STAFF ROOM POSTER

Adapt the Teaching, Not the Expectation

Adaptive teaching keeps every learner on the same ambitious goal and varies the route. Four principles that survive contact with a real classroom.

Scaffold up, never dumb down

Same task, added support: a worked example, sentence starters, a glossary. Remove the scaffold over time, not the challenge.

In class: Everyone answers the same question; some start from a part-completed model.

Teach it explicitly first

Learners with SEND are hit hardest by discovery approaches. Clear modelling, small steps and worked examples help everyone and harm no one.

In class: I do one on the board, we do one together, you do one with your partner, then alone.

Group flexibly, never fixedly

Fixed ability groups slightly depress outcomes for lower attainers. Group by today's need, regroup tomorrow.

In class: This table is everyone who wants another model of question two, whoever you are.

Reduce the load, not the learning

Cut reading volume, steps held in memory, and visual clutter, while keeping the thinking intact.

In class: Instructions: one per line, numbered, on the desk as well as the board.

In-Lesson Adaptation Moves

Four live adjustments for the moment a learner hits a barrier. Try the move before escalating the support.

Chunk it

Break the task into one visible step at a time. Cover the rest; reveal as they go.

Say: "Just do this line. Tell me when it is done and I will show you the next."

Model it again, smaller

Re-model just the failing step with a simpler number, word or example, then return to the real one.

Say: "Watch me do it with an easier one. Now spot what I did first."

Change the response mode

Same thinking, different output: say it, sort cards, label a diagram, record it, before writing it.

Say: "Tell your partner the answer first. Now write exactly what you said."

Pre-teach for next time

Two minutes before the next lesson on the vocabulary or step they will meet. Barriers fall before they form.

Say: "Tomorrow we will use the word evaporation. Here is what it means, with this picture."

QUICK REFERENCE POSTER

Five-Minute Adaptations by Barrier

Match the adjustment to the barrier, not the diagnosis. Most cost nothing and help the whole class.

READ Reading load

Shorter lines, larger spacing, key words bold, text read aloud once before independent work.

In class: Print the same sheet at 120% with double spacing for anyone who wants it.

HOLD Working memory

Instructions visible not just spoken, steps numbered, prior knowledge on the desk.

In class: A strip with the four steps sits on the desk; tick each as you finish.

FOCUS Attention

Shorter work bursts with a visible timer, clear start signals, movement built in legitimately.

In class: Six minutes on the timer, then everyone stands to compare answers.

CALM Sensory and environment

Seat away from high-traffic areas, reduce displays near the board, agree a quiet exit signal.

In class: The two seats by the window stay low-stimulus; anyone can book them.

TEACHER CHECKLIST

Planning an Inclusive Lesson

Run before teaching a new topic. Ten minutes of planning prevents forty minutes of firefighting.

Before the lesson

- [ ] The core learning is defined; every learner will attempt it.
- [ ] New vocabulary (max three terms) has a learner-friendly explanation and a visual.
- [ ] Reading demands are checked: nothing load-bearing is locked inside dense text.
- [ ] Scaffolds are prepared as opt-in for anyone, not handed only to the SEND register.

During the lesson

- [ ] Instructions are spoken AND visible, in steps.
- [ ] A worked example stays on display throughout independent practice.
- [ ] Checks for understanding sample the quiet learners, not just hands up.
- [ ] Support staff know the learning goal, not just the behaviour brief.

After the lesson

- [ ] Note which scaffold was actually used, and by whom, to fade it deliberately.
- [ ] One barrier that recurred is named and planned for next lesson.
- [ ] Marking comments tell the learner the next step, not just the grade.

CPD BRIEFING: STAFF ROOM COPY

Inclusive Teaching: A 5-Minute Evidence Briefing

What the research behind this toolkit says, including the findings that challenge common practice.

Placement is not the active ingredient

Across a Campbell systematic review, inclusive versus segregated placement showed no sizeable average effect either way. The lever is the quality of classroom instruction, wherever the learner sits.

Fixed ability groups quietly cost your lowest attainers

Homogeneous grouping alone shows a small negative effect for lower-attaining learners. Flexible, needs-of-today grouping avoids the cost while keeping the benefit.

Differentiation works when it is structural

Effects are positive when adaptation is embedded in a programme: explicit instruction, scaffolds that fade, adjusted load. Ad-hoc worksheet-splitting is not what the evidence supports.

The honest caveat

Much of this literature is non-randomised and heterogeneous, and teachers have reported the same resourcing gaps for thirty years. Treat these moves as best available practice, monitored against your own learners' progress.

Evidence base

Deunk, M.I. et al. (2018). Effective differentiation practices: a systematic review and meta-analysis of studies on the cognitive effects of differentiation practices in primary education. Educational Research Review.
Dalgaard, N.T. et al. (2022). The effects of inclusion on academic achievement, socioemotional development and wellbeing of children with special educational needs. Campbell Systematic Reviews.
Woolfson, L.M. (2024). Is inclusive education for children with special educational needs and disabilities an impossible dream? British Journal of Educational Psychology.