

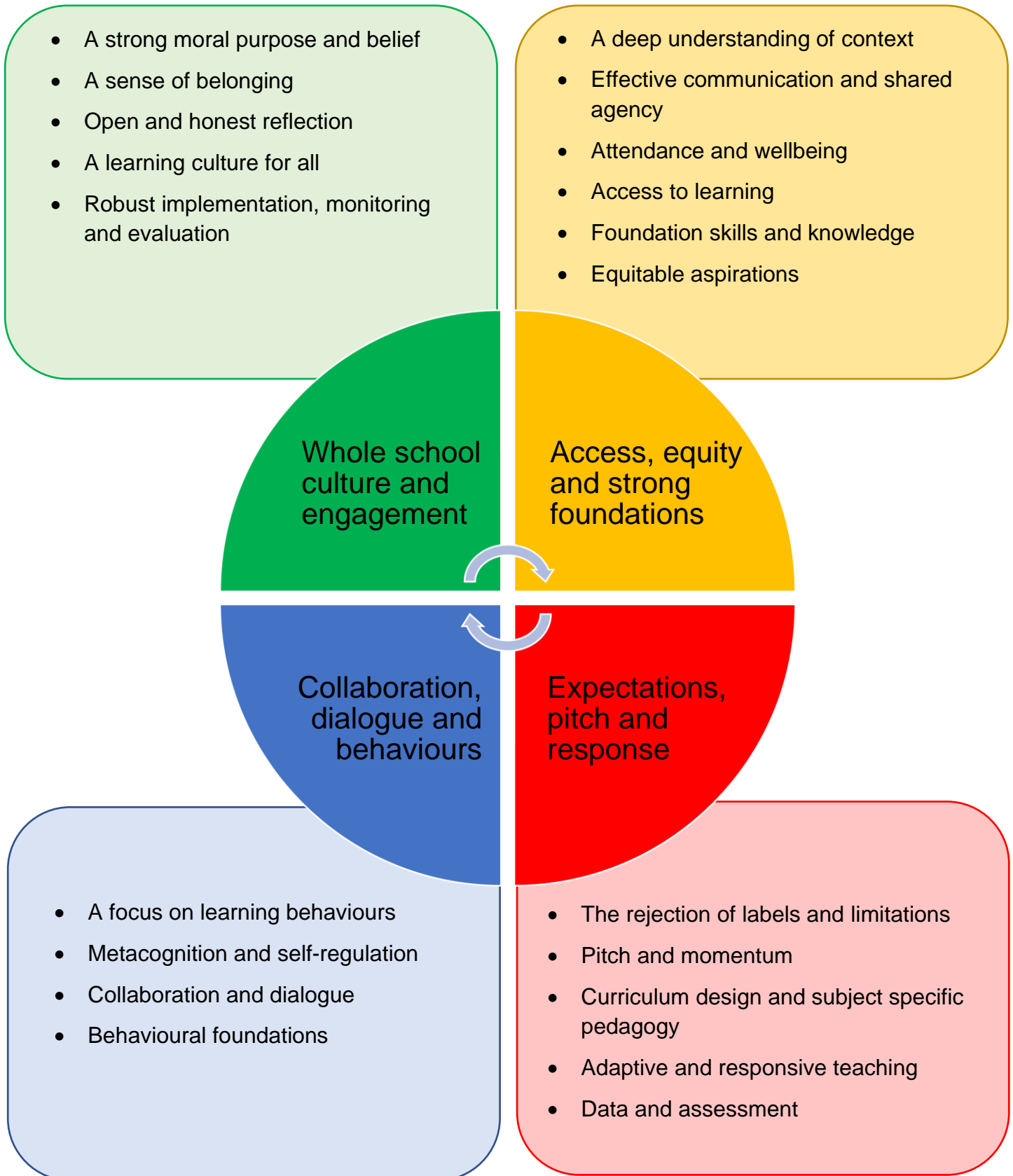
SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS

Tackling Educational Disadvantage (TED) Guidance

Red section: Expectations, pitch
and response

Revised 2023

The Four Core Sections



Expectations, pitch and response

Schools remain curious about what pupils can achieve, ensuring that low prior attainment does not limit expectations or opportunities. Responsive teaching can support all pupils to thrive without limitation.

The rejection of labels and limitations

- Staff acknowledge, and remain aware of potential biases associated with labels, family background, heritage, gender and prior attainment.
- High-attaining pupils experiencing disadvantage are supported to overcome challenges faced. Staff understand that these challenges do not disappear in the context of high attainment.
- Schools use a wealth of information to understand each child.
- The complexities of educational disadvantage are understood, without leading to lower expectations, and this is reflected in the language used.
- Staff avoid the language of labels, such as *PP pupils* and *low-ability*
- Instead of labels, schools focus on addressing the challenges of socio-economic disadvantage and the many strengths and areas to develop which exist at any level of attainment.
- The rejection of labels or limitations is reflected in day-to-day practice through approaches such as flexible grouping based on specific learning strengths and needs, rather than grouping by the notion of *ability* or providing adult support.
- Practice ensures that pupils do not over-rely on adults or peers and that staff support all pupils to develop independent learning behaviours.

“Recently, I met a learner who was developing competence with English. He was new to the education system in England and was in Year 8. He had been given a GCSE target grade 3 at the front of his book – the epitome of setting limits on what a learner could achieve based on labels and prior attainment.”

[Marc Rowland, *Great Expectations* \(2018\)](#)

“The language and tone we use in life is always important, but never more so than when we are in front of children and young people. We model to them in powerful ways through the words we say and often the words we leave unsaid.”

[Nasen, *Teacher Handbook: SEND* \(2022\)](#)

Pitch and momentum

- Practices within the school ensure that expectations are raised for pupils with low prior attainment so that low prior attainment does not predict future attainment.
- Recognising that the challenges of socio-economic disadvantage do not disappear in the context of high attainment, high attaining pupils are supported to excel.
- Schools use academic, in addition to pastoral, transition information to maintain momentum, understanding that continuity at transition points is vital for pupils' academic progress and emotional well-being.
- Teachers work with colleagues to understand prior curriculum content, pitch, pedagogy and assessment in order to teach effectively, secure progression and to fill gaps in learning. This is reflected in curriculum sequencing.
- Teachers use a range of information to establish starting points when teaching new pupils, not relying solely on data but getting to know pupils as individual learners.

Building block: Points of transition in a pupil's education or home life are recognised as potentially negative factors in the continuum of learning and are planned for accordingly, in order to minimise adverse impact.

Building block: Pupil premium is targeted effectively to need; it is not focused solely on those with low prior attainment but instead supports pupils of all prior attainment groups to achieve well.

Curriculum design and subject specific pedagogy

- The curriculum provides the body of knowledge and skills for pupils to succeed. The school ensures that it is relevant and responsive to pupils' lives and context and that it is accessed by all.
- Subject leaders and teams innovate subject-specific pedagogy in response to national and local changes. Leaders and teachers are experts in their subjects.
- Teachers develop pupils' disciplinary literacy, enabling them to talk, read and write like a historian/geographer/artist/mathematician. This is of particular importance in the secondary phase.

“The emphasis on disciplinary literacy makes clear that every teacher communicates their subject through academic language, and that reading, writing, speaking and listening are at the heart of knowing and doing science, art, history, and every other subject in secondary school.”

[EEF, Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools \(2021\)](#)

“Too much curriculum planning is focussed on task completion, which is often a proxy for learning, rather than leading to deep understanding.”

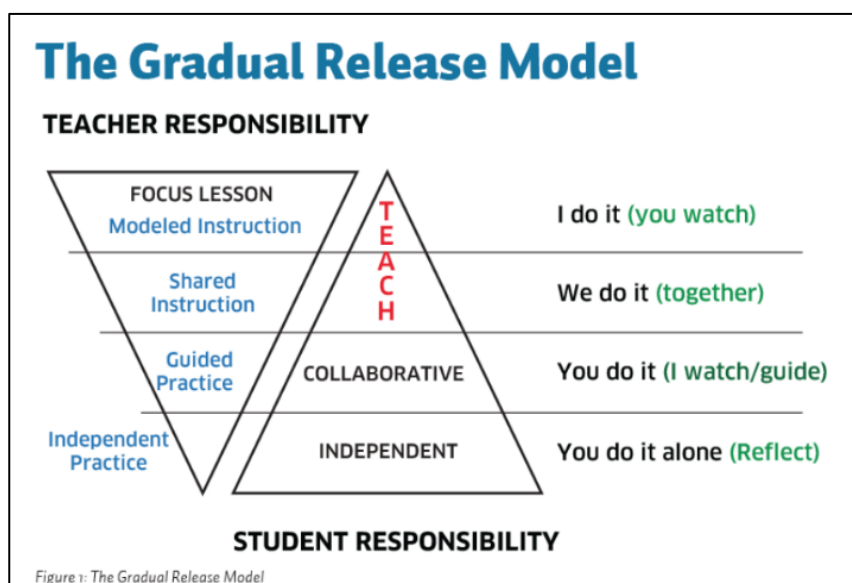
[Mary Myatt, Back on Track, 2020](#)

Adaptive and responsive teaching

- Effective assessment for learning is consistently used to find out what pupils know, understand and can do, and to explore pupils' learning behaviours and processes. This assessment feeds forward into planning.
- Teaching is responsive and adaptive in the moment, with teachers utilising a wide repertoire of approaches based on pupils' needs.
- All pupils are supported to apply learning independently, with learning moving through the phases of direct instruction, shared instruction, collaborative learning and independent application and reflection.
- Sufficient time is given to the *we do* phase of the *I do, we do, you do* sequence, as this is both where pupils can collaborate with peers and where teachers can be most responsive in a way that ensures all pupils can apply their learning with independence.
- Scaffolding is used to ensure that pupils can meet learning intentions. Scaffolds are reduced to ensure all pupils apply learning with increasing independence.
- Feedback takes many forms: modelling, grouping pupils based on next steps, re-teaching, peer-teaching, whole class feedback, self-evaluation and verbal feedback are valued by all. There is not an over reliance on written feedback. Impact on pupils' learning is the measure of successful feedback.

“In my experience, teaching is about sensitivity and adaptation. It is about adjusting to the here-and-now circumstances of particular students. It is about making moment-by-moment decisions as a lesson or activity progresses.”

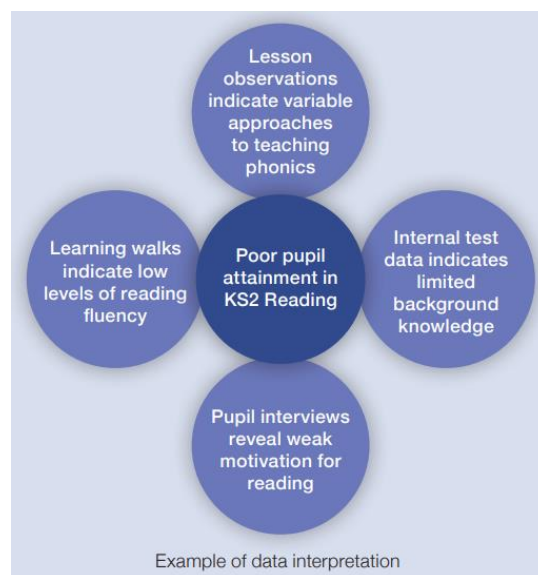
[G Nuthall, *The Hidden Lives of Learners* \(2007\)](#)



[The GGR model, Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey, 2007.](#)

Data and assessment

- 'Data' takes many forms – both quantitative and qualitative.
- Staff recognise that outcomes data highlights symptoms of disadvantage. The focus, however, must be on what causes these symptoms.
- Assessment data is used primarily to inform practice and improve provision at individual pupil, group and whole cohort levels.
- Periodic assessment data also provides information so that leaders can track whole school attainment and progress, including specific cohort groups, in a meaningful way.
- Whole school tracking systems are efficient and ensure that both these needs are met.
- Attainment data is used to hold staff to account, but within the context of supporting staff to engage with and apply whole school, research-informed strategies.
- One-to-one and small group interventions respond to identified needs, with teachers informing the intervention and utilising the learning back in class.



[Putting Evidence To Work: A School's Guide To Implementation, Gathering and interpreting data to identify priorities, \(EEF\)](#)

Building block: Data is used effectively to inform planning at both a strategic level and at the point of delivery in the classroom.

Building block: There is recognition that outcomes data offers a picture of the symptoms of educational disadvantage; strategies needed to tackle this must focus on the causes.

Potential Barriers

If...	then...
stereotyping leads to a judgement of potential...	predictions may cap the pupil's learning, with the pitch of learning too low and the pace too slow. Expectations are lower for these pupils, so they fail to catch up.
some pupils are identified as <i>low ability</i> rather than <i>low attaining</i> ...	this provides the message to pupils, parents and staff that ability is fixed and low attainment acceptable.
pupils are put into what they view as a <i>bottom set</i> or a 'weak' group within the class...	they are given the message that attainment is fixed and they are unlikely to succeed.
low attainment leads to low targets of future attainment...	low attainment becomes an acceptable goal.
transition information focuses on pastoral information...	it may limit the view of what pupils can achieve.
teachers do not have a good understanding or prior curricular...	the pitch of learning may be too low.
teachers do not have a good understanding or future curricular...	the pace of learning may be too slow.
teachers focus on initiatives based on little evidence (like 'marking these pupils' books first, rather than feeding back to pupils in the way that has most impact)...	action is superficial and unlikely to have any real impact.
pupils experience more negative feedback or feedback about compliance, rather than positive feedback focused on developing independence...	they are likely to become demotivated and disengaged.
approaches in the classroom enable pupils to <i>opt out</i> of learning (for example, teachers may ask a small number of pupils to respond to a key question)...	learning time is lost.