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Success for All

24th September 2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

Teaching to Deepen Thinking and Learning

As part of our ongoing commitment to providing the highest quality education for our children, we want to share a strand of one of our school improvement priorities for this academic year. This focuses on our professional development around continuing to enhance the way we use questioning techniques and retrieval practice in the classroom.

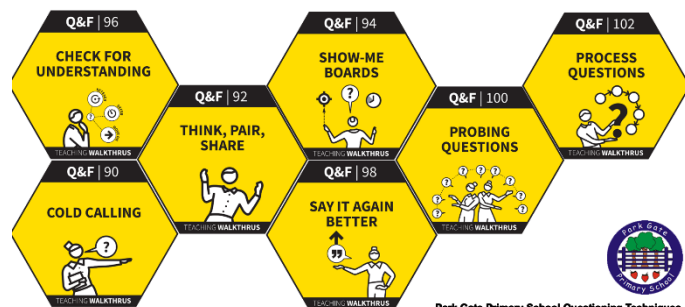
The way teachers ask questions and revisit key learning plays a vital role in how well children understand, remember, and apply what they have learned. Research shows that learning happens when children are encouraged to think hard, make connections, and retrieve knowledge from memory, rather than simply being told information. This work is directly informed by the *WalkThrus* programme by Tom Sherrington and Oliver Caviglioli, as well as the latest research into how children's brains learn most effectively.

We've included a short, informative video clip to help explain the thinking and research that underpins this work:

[How we learn - Learning WalkThrus](#)

This video gives a clear overview of how these strategies support children's learning and why we are embedding them more deeply across the school.

Questioning is at the heart of great teaching. The right kind of questions; those that challenge, probe, and stretch children's thinking, can deepen understanding, spark curiosity, and encourage learners to make connections between ideas. Rather than simply recalling facts, we want our children to explain, reason, and reflect. As a staff team we have worked incredibly hard across the last few years on this work and have spent time focusing on the first five cogs in the picture. This half term we are picking up on the remaining two cogs by having some focused training to strengthen the quality of our teaching across the school even further.



Park Gate Primary School Questioning Techniques

LEARNING
WALKTHRUS

These approaches are drawn from the WalkThrus series, which brings together tried and tested techniques with visual clarity and strong research foundations.

Cognitive science tells us that learning happens when we connect new ideas to what we already know, and when we are encouraged to retrieve, talk about, and apply our knowledge. By using purposeful questioning, our teachers can help children strengthen these neural connections ultimately helping learning stick.

High quality questioning helps create inclusive classrooms. Every child is expected to think, participate, and feel valued in discussions not just those who put their hands up.

How can you help at home?

You can support this focus by asking your child open ended questions about their day, such as:

- "What was the most interesting question asked in class today?"
- "Did you change your mind about anything after a discussion?"
- "What was something tricky you had to think hard about?"

By encouraging your child to talk about their thinking, you're reinforcing the same learning behaviours we're promoting in school.

We're excited about the impact this will have across the curriculum not only in children's academic work, but in developing confident, thoughtful learners who can think critically about the world we live in.

Thank you, as always, for your support and partnership.

Kind regards,

Ms Cara Newman