how can
   this challenge be mitigated so that learning gaps are not compounded?*

3. WIDER STRATEGIES

'Wider strategies' support positive learning behaviours that enable schools to remove non-academic barriers to attainment and get pupils' learning back on track.

The success of these strategies is strongly influenced by whether or not they are implemented with a focus on supportive relationships and strong routines.

Prioritising wider strategies can be key for the wellbeing and attainment of all pupils but will be especially important at transition points, whether the child is moving to the classroom next door or to an entirely new setting. Evidence suggests this is particularly true for pupils with SEND and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Attendance

All teachers understand how important it is for children to be in the classroom, where we know they learn best. However, attendance continues to be an area of difficulty for schools, particularly in the wake of the pandemic.

"There is some evidence of promise for several strategies including parental engagement approaches and responsive interventions to target the individual causes of low attendance."

Attendance Interventions Rapid Evidence Assessment (EEF, 2022)

Parental engagement approaches

It may be useful to reflect on school processes for engaging parents or carers. There are a number of approaches which the evidence suggests can improve attendance for all pupils, including:

- sharing pupils' attendance percentage with parents or carers at key points in the year;

- frequently restating the importance of regular school attendance; and

- utilising technology, such as text messaging.

For those pupils in need of additional support, the evidence also suggests that engaging parents through targeted interventions can be successful. This approach, more commonly employed to support pupils with more significant attendance concerns, often involves schools working positively and closely in partnership with parents, collaborating to support the child or family. This could include making referrals to specialist services such as counselling and mentoring to support the pupil's individual needs or provide wider support for the family.

Responsive interventions to target the individual causes of low attendance

Schools can also support pupils with particularly low attendance by creating and implementing bespoke plans that respond to the often very individual reasons why a child may not be coming to school. Success will be more likely when this work is underpinned by strong relationships and a good understanding of pupil needs.

> *Great Heights Trust's priority in the upcoming academic year is to tackle attendance. As a 2-19 MAT we have a post-pandemic issue with persistent absence across several of our settings. We have implemented both targeted and whole-school strategies—such as breakfast clubs, clear communication of expectations to parents, as well as drilling down into the causes of persistent absence for each pupil—but next year we want to tackle this by thinking about our classroom strategies around absence.*
>
> *We realised that whilst our interventions and whole-school measures are clear, we have been less clear on how to support persistently absent pupils when they are back in the classroom.*
>
> *Next year, we want to train and support our staff in their identification of missing core knowledge and skills for these pupils and how to then fill those gaps. We believe that supporting these pupils to attain better will improve their attitudes to themselves as learners and to the school and that this might be as effective in reducing absence as our other measures.*

Dani Worthington, Director of School Improvement, Great Heights Academy Trust
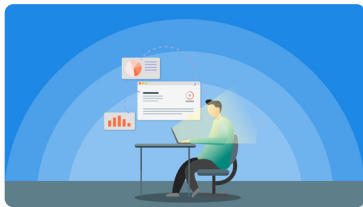
Attendance Interventions Rapid Evidence Assessment

Rapid evidence assessment on attendance interventions for school-aged pupils.

eef.li/attendance-rea

Key questions

— *How effective are current systems of communication with parents around attendance? Could these be improved or strengthened?*

— *What support is available for pupils with poor attendance? Does this address the root causes of their low- or non-attendance?*

Improving behaviour

> *"A learning behaviour can be thought of as a behaviour that is necessary in order for a person to learn effectively in the group setting of the classroom."*
>
> *Ellis and Todd, 2018*

Many schools have invested time on re-establishing strong routines following the disruption caused by COVID-19. Alongside this, many have put considerable effort into supporting positive learning behaviours for all pupils.

In practice, this may mean:

- re-establishing a whole-school culture in which behaviour routines are implemented positively, consistently, and with transparency;

- explicit teaching of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) skills, to all pupils, which also integrate well into high quality teaching in every classroom and at the whole-school level; and

- approaching transition carefully, ensuring that pupils:

  — receiving a well-sequenced curriculum that builds on their prior learning experiences;

  — have a strong understanding of school routines and expectations; and

  — benefit from opportunities to establish new friendships.

> *A key priority has been re-establishing effective learning behaviours, focusing on embedding strong routines through clear and explicit instruction. Our weekly professional development sessions have included time for teachers to script and practice their explanations, including explicit explanations about what pupils should be doing at key points in the lesson.*
>
> **Susie Fraser, Dir. Manchester Communication Research School**

> *A main area for development is support for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds transitioning between primary and secondary school—anticipating risk points and deliberately building the support needed to set every child up for success. Using a robust diagnostic process, including discussions with primary colleagues, sensitive assessment of pupils' social and emotional wellbeing, and attainment data, we aim to highlight a cohort of pupils who would benefit from additional support.*
>
> *We will use a number of approaches rooted in evidence: a summer school with access to high quality English, maths, and science tutoring, masterclasses focused on resilience, communication, and teamwork to develop social and emotional skills, and opportunities to build healthy peer networks before transition. At secondary school, a peer tutoring programme will be established which pairs children with older pupils providing support with homework, study skills, and dealing with social issues. Parents are involved at every step, using methods of parental engagement we have previously found to be successful with our community.*
>
> *This will take time to develop and embed and will require a focused implementation plan to maximise the chance of success. Next year, we intend to refine this approach before sharing with other schools looking to overcome similar challenges.*
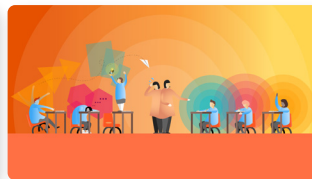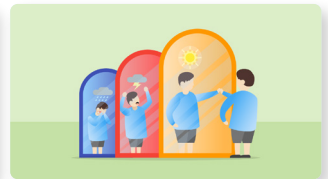
Simon Cox, Director of Blackpool Research School

Metacognition and Self Regulation

eef.li/metacognition

Improving behaviour in schools

eef.li/behaviour

Social and Emotional Learning

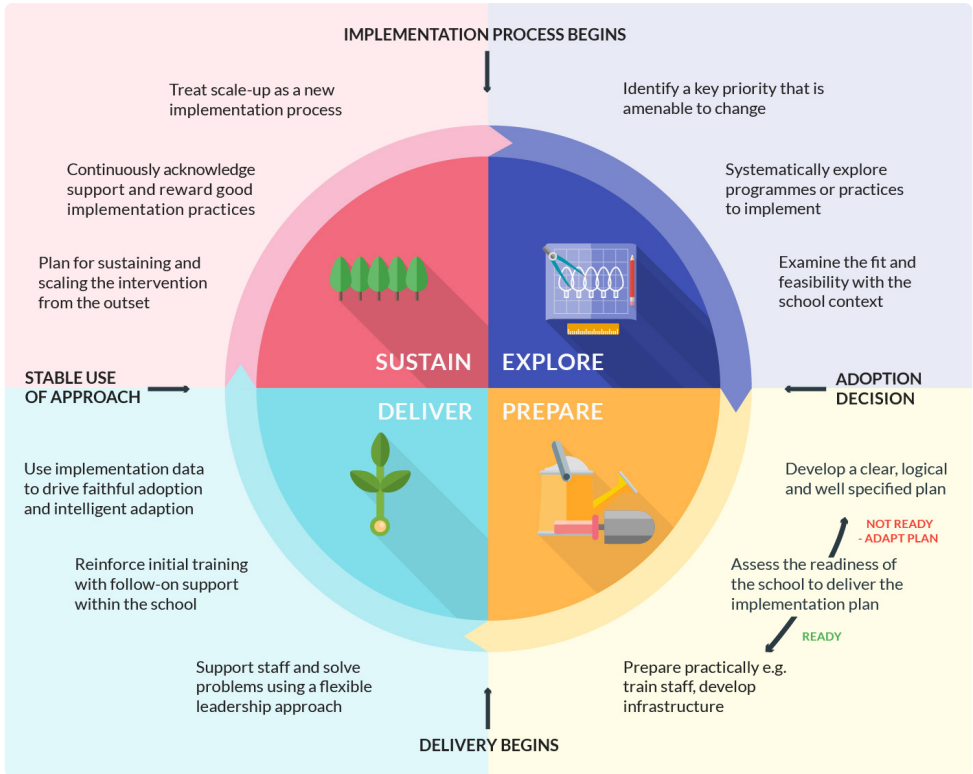**eef.li/SEL**

Key questions to consider...

— *Are behaviour routines explicitly understood and enacted across your whole school?*

— *During periods of transition, do pupils have a clear understanding of any changes to routine, the opportunity to develop relationships with peers, and access to a curriculum that builds on what they already know? What changes might be needed to ensure this?*

Essentials of implementation

As schools develop their plans for the year ahead, it is important to recognise that successfully implementing new approaches is not a quick, one-off event. Additionally, there may be a need to stop existing approaches or practices: attention to de-implementing may be necessary.

Meaningful change happens in planned stages and unfolds over an extended period of time—within and across school years. The EEF implementation cycle offers schools a clear, accessible process for planning and delivering changes in practice.
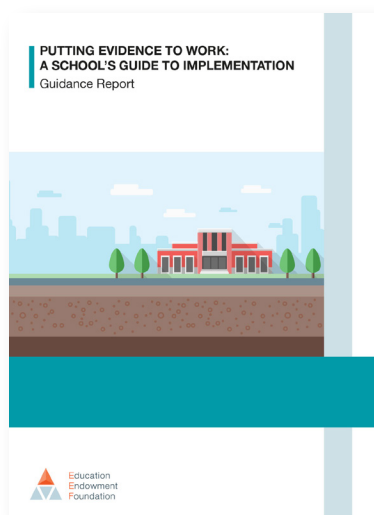
The implementation process diagram:

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS BEGINS

Treat scale-up as a new implementation process

Continuously acknowledge support and reward good implementation practices

Plan for sustaining and scaling the intervention from the outset

STABLE USE OF APPROACH

Use implementation data to drive faithful adoption and intelligent adaption

Reinforce initial training with follow-on support within the school

Support staff and solve problems using a flexible leadership approach

DELIVERY BEGINS

SUSTAIN

EXPLORE

DELIVER

PREPARE

Identify a key priority that is amenable to change

Systematically explore programmes or practices to implement

Examine the fit and feasibility with the school context

ADOPTION DECISION

Develop a clear, logical and well specified plan

NOT READY - ADAPT PLAN

Assess the readiness of the school to deliver the implementation plan

READY

Prepare practically e.g. train staff, develop infrastructure

The EEF's *'Putting evidence to work: a school's guide to implementation'* provides key recommendations that can help school leaders looking to implement evidence-informed approaches in the year ahead. These highlight the importance of:

- **clearly defining the area of practice in need of development and identifying appropriate practices or programmes to address this**: this will involve using robust diagnostic evidence to identify a tight focus for improvement and utilising robust research evidence to inform decisions on what to implement;

- **creating an implementation plan that clarifies how changes will take place in practice**: this will help to build a shared understanding of changes to come, and consider how best to arrange support staff and allocate resources (including time); and

- **continually monitoring the implementation process to track progress and make adaptations to suit the needs of the pupils and school context**: this will help schools to solve any problems which might arise and identify areas where staff might require additional support, to keep improving the use of an approach over time.

Implementation is easier when staff feel trusted to try new things and make mistakes, safe in the knowledge that they will be supported with high quality resources, training, and encouragement to try again and keep improving. This may mean choosing to implement fewer key actions in order to ensure that time, resources, and teachers' efforts and energy can be focused where they will make the most difference.

PUTTING EVIDENCE TO WORK: A SCHOOL'S GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTATION
Guidance Report

Education Endowment Foundation

eef.li/implementation

> *A key priority for our primary schools is the development of reading fluency in Key Stage 2. We piloted an approach and spent a long time preparing the ground for this in our exploration phase. We have developed and trialled all our resources, have our staff training package prepared and our milestones and outcomes are set.*

Helen Crowther, Principal of The Greetland Academy

> " *In planning for 2022/2023 school improvement, the leadership team at John Taylor High School has used the EEF's Putting Evidence to Work guidance report recommendations and implementation process to enhance collaborative leadership thinking and rationales for selecting priorities. The aim was to choose fewer initiatives and do them better.*
>
> *Following SLT professional development sessions from the Staffordshire Research School, the team analysed all of the post-pandemic data sources available to us. Only after multiple team sessions were we in a position to agree and define the 'problems' we wished to address and create implementation plans with clearly defined 'active ingredients'. Where previously there have been five or six school improvement targets, our current priorities focus on two aspects of school improvement:*
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> * *school culture (focusing on routines and relationships); and*
> * *further enhancing sixth form quality of teaching through medium term planning and two main areas of pedagogy (metacognition and feedback).* "
>
> **Katie Cochrane, Headteacher at John Taylor High School (Staffordshire)**

Key questions to consider...

— *What evidence will be needed to identify the most pressing priorities for our school plans?*

— *Does this include information from a range of sources (for example, assessment information, lesson observations, or staff and pupil survey or interviews) to build a rich evidence picture?*

— *How will staff be supported to implement the practices that will address the priority identified? What will be expected, supported, and rewarded?*

The Research Schools Network (RSN) is a network of 38 schools (including ten Associate Research Schools) that support the use of evidence to improve teaching practice.

Schools in the RSN work with local schools across England, sharing and communicating research evidence, developing partnerships, and conducting evidence-based professional development.

Many expert RSN leaders feature in this guide and they are available to contact for support with school planning. You can find out more about the RSN here:

https://researchschool.org.uk/

Accessing scale-up programmes and taking part in trials:

The EEF provides opportunities to access a range of programmes on an ongoing basis. More than 14,000 schools, as well as early years and post-16 settings, have signed up to be involved in an EEF project.

Schools can get involved in several ways, from supporting the testing of innovative approaches to teaching and learning, taking part in independently evaluated trials to build the evidence base around established programmes, as well as being supported to access programmes with evidence of positive impact for pupils.

For more information visit:

eef.li/projects-recruiting
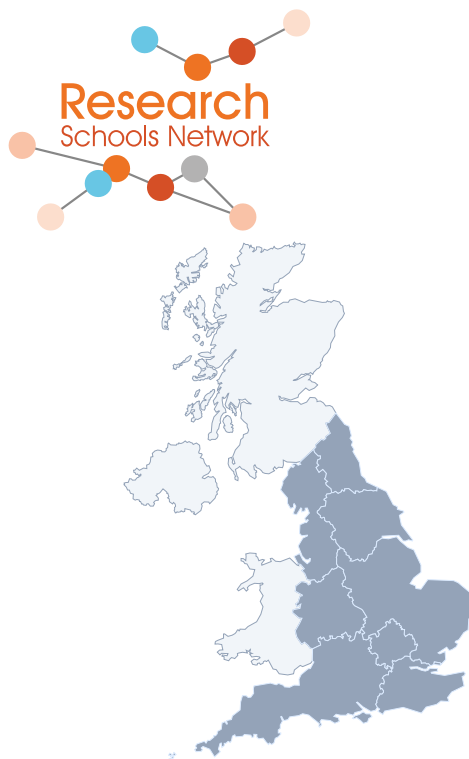
> *We don't want innovators to see the new framework as a brake. For example, if you are trying out new models as part of Education Endowment Foundation studies, or are working on new approaches to curriculum or teaching or assessment, that will be recognised."*
>
> **Amanda Spielman,**
> **Ofsted Chief Inspector (2019)**