Maesteg School

Teaching and Learning Policy

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Rationale

Teaching and learning at Maesteg School is our core business. It is our aim to ensure that all our pupils have high aspirations to be the most effective learner they can be and so be successful both in and out of school. Teachers and pupils work in partnership to create stimulating and successful environments in which learning and achievement can flourish and all forms of effort are celebrated. We operate as a research-based community which strives relentlessly to adopt excellence in all aspects of pedagogy. Our practice is based on the work of John Hattie, Dylan Wiliams and Carol Dweck, and underpinned by three guiding principles:

- Learning is at its most effective when visible, both allowing students to recognise themselves as participants in the process and ensuring teachers are monitoring the impact of their own practice (John Hattie).
- Teachers and students embrace every opportunity to gain feedback, using it meaningfully to reflect on and improve engagement and progress (Dylan Wiliam).
- A ‘growth mindset’ culture ensures that all teachers and students understand that intelligence is not fixed and effort and ambition are required for learning to occur (Carol Dweck).

All professional learning for teachers exists within the school’s frameworks for teaching and learning of CRAFT and LEARN and aim to bring around the culture described by the three theorists above. Together CRAFT and LEARN constitute ‘The Maesteg Method’

The theoretical backdrop to learning and teaching in Maesteg School

Learning is at its most effective when visible

"Accomplished teachers . . . focus on seeing learning through the eyes of the students, appreciating their fits and starts in learning, and their often non-linear progressions to the goals"

(John Hattie, *Visible Learning for Teachers*, p. 20)

- Teachers recognise that visible learning occurs when teachers and pupils seek evidence that the intended learning is occurring, allowing them to react and adjust accordingly. Careful planning ensures that opportunities for reflection (e.g. through mini-plenaries) are given throughout a lesson to assess the impact of the teaching. Teachers are vigilant as to what is and what is not working in their classroom.
- Teachers ensure that pace and challenge are essential features of the lesson and craft situations that match these to the context of the learning. Teachers are adaptive and recognise the need to change elements of the lesson immediately where they are not having the expected effect. Intervention is ongoing and 'on-the-spot'.
- Learners experience marginal gains in their achievement through the teacher's manipulation of those areas of pedagogy which have significant effect sizes (e.g. self-reported grades; formative evaluation; reciprocal teaching).
- Teachers use the following areas when planning lessons to ensure that optimal conditions for learning are created: prior achievement; targeted outcomes; the rate of desired progress; and teacher collaboration
- Teachers are proficient in 'reading the room' to ensure a supportive and cooperative classroom climate in which pupils are prepared to take risks and recognise making mistakes and the process of correction as an integral part of learning.
- Where learning intentions are not being fully realised, teachers adapt their practice to ensure that the lesson is meaningful and impactful to the specific pupils in front of them.

The centrality of live feedback and marking, particularly during the lesson

"Pedagogy is curriculum, because what matters is how things are taught, rather than what is taught"

(Dylan Wiliam, *Embedded Formative Assessment*, p. 52)

- So that learning can be measured, teachers set carefully-constructed learning objectives and success criteria which are shared with the pupils and act as the 'map' for the lesson. They support pupils in moving towards ever more conceptual understanding such that the learning can be generalised and transferred to new contexts. Success criteria for key tasks further support this process.
- As reflective practitioners, teachers wish to gain evidence of the impact of their practice. Discussion work, questioning and pupils' response to challenging tasks are all recognised as sources of such evidence.
- Teachers undertake live feedback in nearly all lessons to ensure that pupils are provided with ways of addressing errors and misconceptions as soon as possible.

- The aim of feedback is to move the learner forward by causing thinking on their part and requiring a response. Its focus is on how to improve, meaning that comments are more important than grades or levels.
- Teachers recognise that pupils act as highly powerful learning resources for each other. Tasks are set which allow individual students to gain confidence and security in a particular area before instructing others.
- Learners need to be prepared for an increasingly globalised and changing world. To achieve this, lessons give pupils the opportunity to become owners of their own learning through, for example, forms of self- and peer-assessment.

Developing a 'Growth Mindset' Culture

'No matter what your ability is, effort is what ignites that ability and turns it into accomplishment'.
(Carol Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, p. 45)

- Teachers recognise that having an appropriate level of challenge is crucial if pupils are to be engaged and make progress. Lessons are planned with the expectation that provision allows for 'Teach to the Top'.
- Teachers emphasise effort and progress more than they emphasise ability. Pupils are aware that learning only occurs when effort is being made and challenge is felt. The teacher's role is to ensure that a learner is carefully supported in achieving ever-more challenging goals. The learner's role is to reflect on what they did, how they did it and how they felt about the challenge at various key points.
- Teachers welcome and encourage error, using it to drive the learning forward and develop pupils' motivation and skills. Mistakes are welcomed as important pieces of evidence to the pupil and the teacher and time is built into lessons for students to understand why the mistake was made and what needs to be done to overcome it.
- Pupils recognise themselves as active participants in learning and so are supported in demonstrating the kinds of skills associated with effective learning such as resilience, resourcefulness, reciprocity and reflection.
- Learners are given the opportunity to engage in deliberate practice as a way of increasing their mastery over a topic. This allows pupils to experience the importance of effort, protect against their forgetting and improve their ability to transfer.
- Praise is geared towards the growth-orientated process

The Maesteg Method: How teaching and learning in Maesteg School happens

In Maesteg School, lessons are planned, delivered and evaluated through two frameworks that have been developed collaboratively by all teachers:

LEARN This framework supports lesson structure. In Maesteg School, we recognise that nearly all lessons have the same structure. Each part of the lesson is designed to support pupils in engaging in their learning and making progress.

CRAFT This framework provides an overview of the pedagogical principles which inform lessons. In Maesteg School, we recognise that all lessons are deliberate, purposeful and learner-centric. In short, they are crafted. The principles form part of all learning experiences.

LEARN Framework: Lesson Structure

Principle	What does this involve?
Learning Environment	• Meet-and-Greet (to build relationships) • Learning readiness (to create the right climate) • Bell Work (to activate learning)
Establish	• Learning Objectives (to show the bigger picture) • Success Criteria and Skills provision (to support progress) • Starter activity (to initiate/activate learning)
Achieve	• Challenge (CRAFT) • Adaptive Teaching (CRAFT) • Pace of learning (rather than pace of activities)
Review & Reflect	• Assessment of and for learning (to know what learning has taken place) • Plenary (to consolidate learning) • End and send (to close with purpose)
Next Steps	• Thread of learning (to ensure coherence and continuity) • Individual pupil progress (to know how to improve) • Progress of the class (to secure learning)

CRAFT Framework: Pedagogical Principles

Principle	What does this involve?
Challenge 	a) Lessons are planned, delivered and assessed to support and challenge the most able pupils ('Teach to the Top') to raise the learning aspirations of all. b) Relevant concepts within the subject are explored through pre-planned concrete examples and analogies. c) Learners are given opportunities to apply and transfer their knowledge from one context to another and/or reflect on it through metacognitive tools. d) Teachers are mindful of cognitive load in the presentation of new information. e) High expectations are placed on pupils' use and understanding of subject-specific vocabulary. f) Links with skills are purposeful and teachers ensure that they are not barriers to pupils deepening or demonstrating their learning.
Relationships 	a) Teachers know their pupils well and use all available data and information on them to make the learning personalised, relevant and appropriately challenging. b) Meaningful praise which is focused on the learning is used positively throughout the lesson. c) High expectations of each learner are demonstrated consistently to develop their self-esteem and confidence. d) Teachers demonstrate passion for their subject and for learning in general, including in their role modelling of high standards of oracy and presentation. e) Teachers support a growth mindset within their learners, responding positively to risk-taking and initial failure as a way of building resilience. f) School routines, policies and SOPs are followed to support consistency within a classroom and across the school (including seating plans).
Adaptive Teaching Methods 	a) The learner's needs and progression is at the heart of the lesson: Purposeful planning and reactive delivery ('Teach to the Top') b) Learners complete the same aspirational tasks but may utilise a range of scaffolds to support completion. c) Teachers show awareness of the requirement of universal provision, IDPs and PSPs to ensure equitable opportunities in learning for all. d) Teachers understand and use subject-specific and disposition-specific pedagogy. e) The range of tasks are designed to allow pupils access to the learning in varied ways and which best suits the intended learning outcomes.
Feedback 	a) In-class assessing strategies (e.g. questioning; mini-plenaries; technological devices) are used at key learning moments to check the impact of teaching on the learners. They are used to inform the direction of the lesson, address misconceptions and close learning gaps. b) 'No hands up' and strategic 'cold calling' are employed. c) Assessments are used diagnostically to inform further teaching and curriculum design. d) All feedback, whether through verbal interaction, active live marking or in books, should push learning forward. e) Opportunities are given for pupils to improve all work that has been assessed, by themselves, their peers or their teacher. f) Pupils are clear on what learning success looks like (for example, through WAGOLLs and success criteria)
Thread 	a) All lessons (planning, structure and delivery) have a clearly articulated learning journey in which pupils show increasing knowledge, independence, application and progression within the planned area. b) Prior learning (often through retrieval activities) is activated to support current learning and create deeper and more complex understandings. c) The learning 'thread' is made explicit to the learners (e.g. through learning objectives; directed teaching moments; instructions; task design; homework). d) Learning 'threads' should be informed through the school's disposition curriculum, Contexts for Learning and exam specifications. e) Learning 'threads' are referenced when reporting on pupils' progression.

Universal provision at the classroom level is essential for ensuring that all pupils have equitable access to learning opportunities. It allows teachers to proactively address diverse needs and potential barriers, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment. By using tools like Class Charts and applying specific learning strategies, teachers can tailor their approach to meet individual pupil profiles. This not only enhances engagement and progress but also promotes a culture of understanding and respect within the classroom. This forms a crucial part of CRAFT when considering Adaptive Teaching (strand c)

Use of Class Charts

Teachers in Maesteg School use Class Charts as a valuable tool to support them in creating and delivering high-impact lessons, as described by LEARN and CRAFT. Class Charts is used by teachers to:

- Use all data available about their pupils to provide meaningful scaffolding, challenge and support where required;
- Construct seating plans based on high-level information about each child and how their position within the class can best support their learning;
- Make a range of decisions about their learning and physical environments;
- Engage with teaching and learning strategies which are designed to support pupils with additional learning needs
- Reward pupils for lesson engagement and effort in their learning.

Key Professional Learning 2024-2025:

Collaborative Learning and The Use of Live Feedback

In Professional Learning sessions in 2024-2025, teachers worked on developing their understanding and successful application of the following:

- Collaborative (Group) Learning
- The Use of Live and Immediate Feedback within the classroom

As these features of pedagogy are cornerstones on which lesson planning and delivery should be based, the school has developed specific frameworks within which they should operate.

Collaborative Learning

In Maesteg school, collaborative learning is a key pedagogical tool for the engagement and progress of pupils. We believe that collaborative learning allows us to achieve our teaching and learning principles in the following ways:

Principle	How the principle links to Collaborative Learning
Challenge 	• "All for One and One for All – Together Stronger" • Group Experts allow for shared expertise • Encourage competition (want to do as well as peers) • Pupils supporting each other, especially where MAT learners are distributed around groups • Questioning each other • Encourage confidence – more likely to speak in small groups than whole class
Relationships 	• Pupils may feel happier / more confident sharing with smaller/more friendly groups • Pupils begin to understand one another and group work may remove barriers that would normally 'separate' them • Collaboration cycle: trust (teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil) – Breaking down social barriers – Emphasising turn taking – Idea of respecting each other • Building and facilitating relationships between pupils who may not communicate with each other as a way of creating stronger classroom communication • Allows a safer environment to allow more introverted pupils to flourish
Adaptive Teaching Methods 	• Comfortable environments – 'safe space' • Resources need very careful planning to allow teacher to circulate • Different scaffolding for different groups • Need to know the pupils very well, particularly if assigning roles • Spread MAT pupils around so that they are a resource • Different pupil types to work together (e.g. introverts with extroverts) • Everyone has the chance to speak
Feedback	• Examples to draw upon – explorations of WAGOLLs as a group • Ownership and co-construction of success criteria (comparison across groups?) • Opportunity to see each other 'fail' and 'rebound' • Safe buffer to check work before handing over to the teacher

	• Pupils within a particular group acting as role models, e.g., in sharing of feedback, in improving through feedback and in supporting each other's feedback
Thread 	• Project-based tasks to drive the learning forward • Repetition of themes to support pupils in developing their own confidence • Pupils taking accountability for different aspects of the thread and 'shape' the workload

Challenges at Planning and Delivery Stage	• Some pupils will just be 'passengers' and will let other pupils do the work • Some pupils work at a different pace and ability so challenges around scaffolding/adaptation • One pupil taking responsibility/workload for the entire group • Size of the group can be an issue: what is the optimal size of the group in relation to the task?
Preparing for Group Work	• Type of group to be used • Ensuring high level of challenge • Roles within the group • Clear objectives and outcomes • Balance workload within the group / Time for task • Resources to support task • A plan B just in case . . . • Consider relationships within the groups
Construction of Groups	• Register – alphabetical • Number the class and then create the groups • Demographics – representation of all (e.g. FSM) • Random vs Teacher planned • Teacher's prior knowledge (mixing skills/confidence levels/pupil relationships) • Random name generator • Classroom environment • Pupils choose themselves • Colour tokens ('out of a hat')

The Use of Live and Immediate Feedback within the classroom

In Maesteg school, a key principle of our approach to lesson planning and delivery is 'Feedback'. This means:

Principle	What does this involve?
Feedback 	g) In-class assessing strategies (e.g. questioning; mini-plenaries; technological devices) are used at key learning moments to check the impact of teaching on the learners. They are used to inform the direction of the lesson, address misconceptions and close learning gaps. h) 'No hands up' and strategic 'cold calling' are employed. i) Assessments are used diagnostically to inform further teaching and curriculum design. j) All feedback, whether **through verbal interaction**, **active live marking** or in books, should push learning forward. k) Opportunities are given for pupils to improve all work that has been assessed, by themselves, their peers or their teacher. l) Pupils are clear on what learning success looks like (for example, through WAGOLLs and success criteria)

Feedback should always be given with the intention of moving learning forward. We believe that the sooner a learner receives feedback on the learning they are undertaking and is given the opportunity to action it, the more impact it has on improving their learning. This is of particular importance in lessons:

(i) where new concepts or skills have been introduced and the pupils are being given time to start exploring this learning independently or collaboratively through relevant tasks;
(ii) where pupils are practising or applying previously-taught concepts or skills, most likely independently, and in line with some of the key learning intentions of a unit of work.

As outlined in 'Feedback (d)' above, **active live feedback** is the pedagogical tool through which we achieve this principle. **Active live feedback** should be a feature of almost all lessons in Maesteg School and regarded as the main source of meaningful feedback together with the planned assessment(s) within a unit of work. Feedback given during an 'active live marking' exchange should be acted on immediately; feedback given as part of an 'assessment' should be acted on through DIRT. Live marking and assessments are regarded as the key ways in which 'Feedback (e)' above is achieved for all pupils.

Active Live Feedback

- Live marking is on the spot within the lesson and instantly actioned by the pupil.
- During any moment of a lesson where a teacher is not addressing the entire class (for example, use of direct instruction or during a whole-class questioning session), the teacher should interact with the pupils and provide live marking.
- The teacher should strategically move around the classroom with a red pen in their hand and mark on-the-spot.
- The teacher should have a sense of a planned route around their classroom, ensuring that all pupils benefit equally from live marking.
- The teacher should aim to interact with as many pupils within this period as possible, although this could be affected by the complexity of the learning and nature of the feedback. Teachers should note their 'starting' and 'end' point within their planned route during each live marking session.
- Feedback should be noted in the pupil's book by the teacher or by the pupil themselves as a reminder to the pupil of what is required to push their learning forward. The teacher should use 'Marking Codes' to indicate feedback to the pupil.
- In lessons where feedback is given to improve performance or design (i.e. the medium of writing is not used to give or action feedback), teachers should encourage pupils to reference any feedback they received as part of any reflection or evaluative records they keep.
- During this time, teachers may identify a common misconception or error within a number of pupils. Where this happens, the teacher may decide to address the whole class rather than teacher-to-pupil in order to save time. Teachers may also ask the whole class to check an aspect of their work and, where the misconception or error is in place, address only those pupils, allowing others to continue with their learning.
- Feedback is always only meaningful if acted upon by the pupil. No feedback should be given if it is not used by them. Where Marking Codes have been used, there should be evidence in the book that the pupil has responded to it promptly and accurately and so improved their learning.

For more information on ‘Marking and Feedback’ aside from the ‘Live Feedback’ aspects of lessons, please see the ‘Marking and Feedback’ policy (*Add hyperlink*)

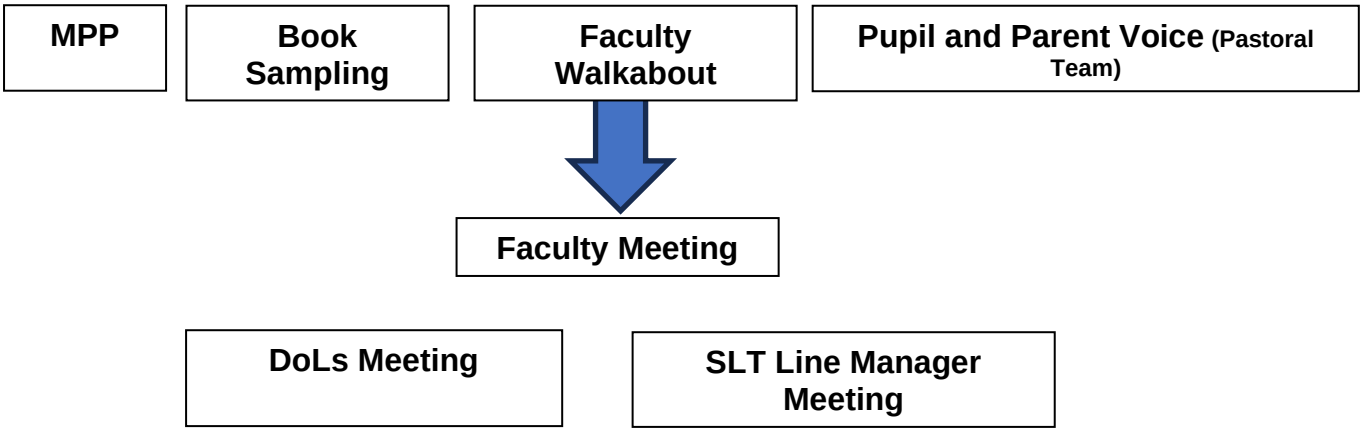
Ensuring ‘Excellence’ in Teaching and Learning

To ensure the consistent and effective implementation of these principles, the school has implemented a cycle of continuous monitoring, evaluation and improvement.

All Middle Leaders are ultimately responsible for supporting all teachers to ensure the learning and progress of pupils in Maesteg School. Directors of Learning (DoLs) in particular will be curious about the way in which their vision around pedagogy and curriculum design is experienced by the pupils in the classroom. The way in which they undertake all evaluative activities should allow them to identify and celebrate where good practice is having an impact on learning and respond in a timely fashion where adjustments need to be actioned.
Directors of Learning should use the monitoring of teaching and learning to form hypotheses which can be ‘applied’ to subsequent activities.
The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is undertaken through a number of activities:

- Faculty Improvement Planning
- Professional Development Cycle
- Lesson Observations
- Faculty Walkabout
- Book Sampling
- Assessment standardisation and scrutiny to monitor pupil progress and learner resilience
- Pupil voice
- Parent voice
- Staff voice
- Class Charts (monitoring of behaviour in class)
- Schemes of work/Contexts for Learning
- Tracking pupil progress through Assessments and MPPs
- Faculty Meetings
- Line Management meetings with SLT

While book sampling and Faculty Walkabout should be regarded as weekly activities, there are times where DoLs will be asked to target a specific year group in order to inform a T&L Cycle QA process and gather ‘hard evidence’. At these times, the following process will be followed:



For each year group, the above process will be completed twice a year.

Procedures are:

Book/Learning Sampling

- On the Monday of each week, DoLs will identify 6 pupils within a year group whose book they would like to use as part of a book sampling activity. Selected pupils should be representative of the year group as a whole (e.g. Boys/Girls/FSM status). They will email these pupils, copying in tutors, and request that their books are brought to them on the Tuesday.
- On the Wednesday of each week, DoLs conduct their book sampling. Their findings are recorded on their subject's Book Sampling tracker.
- On certain Wednesdays as indicated below, DoLs should look at the books with the pupils present.
- Where there is a school-level focus on a year group, QA of book sampling will also be carried out in Line Management meetings with SLT. This will include:
    - (i) applying the findings of the subject tracker to a new set of pupils' books
    - (ii) Discussion of the RAYG indicators on the tracker
- DoLs will evaluate books weekly on their Faculty-area tracker.

Faculty Walkabout

- DoLs are expected to identify one L&M hour each week in which to carry out 'Faculty Walkabout' within their Faculty. They are encouraged to change this slot to ensure breadth of interaction with a range of year groups, classes and teachers. Other TLR holders can be involved.
- Findings are recorded against LEARN and CRAFT related criteria on a subject's Faculty Walkabout tracker.
- Where there is a school-level focus on a year group, QA of faculty walkabout will be discussed in Line Management meetings with SLT. This will include:
    - (i) Areas of best practice and how this can be used to support Faculty and School improvement in general
    - (ii) Areas of 'Coaching Through CRAFT' and how this can be supported through Faculty-level and School-level if required.
- DoLs will evaluate their Faculty Walkabout weekly on their Faculty-area tracker.

Parent and Pupil Voice

- DoLs complete their own pupil voice by giving all pupils within a year group access to an online survey. Pupils answer a set of questions about each of their subjects
- Where curriculum provision and teaching and learning is being evaluated within a particular year group, the feedback of parents and pupils are sought through:

- Subject-level questionnaires which allow for quantifiable data to be collected in key areas. Directors of Learning may supplement this further through pupil interviews.
- The SLT Link for that year group will carry out a more in-depth pupil voice face-to-face
- The SLT Link will send out a questionnaire to all parents of pupils in that year group.

Faculty Meeting Time

- As much as possible, the directed time calendar will align Faculty meetings with MPP/Book Sampling/Faculty Walkabout and Pupil/Parent Voice for each year group two times a year
- Faculties will be expected to discuss standards, teaching and learning and curriculum of this year group as a key agenda item, where directed. They should use the 'Faculty Year group Evaluation' document to record the agreed actions.

DoLs Meeting

- As much as possible, DoLs meetings will follow the above and allow for discussion of teaching and learning of a year group across the school.
- Where possible, the SLT link and/or Progress Leader will attend this meeting and share the 'Pupil Voice' and 'Parent Voice' activities they have undertaken.
- DoLs should use the 'Book Sampling' and 'Faculty Walkabout' trackers as well as their Faculty minutes to inform their contribution to the discussion.

SLT Line Manager Meeting

- During SLT meeting, the trackers and Faculty minutes will be discussed and quality assured through:
  - Book Sampling: applying the findings of the subject tracker to a new set of pupils' books and analysing the RAYG data;
  - Faculty Walkabout: analysing the RAYG data and discussing the 'Best Practice' and 'Coaching Conversation' information
  - Recording key agree actions.

Year Group Standards, Teaching and Learning and Curriculum Review Meeting

- The cycle ends with a meeting in which the focus is on all hard evidence which has been collected regarding a specific year group and its analysis/evaluation in terms of key messages.
- The meeting is attended by all Directors for Learner and the Progress Leader for the year group, as well as key members of SLT.
- Year-level actions are agreed and prioritised to address the most crucial areas for improvement identified by this team.

Deep Dive Reviews

Maesteg School also runs a cycle of Deep Dive Reviews, in which SLT and subject leaders plan, carry out and evaluate all aspects of teaching and learning within an area. These are run on a biennial basis. Features of Deep Dive Reviews include:

- Close collaboration at all stages. Subject teachers are partnered with a member of the SLT to undertake a series of activities within each year group, including sixth form. No activity takes place unless there is a member of the subject teaching team present.
- Activities include: a lesson observation; book sampling; pupil voice; a discussion around curriculum, resourcing and teaching and learning within each year group.

At the end of the process, a meeting takes place between all SLT and all teachers within a subject in which the teacher themselves offers feedback on the evaluation of teaching and learning within each year group. A final report is then drafted by the Deputy Headteacher to support Faculty improvement.

Maesteg School: Teaching and Learning Priorities for 2025-2026

1. Fully improve Feedback (CRAFT) to better impact on pupil learning and progress
2. Further improve learning by creating opportunities for experiential learning through authentic contexts
3. All learners to receive high quality universal provision to challenge passivity in lessons
4. Teachers and middle leaders take responsibility to improve their own practice.