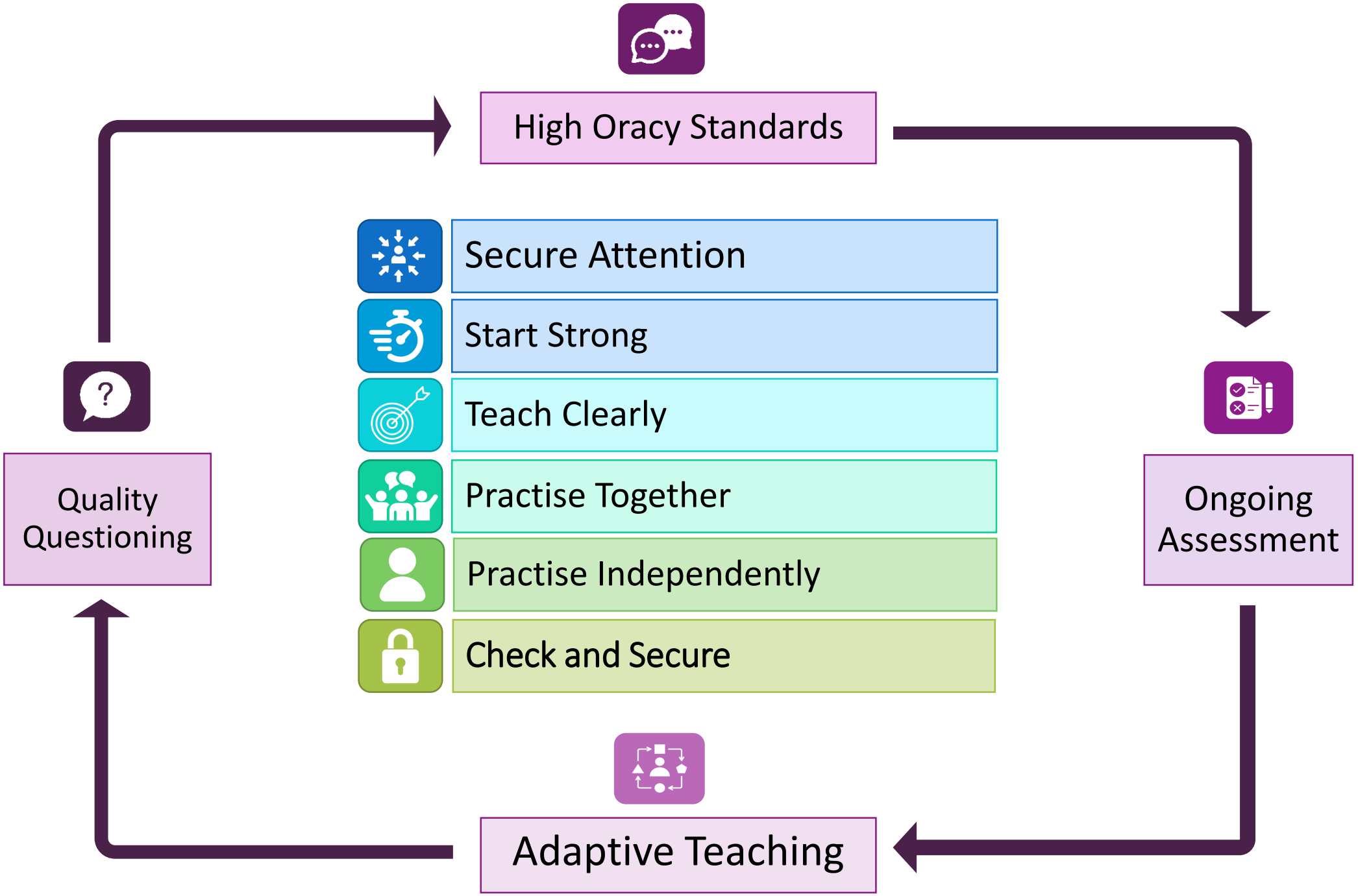

High Oracy Standards
Secure Attention
Start Strong
Teach Clearly
Practise Together
Practise Independently
Check and Secure
Ongoing Assessment
Adaptive Teaching
Quality Questioning

Symbol	Strand	Explanation
	Secure Attention	Secure Attention focuses on the routines that help pupils listen, respond and follow instructions throughout the lesson. It protects attention so learning can happen. It is used whenever pupils need to stop, listen, transition or refocus.
	Start Strong	Start Strong focuses on the opening phase of the lesson. It helps pupils begin learning quickly, calmly and purposefully. The aim is to create early momentum and make the first few minutes count.
	Teach Clearly	Teach Clearly focuses on how new learning is explained and communicated. It helps teachers make key ideas precise, manageable and easy to understand. The aim is to reduce overload while keeping the learning ambitious.
	Practise Together	Practise Together focuses on guided practice before pupils work independently. It helps pupils see, hear and rehearse what successful thinking or work looks like. The teacher models the process and gradually moves pupils towards independence.
	Practise Independently	Practise Independently focuses on protected time for pupils to apply learning. It helps pupils build fluency, confidence and independence through purposeful practice. The teacher monitors closely while keeping support as unobtrusive as possible.
	Check and Secure	Check and Secure focuses on checking what pupils have understood and acting on it. It helps teachers address misconceptions and strengthen key learning before moving on. The aim is to make sure learning is secure, not just completed.
	Quality Questioning	Quality Questioning focuses on using questions and routines to make more pupils think, respond and explain. It helps teachers gather better evidence of understanding. The aim is to move questioning beyond a small number of confident volunteers.
	High Oracy Standards	High Oracy standards focuses on the quality of pupils' spoken responses. It helps pupils use key vocabulary, speak in fuller answers and develop ideas aloud. The aim is to teach pupils how to speak well about their learning.
	Ongoing Assessment	Ongoing Assessment focuses on checking understanding throughout the lesson, not just at the end. It helps teachers respond while there is still time to adjust teaching. The aim is to avoid assuming understanding from one answer, completed work or quiet compliance.
	Adaptive Teaching	Adaptive Teaching focuses on adapting how pupils access learning without lowering ambition. It helps teachers adjust support, scaffolds and participation so more pupils can succeed. The aim is to change the route, not lower the destination.



Secure Attention

Use a clear routine for gaining attention (StepLab)

- A clear signal is used to gain pupils' attention
- Expectations for attention are made explicit
- The routine is introduced, practised and revisited
- Pupils respond quickly and consistently

Give instructions without distractions (StepLab)

- The teacher faces the class when giving instructions
- The teacher stands still and is fully visible
- Instructions are given clearly before pupils handle resources
- Attention is protected from unnecessary distractions

Publicly narrate met expectations (StepLab)

- Specific positive behaviours are noticed and named
- Recognition is public, brief and precise
- Positive narration reinforces the attention routine
- Pupils are reminded what meeting expectations looks like

Give anonymous public corrections (StepLab)

- Corrections are brief, calm and anonymous
- The teacher states the behaviour they want to see
- A pause is used to allow pupils to correct their behaviour
- Cooperation is acknowledged once expectations are met

Frontload instructions (StepLab)

- Pupils are told how to respond before the instruction is given
- A clear signal is used to show when pupils should begin
- The means of participation are emphasised clearly
- Expectations are repeated if needed before pupils start

Chunk and clarify procedural instructions (StepLab)

- Instructions are broken into short, simple chunks
- Longer tasks are split into manageable stages
- The teacher uses clear action verbs
- Verbal instructions are supported with written reminders

Check understanding of instructions (StepLab)

- Pupils repeat back key parts of the instruction
- Questions check understanding before pupils begin
- All pupils are held accountable for listening
- Errors or uncertainty are corrected before release



Start Strong

Do It Now (TLAC)

- Task is ready before pupils enter
- Pupils begin immediately
- Pupils can usually start without prompting
- Task is quiet and purposeful
- Task links to prior learning

Make starting easy (StepLab)

- Pupils are shown exactly how to begin
- Clear models help pupils get started successfully
- The first step has a low barrier to entry
- Early success is noticed and reinforced

Strong Start (TLAC)

- Learning begins straight away
- No wasted time at the start
- All pupils are focused quickly
- Routines are clear and consistent
- Teacher sets a purposeful pace

Keep time limits tight and visible (StepLab)

- Time limits are clear and specific
- The time given creates a sense of urgency
- A clear signal shows pupils when to begin
- Time is made visible or audible as pupils work

Least Invasive Intervention (Kings)

- Teacher addresses disruption quickly
- Intervention is calm and unobtrusive
- Learning continues with minimal interruption
- Attention is redirected efficiently
- Expectations are maintained consistently

Positive Framing (TLAC)

- Language reinforces what pupils should do
- Expectations are communicated positively
- Corrections are calm and purposeful
- Teacher notices and names positive choices
- Tone builds momentum and belief



Teach Clearly

Limit new content (StepLab)

- Make key elements explicit
- Limit new information
- Chunk learning into steps
- Practise after each step
- Avoid overload

Situate the learning (StepLab)

- Learning is explained clearly and concisely
- The lesson focus is specific
- The learning intention is shared verbally and in writing
- The lesson is linked to prior learning
- The lesson is positioned within the wider sequence

Keep teacher talk lean (StepLab)

- Explanations are concise and focused
- Unnecessary words are removed
- Clear vocabulary is used
- Key ideas are repeated

Provide student-friendly definitions (StepLab)

- Definitions use familiar words
- New terms are explained clearly
- Examples begin in a familiar context
- Vocabulary is introduced without overload

Highlight and repeat key ideas and information (StepLab)

- Key ideas are clearly signposted
- Important content is emphasised on resources
- Language and visuals are kept accessible
- Key ideas are repeated over time

Build in processing time (StepLab)

- Pause after each chunk of explanation
- Use short tasks to check understanding
- Processing tasks are brief and purposeful
- Misconceptions are identified early

Use dual coding (StepLab)

- Visuals support the core concept
- Images are simple and memorable
- Links between image and idea are made explicit

Use volume and tone (StepLab)

- Voice is used to emphasise key ideas
- Pace is varied to signal importance
- Delivery helps maintain attention
- Pauses are used deliberately
- Enthusiasm supports the message



Practise together

Live model the process (StepLab)

- The process is modelled step by step
- Teacher narrates their thinking aloud
- Modelling is focused on the key steps
- Visible scaffolds are used within the model
- Critical features are highlighted clearly

Live model improvement (StepLab)

- Improvements are modelled explicitly
- Teacher narrates the editing process
- Changes are linked to the success criteria
- Pupils are involved in reviewing the model
- Visible scaffolds support improvement

Form a collaborative live model (StepLab)

- The model is built with pupil input
- Success criteria are visible and referenced
- Multiple pupils contribute to the model
- Teacher guides contributions precisely
- Visible scaffolds support the process

Fade modelling scaffolds (StepLab)

- Scaffolds are reduced gradually
- Support moves pupils towards independence
- Practice remains closely matched to the learning
- Teachers respond to pupil readiness

Use checks for understanding whilst modelling (StepLab)

- Checks are used at key points
- Checks target likely misconceptions
- Responses are checked systematically
- Modelling responds to what pupils show
- Scaffolds are added or removed accordingly

Use hand signals (TLAC)

- All pupils are expected to respond
- Signals are taught and used consistently
- Responses are quick and visible
- Teacher checks responses across the room
- Signals inform the next step in teaching

Use mini whiteboards (TLAC)

- All pupils record a response
- Responses are visible to the teacher
- Whiteboards are used for brief checks
- Misconceptions are spotted quickly
- Teaching responds to what pupils show



Practise Independently

Protect independent practice (StepLab)

- Practice tasks focus on the core knowledge or skill from the lesson
- Lesson time is planned so independent practice is protected
- Independent practice begins at the planned point in the lesson
- Pupils have enough practice to help learning become secure

Silent Solo (TLAC)

- Clear directions are given for the task, including time and expectations
- Pupils begin work straight away
- Pupils who start promptly are recognised positively
- Pupils who are not yet working are prompted quickly and calmly

Build challenge gradually (StepLab)

- Practice begins at an achievable level
- Support is provided where needed to help pupils get started
- Challenge increases in small, planned steps
- Tasks are clear and well laid out

Build in check (StepLab)

- Pupils stop at planned points before moving on
- Check points focus on the key learning
- Errors are identified before they become embedded
- The teacher checks work quickly and efficiently

Pre-plan success criteria and identify likely errors (StepLab)

- The teacher checks for the most important success points
- Likely errors are identified in advance
- Pupils' work is scanned quickly and purposefully
- Feedback is shaped by what the teacher notices

Use least intrusive support (Kings)

- Feedback is given at a quiet 1:1 volume
- Support is given without distracting other pupils
- Attention is protected for pupils who are already on task
- Intervention is brief, calm and purposeful
- 'Teacher voice' not used during independent practice unless addressing a whole-class misconception



Check and Secure

Design efficient assessments (StepLab)

- Checks are simple and quick to complete
- Questions expose thinking about the key learning
- Instructions are clear and concise
- The teacher can see whole-class responses quickly

Sample all students (StepLab)

- Checks use a quick routine that all pupils can respond to
- Every pupil responds to the question
- Responses are gathered rapidly
- The teacher scans all answers systematically

Use mini whiteboards (Kings)

- Mini whiteboards are used to gather responses from all pupils
- Every pupil shows their thinking at the same time
- The teacher gains quick insight into whole-class understanding
- Misconceptions are spotted and addressed immediately

Positively narrate responses (StepLab)

- Key learning points are shared clearly and succinctly
- Important parts of the work are highlighted or annotated
- The teacher emphasises each learning point clearly
- Pupils use this to check or improve their own work

Use tick with me (StepLab)

- Pupils check each feature of quality step by step
- The teacher is clear about what pupils are looking for
- Checking is guided through a clear model or example
- The model matches the format pupils are working in

Re-teach, re-check (StepLab)

- Teaching is revisited when pupils have not understood the key learning
- Pupils are clear about how to correct or improve their work
- Pupils complete an action after the re-teach
- Scaffolds support pupils to correct their work successfully

Keep to core content (StepLab)

- Exit tickets focus on the core learning from the lesson
- Questions match the intended level of mastery
- The task is brief and manageable
- The assessment stays focused on what matters most



Quality Questioning

Make wait time real and transparent (TLAC)

- Questions are chosen carefully when extra thinking time is needed
- Pupils are told how long they have to think
- Silence is protected so pupils can reflect
- The teacher gives the full wait time promised

Protect quiet thinking time (Kings)

- Thinking time is kept calm, quiet and purposeful
- The teacher uses brief positive cues to reinforce silent thinking
- Pupils are reminded that everyone should be thinking
- Silence is used to help all pupils prepare to respond

Frontload the means of participation (StepLab)

- Pupils are told how they will respond before the question is asked
- The means of participation are emphasised clearly
- Expectations are repeated if needed
- Consistent routines help participation run smoothly

Use question, pause, name (StepLab)

- The question is asked before a pupil is named
- Pause time is given so all pupils can think
- Questions and instructions are clear
- The routine is used consistently and supportively

Make cold call predictable (TLAC)

- Cold Call is used as a normal part of classroom practice
- Pupils know that Cold Call may be used
- Cold Call is introduced in a transparent, low-stakes way
- Predictability helps more pupils take part with confidence

Build the Turn and Talk routine (TLAC)

- Turn and Talk is planned for key questions
- Partners and routines are established in advance
- Time limits are clear and precise
- The routine is practised until it runs smoothly

Build a culture of error (TLAC)

- Errors are treated as a normal part of learning
- Pupils' thinking is valued, even when answers are incorrect
- The teacher stays neutral and does not give away the answer too quickly
- Mistakes are used to deepen thinking and discussion

Use mini whiteboards to check thinking (Kings)

- Mini whiteboards are used to gather responses from all pupils
- Every pupil shows their thinking at the same time
- The teacher gains quick insight into whole-class understanding
- Misconceptions are spotted and addressed immediately



High Oracy Standards

Provide examples (StepLab)

- Pupils are given examples of how to use key vocabulary or concepts in discussion
- Examples show pupils what a strong spoken response sounds like
- The teacher explains why the example is effective
- Examples are concise and focused on the key learning

Provide scaffolds (StepLab)

- Scaffolds support pupils to take part successfully in discussion
- Sentence starters and prompts help pupils give developed answers
- Scaffolds are visible and easy to use
- Scaffolds are concise and do not overload pupils

Prompt to improve speech (StepLab)

- Short prompts are used to improve how pupils speak
- Prompts are clear and familiar to pupils
- The teacher gives prompts with confidence and clarity
- The teacher pauses to check that pupils respond to the prompt

Promote use of key terms (StepLab)

- Pupils are expected to use subject-specific vocabulary when speaking
- Key terms are identified in advance
- Prompts help pupils use the correct terminology successfully
- The teacher reinforces this expectation positively and concisely

Promote use of full sentences (StepLab)

- Pupils are expected to answer in full sentences
- Sentence starters support pupils to respond successfully
- The teacher prompts this expectation clearly and consistently
- Prompts become shorter as pupils grow in confidence

Prompt to paraphrase (StepLab)

- Pupils are asked to restate another pupil's answer in their own words
- Paraphrasing helps pupils listen actively to others
- The teacher uses concise prompts to cue paraphrasing
- All pupils are expected to track the speaker

Ongoing Assessment

Check understanding throughout the lesson (Kings)

- Checks are built into each phase of the lesson
- Understanding is checked at key points before moving on
- Checks are brief and purposeful
- Assessment happens during teaching, not just at the end
- The teacher uses what they notice to shape the next step

Do not assume understanding (Kings)

- One correct answer is not taken as whole-class understanding
- Completed work is not assumed to mean secure understanding
- Quiet compliance is not mistaken for learning
- The teacher checks beyond the most confident pupils

Gather evidence from all pupils (Kings)

- All pupils are expected to show their thinking regularly
- Routines allow the teacher to gather responses from across the class
- A range of pupils are included, not just volunteers
- The teacher looks for patterns in responses
- Whole-class evidence informs the next step in teaching

Spot misconceptions as they emerge (Kings)

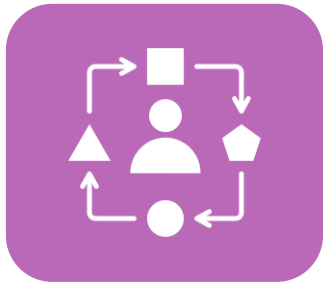
- Likely misconceptions are anticipated in advance
- The teacher notices errors and confusion quickly
- Misconceptions are addressed before they become embedded
- Follow-up questions are used to probe misunderstanding
- Teaching is adjusted when misconceptions appear

Use pupil responses to guide next steps (Kings)

- Pupils' spoken and written responses inform the next part of the lesson
- The teacher decides whether to continue, re-explain or scaffold further
- Examples and models are adapted in response to what pupils show
- Questioning is shaped by emerging understanding
- Next steps are based on evidence rather than assumption

Adapt teaching in response to what pupils show (Kings)

- The teacher responds flexibly to pupils' level of understanding
- Support is increased or reduced when needed
- Pace is adjusted if pupils are not yet secure
- Additional explanation or practice is provided where needed
- Challenge is increased when pupils are ready



Adaptive Teaching

Access to the learning (Kings)

- Tasks are made understandable and accessible
- Instructions are simplified where needed
- Key vocabulary is pre-taught or reinforced
- Models, visuals and worked examples support understanding

Reduce cognitive load (Kings)

- Learning is broken into manageable parts
- Tasks are chunked or staged where needed
- Unnecessary information is reduced
- Sequencing helps pupils focus on what matters most

Scaffold response (Kings)

- Scaffolds help pupils take part successfully
- Sentence starters, word banks or writing frames are used thoughtfully
- Prompts and cues help pupils begin or develop responses
- Guided practice supports pupils before independent work

Respond in the moment (Kings)

- Teachers notice when pupils are stuck or ready for more
- Support is adjusted during the lesson
- Scaffolds are added or removed when needed
- Clarification or re-teaching happens before pupils become lost

Protect ambition (Kings)

- The core learning remains ambitious
- Support makes the learning more accessible, not less demanding
- Pupils still work towards the key idea, concept or skill
- Tasks avoid unnecessary low ceilings

Support independence (Kings)

- The least intrusive support is used first
- Prompts and cues come before over-helping
- Pupils are helped to self-start and keep going
- Support is reduced as pupils become more secure

Adapt participation and communication (Kings)

- Pupils are supported to take part in learning successfully
- Thinking time is used where needed
- Different approaches help pupils show what they know
- Adaptations help more pupils contribute with confidence