

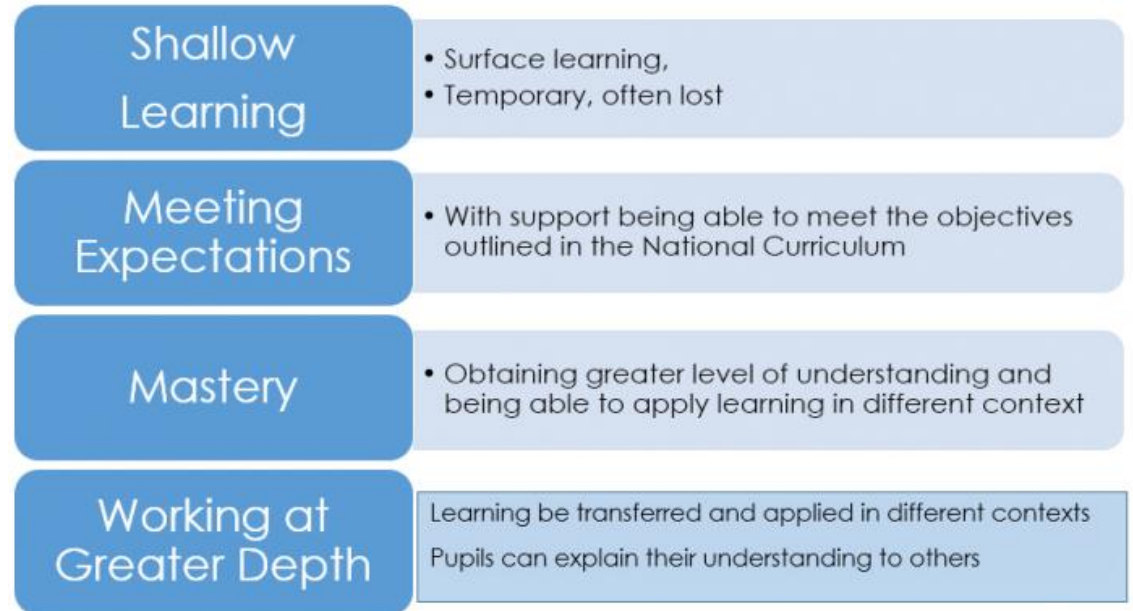
Greater Depth is About Being Better Equipped to Live and Learn

At Priestley Primary School we recognise that all pupils are individuals with their own strengths and weaknesses, gifts and talents and we are committed to supporting all our students: realising that all pupils need to be stretched and challenged. This academic year, class teachers have been identifying and registering students who show a particular talent or flair for certain subject areas using subject specific criteria to help them make their judgments. This will usually result in ten per cent of pupils being identified in any one topic.

This diagram helps to clarify the concept of mastery and greater depth in the national curriculum:

What we do know for certain is that mastery is not:

- Mastery and greater depth – not working on content from the next year group or an end of the week challenge.
- Mastery and greater depth in mathematics – not practising the same concept with bigger numbers.
- Mastery and greater depth in reading – not necessarily reading a more challenging text.

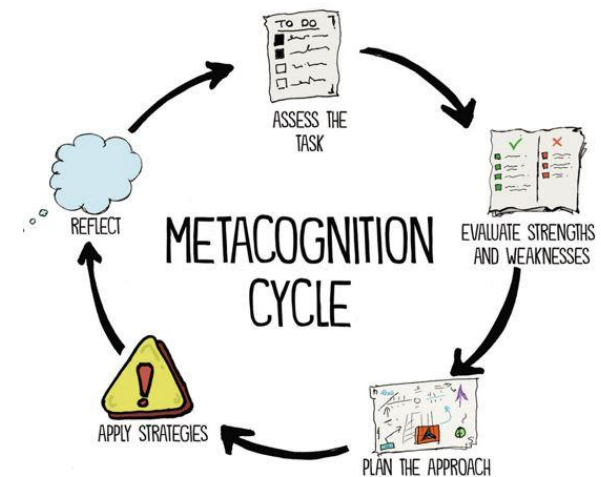


With the above in mind this means that pupils working at greater depth are expected to be able to:

- apply their learning to different contexts, including other areas of the curriculum.
- work independently after some initial input.
- apply their skills and knowledge consistently, confidently and fluently.
- organise their ideas to make connections with other areas of learning.
- use their ideas to help them work with new areas of learning.
- clearly explain what they have been doing and why they know they are correct to others.

An inclusive approach to greater depth calls for us to:

- Question more deeply.
- Pass ownership of learning more directly to pupils
- Make more time to embed taught skills at a deeper level.
- Link learning more explicitly to real life situations.



The Characteristics of mastery and greater depth in the national curriculum could therefore be summarised as:

Independence – apply the skill or knowledge without recall to the teacher.

Fluency – apply the skill and knowledge with a high level of confidence and show good resilience when the task seems demanding.

Application – apply the skill and knowledge to a range of different contexts, including other areas of the curriculum.

Consistency – consistently use their skills, knowledge and understanding.

Synthesise – organise ideas to make connections with other areas of learning and new areas.

Re-visit – Return to this aspect of learning after a break and still feel confident that they can work on the skill and knowledge without difficulty.

Explain it – able to explain to others their understanding and perhaps be a learning buddy to others.

When ready, pupils are provided with the opportunity to work at greater depth through carefully planned lessons and activities. Teachers will provide pupils with the time and opportunity to explore the learning objectives taught and will allow pupils the independence to apply their learning at a deeper level. Pupils may access greater depth challenges at any point in the week and across a range of subjects, as the teacher assesses their knowledge and progress. Greater depth cannot be awarded overall until the teacher has seen sufficient evidence across the subject and not just in a specific area e.g., punctuation, spelling, calculation, scientific investigations etc.

The removal of national curriculum levels is an acknowledgement that they were not a dependable way of defining achievement. Levels were used in a different way by different people and organisations depending on the audience.

Because of the way that schools are evaluated by Ofsted, levels also led to children being moved on at undue pace rather than developing depth of understanding. Depending on how they were used, levels could also be used to label children and become a disincentive for learning.

The new world of ‘assessment without levels’ is intended to encourage a more professional, intelligent assessment. There is a recognition that learning is neither neat nor linear. The simple attachment of a level could undermine learning as there could be gaps in specific areas of learning for a child. Progression is more focused on understanding and developing greater depth in the national curriculum than on mere progression to the next set of content.

The mastery pedagogy works on the principle that all learners, with effort, will meet expectations. It works on the premise that great teaching, based on formative assessment, particularly great questioning, is key. Precise assessment, teaching that closes any gaps, thinking about ability differently are all part of the mastery pedagogy. The notion behind a ‘mastery level’ came about from the performance descriptors that were published, in draft, some months ago. This so called ‘mastery level’ has now been replaced in the teacher assessment information that has now been published with the phrase ‘even greater depth.’

All children should have a deep learning of key ideas/constructs and opportunities for even deeper learning (growth mindset). For some learners they will be able to access, within a construct, even greater challenge to deepen their thinking further. Mastery learning is deep learning that sticks, can be recalled over time etc. It is necessary to have deep learning in order to meet the key objectives. In essence, in order to meet the objectives securely children need to have mastered them.

