

Learning & Teaching Strategy



‘Together we...’

RESPECT

BELIEVE

ACHIEVE

Forrester High School




212 Broomhouse Road, Edinburgh EH12 9AE

Learning and Teaching at Forrester High School







Rationale

The Learning and Teaching strategy at Forrester High school has been developed to ensure that all young people achieve their potential in a high-quality learning environment which meets the needs of all. It places learning and teaching at the heart of the school's work.

In developing the strategy, the following has been considered:

-  Looking Inward – auditing, reviewing and consulting with teaching and non-teaching staff, using a variety of self-evaluation tools to fully understand our school
-  Looking Outward – consulting with partners and other schools to establish what works, using robust data to plan our learning strategy
-  Looking Forward – planning collaboratively to better equip all learners for the future

The strategy has been informed by the documents below:

-  The National Improvement Framework -
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00511513.pdf>
-  How Good is Our School? 4th Edition
https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Frameworks_Self_Evaluation/FRWK2_NIHeditHGIOS/FRWK2_HGIOS4.pdf
-  Edinburgh Learns platform
-  School Improvement plan
-  Existing school Learning & Teaching Policy
-  Outcomes of the school's self-evaluation activities

The Strategy

Five aspects of learning critical to success were identified. These five aspects will appear in every lesson delivered in Forrester High School

Learning Ethos – *‘All members of the school community are respectful, consistent and supported’*

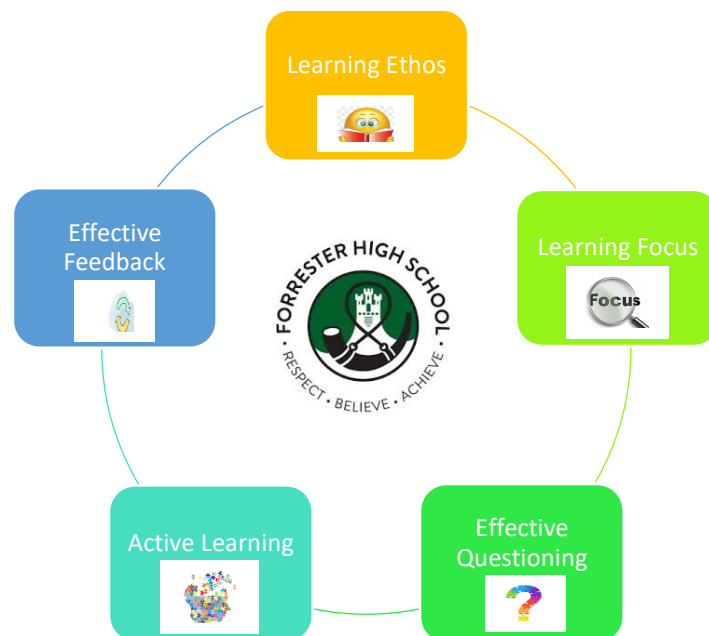
Learning Focus - *‘Learners know what they are learning, why they are learning it and at what level’*

Effective questioning – *‘Learners are asked high level questions that make them think about their learning in different ways’*

Active learning – *‘Learners are asked to think for themselves, be involved in learning and co-operate with others’*

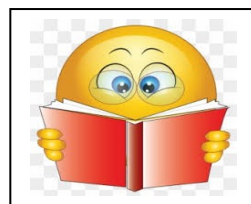
Effective feedback – *‘Learners are given clear personal feedback and next steps/targets to help them lead their learning’*

The five aspects will be displayed in every classroom, so all learners are aware of expectations in their learning.



Every member of staff has been given a copy of this ‘Learning and Teaching Strategy’ which gives support/advice on delivering the five aspects.

Learning Ethos



What is it?

'All members of the school community are respectful, consistent and supported'

- 👤 **Creating an environment of respect and rapport** – Meet & Greet at door. Expectations are made clear and consistently applied. Young people and teachers interact in a mutually respectful manner with any deviation from this dealt with quickly and effectively.
- 👤 **Communication** - clear explanations, knowing their names, approachability, expectations explicit, variation in voice used, reinforcement, building on previous learning, modelling, demonstrations, 'how to' videos etc.
- 👤 **Use of devices** is appropriate to the task. Mobile phones should be out of sight, and iPads should be used as and when they are needed in the lesson at the teacher's discretion.
- 👤 **A non-confrontational manner from the teacher** - Embrace the positive, avoid public criticism, praise effort not just ability, use restorative practices to resolve conflict.
- 👤 **Organisation of the classroom environment including co-ordinating resources and space** - Classroom is tidy and organised and location of resources is well known/labelled. Resources for the lesson are prepared in advance and readily available. Resources in use should stimulate and enhance learning. A starter task should be available for students in BGE.
- 👤 **Make efficient use of lesson time** - lessons are not dominated by teacher voice. Pupil voice is recognised and encouraged. Planned lessons are varied with appropriate time designated to a variety of differentiated activities. Pace is evident, not too much time spent on tasks.
- 👤 **Teacher vigilance about pupils' needs** - young people looking to participate, young people 'off-task', addressing barriers to learning (identify through Information Hub), differentiation.
- 👤 **Teachers establish on-task behaviour through the interactions they promote** – teacher / student and student / student, pair work, group work, one-to-one with teacher.
- 👤 **Teachers deal with patterns of classroom behaviour and student competition through *establishing* rules, *encouraging* pupils to respect them and *applying* the rules *consistently*** - Core routines established and in use consistently, Code of Conduct / Relationships policy is in practice in every classroom. Expectations must be consistent and made clear to all learners.
- 👤 **Promotion of different kinds of motivational goals from teachers encouraging success e.g. fixed versus growth mindset, attributions to effort and strategy rather than ability or luck** - I *can*... What can I do to help myself here? Praise for the effort put in rather than product, 3B4Me, resilience, target setting.
- 👤 **Courtesy and respect, equity and fairness to all.** Respect, Believe, Achieve,




Learning Focus



What is it?

'Learners know what they are learning, why they are learning it and at what level'

The focus for learning can be developed over three areas:

-  Learning Intentions
-  Success Criteria
-  Plenaries

What makes a good Learning Intention (LI)?

Good LIs are set in the context of the learning and use verbs and child friendly language. They use words associated with learning, such as 'to be able to apply our knowledge of...', or 'to be able to understand and analyse...'

LIs should be displayed / discussed at the beginning of the lesson. It can be useful to keep the LI displayed throughout a task, written down, or revisited periodically to keep it fresh and clear in the pupils' minds during the lesson. The approach is dependent on the task, subject and use of resources.

Using Success Criteria (SC)

SC should not be a rephrasing of the LI, instead they should be used to highlight specific procedures or learning outcomes that relate to the learning intention. It is more beneficial for learning if they focus on a process rather than the production of a piece of work. This can include skills development. Learners can be involved in creating the success criteria through discussions surrounding exemplar pieces of work. You may also wish to include SC relating to skills, e.g. team work, problem solving.

Plenaries

Plenaries should be used to reiterate the focus for learning and to ascertain how successful learners have been. They can provide greater scope for self-assessment and peer assessment through analysing the work completed during the period. This can be achieved through exit passes, or by using a set of reflective questions to ensure the pupils understand the purpose behind what they were learning. It is noted that this may be written or verbal and may not always take place at the end of the lesson, although it will be always be present in the lesson.

Differentiation

To provide appropriate pace and challenge for **all** learners, differentiated materials or activities should be available. This will also allow learners some flexibility and choice in their learning, to select a task they find more suited to their learning style and preference. A 'Bronze/Silver/Gold' or 'Spicy' approach may be used. Language and content of activities should be reviewed and changed if required to meet the pupils learning needs.

Effective Questioning



What is it?

'Learners are asked high level questions that make them think about their learning in different ways'

Questioning is at the heart of an effective learning environment. A good questioning climate is one that activates understanding and thinking and focuses on the development of learning rather than a test of recall.

Strategies and examples to try:

- 👤 **Raising different types of questions i.e. PROCESS and PRODUCT at appropriate level**
What is the answer to the question? "20". **How** did we reach that conclusion? **Describe** what you did. **How** does the playwright highlight this through dialogue and stage directions?
- 👤 **Giving time for students to respond (Pose Pause Pounce Bounce)**
Pose the question. Pause (10 seconds thinking time). Pounce on a student for initial answer. Bounce to another student to build on response. Use Think Pair Share to build confidence.
- 👤 **Dealing with student responses**
Every student response deserves a teacher response. Ask other pupils to consider the pupil's response and look for feedback. Teachers can use a variety of ways to 'decide' which pupil should answer questions next. Don't give away answers too easily – make pupils think and re-think. Keep responses in context to stay on task.
- 👤 **Encouraging pupils to use problem-solving strategies presented by the teacher or other classmates**
If the first method of solving the problem does not work, suggest an alternative or ask young people to think of one. 'If you don't have that shade of paint, what can you do instead?'
- 👤 **Inviting students to develop strategies**
'Once you have read the question, what is the first thing you should do? Underline/highlight the key words? Write a brief essay plan?'
- 👤 **Encouraging individual involvement**
'Let's look at the word ambition. What does it mean? Everyone think of a personal ambition, and we will share in turn.' This allows pupils to be active in their thinking and not passive.
- 👤 **Use other pupils to support if pupil is struggling to answer**
Ask one young person to develop an answer that another has struggled to give. Give credit for the answer given whilst using positive and supportive phrases like 'Who can help out here? What else can we add?' Thanks to you both for coming up with a good answer between you.'
- 👤 **Questioning on skills as well as product**
'Why is that painting so good?' 'The details are clear, the colours are eye-catching and the perspective works well.' rather than 'It's a nice landscape.'
- 👤 **Language modelling through questioning, expanding on students' use of vocabulary**
When you are asking a question, use language pertinent to your subject. This helps reinforce the hearing of the use of vocabulary in context.

Active Learning

What is it?

'Learners are asked to think for themselves, be involved in learning and co-operate with others'



Active learning:

- is a process where students engage in classroom activities that promote **critical engagement** – thinking about and making sense of their own learning
- **applies classroom learning** across other real-life and imaginary situations
- means that learners take **increasing responsibility** for their learning
- is rooted in **problem solving** and is often **collaborative**
- focuses on the development of vital **higher-order thinking** skills rather than just the retention of content.

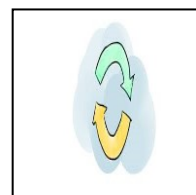
Active learning avoids:

- repeating information without understanding
- not being able to use what you have learned
- not reflecting on what you've learned
- surface processing – passive transfer of information with no depth

Active Learning strategies to try:

- **Play Twenty Questions** – Can only answer Yes or No!
Write an answer on a piece of paper, then have students take turns asking a question each until they guess the answer. Keep track of the number of questions they use to guess correctly. In this game, the lowest number of questions wins
- **Exit Passes** – can use PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting) or other statements
These have been around for a long time. Try some of these sentence starters to engage all of your students. You could post these for students to refer to during class.
 - I was surprised when...
 - I would have liked...
 - Now I understand.....
- **Snowball** – building on Think Pair Share
Instead of starting by 'teaching by telling', ask a question that leads to what you want students to learn. Then:
 - each individual writes down their thoughts without reference to others
 - students share what they have written in pairs or threes
 - The pairs or threes combine to create larger groups who agree a group answer.
 - The teacher asks each big group in turn for one idea they have had, and writes the useful ideas on the board, perhaps saying a little in support of each idea.
- **3-2-1** - Give students a text they are required to read. Ask them to work in pairs to agree:
3 ideas/issues etc. presented 2 examples or uses of the idea/information covered
1 unresolved/remaining question/area of possible confusion

Effective Feedback



What is it?

‘Learners are given clear personal feedback and next steps/targets to help them lead their learning’

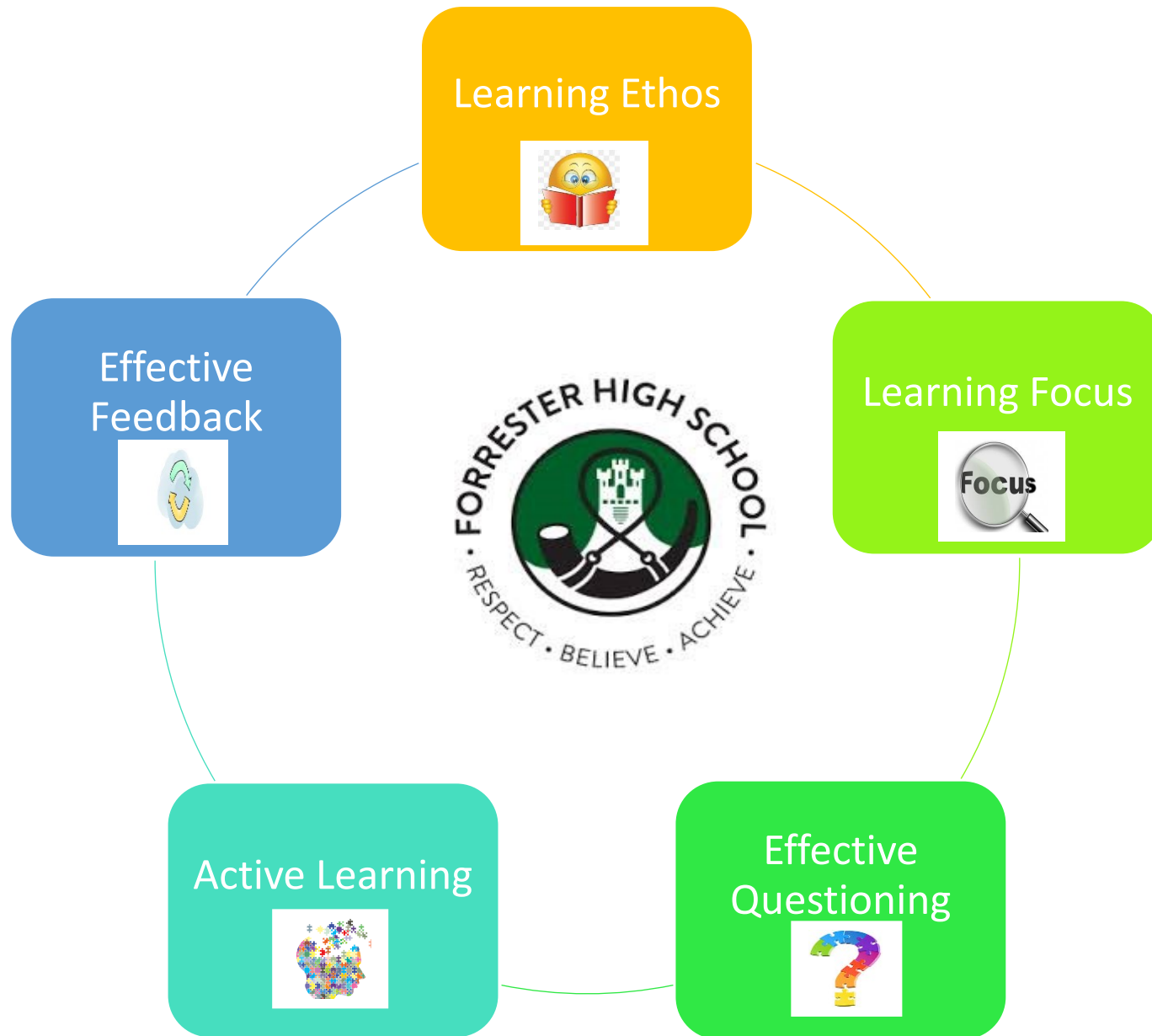
Feedback is vital information given to the learner about their performance relative to their learning goals. The principal aim should be to improve young people’s learning. It is therefore critical that teachers engage in regular learner conversations, encouraging specific target setting and applying interventions where necessary.

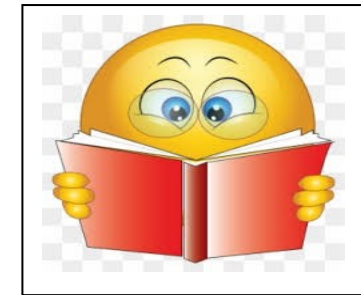
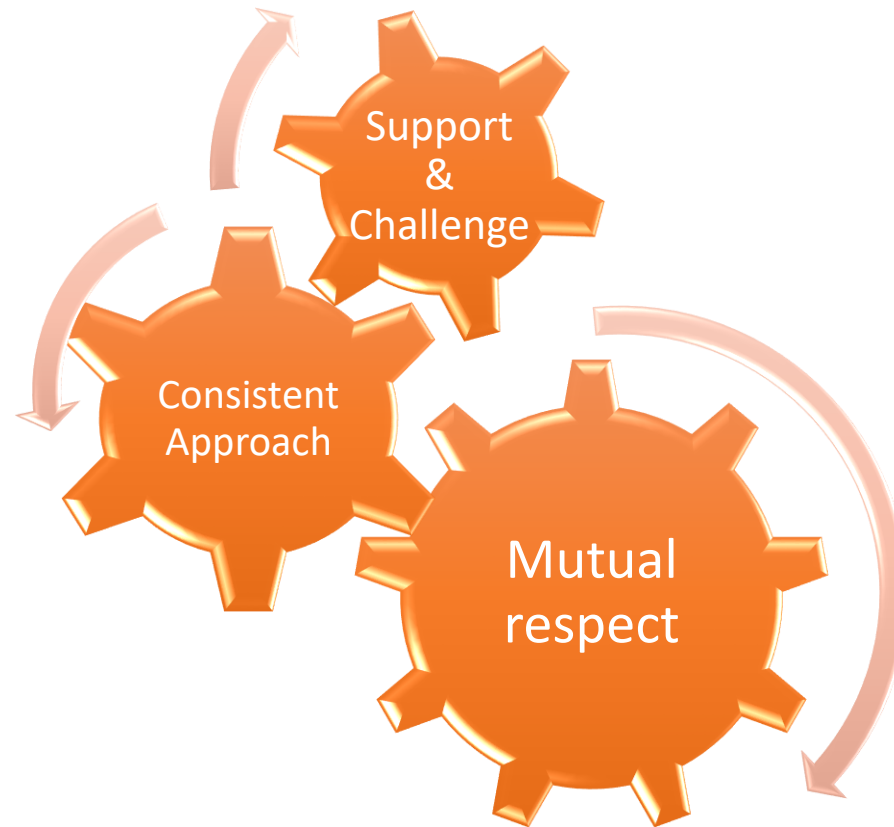
Effective feedback

- Is specific, accurate and clear
- Gives young people definitive actions they can take to improve
- Is delivered timeously
- references to the specific skill or knowledge in the learning goal
- also references effort
- is used sparingly to give it deeper meaning

In practice:

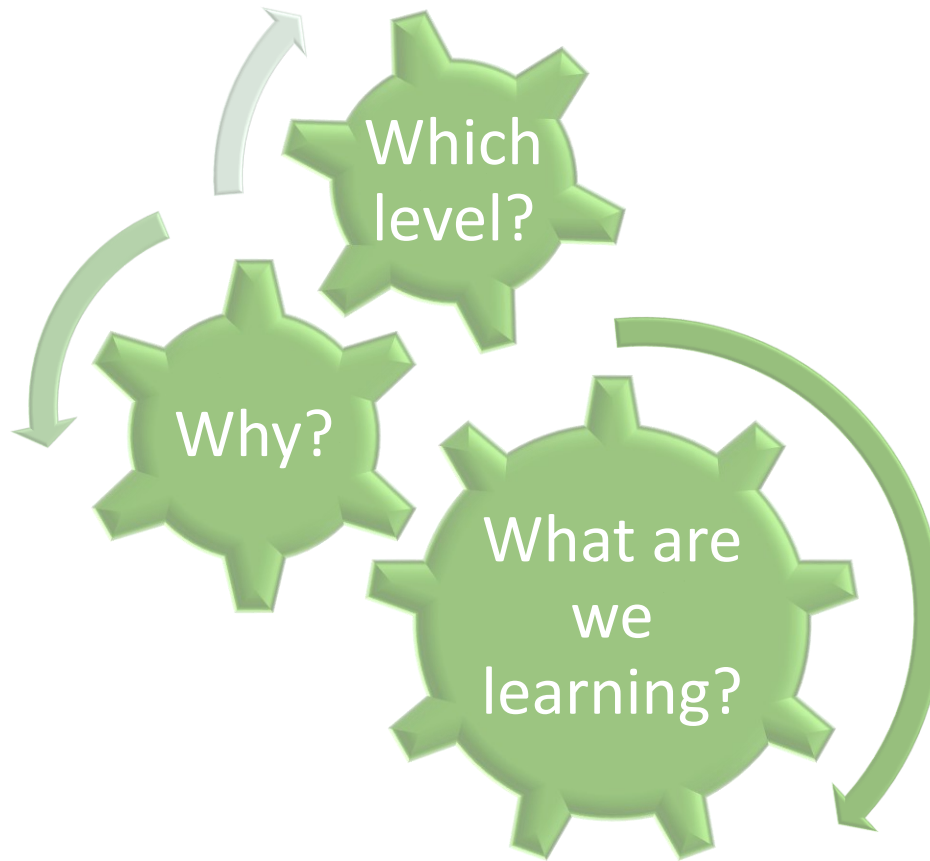
- Written or verbal feedback should be given as soon after the task as possible: immediate written or verbal feedback is most beneficial. More difficult tasks may benefit from delayed feedback to allow students to process the complexity of the information or task.
- Language should be simple, clear and understandable to students: avoid confusing statements with overly complex or technical language. Double ticking may be helpful (teacher double ticks something exceptional, student has to work out why it is good).
- Written or verbal feedback should be specific and related to the task or process. Avoid overly simplistic or vague comments such as “make more effort”, “you talk too much” or “you need to write more” etc. Emphasise the instructional aspects of feedback and not just the corrections and try to focus your comments on what has been done well.
- Feedback should be personal between teacher and student. Use statements such as “I found that...” rather than bold statements such as “It’s obvious that...”
- Suggest goals to focus on in future performance of tasks of similar types or provide specific strategies that might be applied. Demonstrate your advice with exemplars. Try asking the learner: “Given the feedback, do you have some ideas about how to improve?” Give students the opportunity to add to, amend or redraft their work after receiving feedback.
- Praise should be related to the task. Avoid the lone use of “well done” or “good”. Always add a mental colon after each statement of value. For example, “Well done: your use of key words was more precise in this question than in the last one.”
- Ask students to rephrase the question in their own words and make a judgement about how well they have met the success criteria.





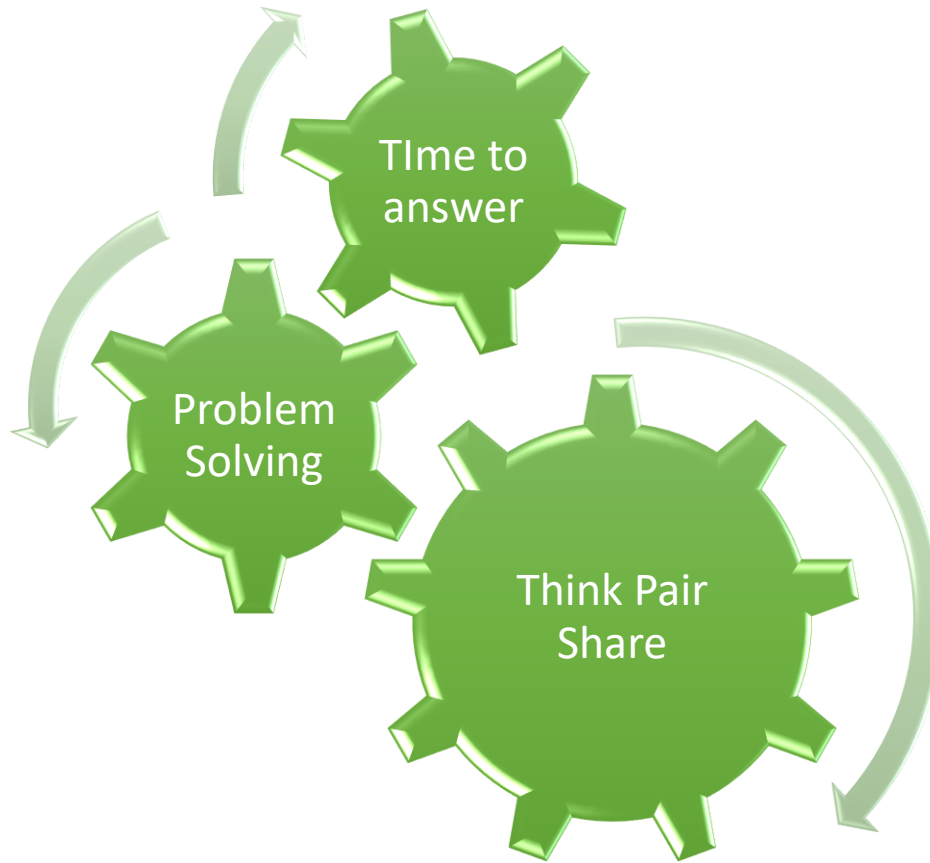
LEARNING ETHOS

***‘All members of the school community are respectful,
consistent and supported’***



LEARNING
FOCUS

‘Learners know what they are learning, why they are learning it and at what level’



EFFECTIVE QUESTIONING

‘Learners are asked high level questions that make them think about their learning in different ways’



ACTIVE LEARNING

‘Learners are asked to think for themselves, be involved in learning and co-operate with others’



EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

‘Learners are given clear, personal feedback and next steps/targets to help them lead their learning’

Appendix 1: How we teach

