

What it looks like in practice

Nine routines teachers described on social media.

ROUTINE, AS TEACHERS DESCRIBE IT	WHAT YOU WOULD NOTICE	WHAT THE EVIDENCE SAYS
Method wall plus a physical check Year 2 recap methods from the display, self-correct, and use fingers as a physical tool. Not a reflection journal. "They are actively using classroom displays to recap methods and self-correct their work and using their fingers as a physical tool." @GatewayFCAT	A number-line display in use, not just on the wall. A learner counting on fingers beside a worksheet. English primary, Fylde Coast.	EEF: teach strategies in the subject, and make monitoring visible. Dignath, Buettner and Langfeldt (2008): self-regulated learning programmes in primary raise attainment, with larger effects when strategy instruction is explicit and metacognitive. We have not verified whether the fingers were a taught check or ordinary counting.
Writing toolkit, then whiteboard, then paper Open a ring-bound toolkit at different ways to start a sentence. Draft on a whiteboard. Then commit to paper. "using writing toolkits to find different ways to start a sentence or drafting on a whiteboard before committing it to paper.. excellent metacognitive learning behaviours!!" @StJohns_Eagle	The toolkit is in the learner's hands, not on a peg. A whiteboard draft sits beside the book. UK English lesson.	EEF recommendation 4: model and prompt metacognitive talk inside the subject. Willingham (2008): thinking skills taught away from knowledge do not transfer. This is writing, not a generic Plan Do Review grid.

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Learning powers, not the word metacognition Award the power the school already names: considering choices and embracing mistakes. Map that language to plan, monitor and review. "Vincent has received a gold award for developing the Learning Powers of Considering Choices & Embracing Mistakes." @godwinschool	A gold award named for two powers. Scottish assemblies name Keep Improving and Be Curious. The word metacognition may not be said.	EEF Toolkit rates metacognition and self-regulation high impact, +8 months on average (Toolkit). That is a mean across phases, not a trial of learning-power awards.
Learning pit, strategies on the way out P4/5 sit on the carpet under the pit display and name strategies that move learning forward. P6 draw their own pit, with confusion at the bottom and ways out on the slope. "P4/5 were introduced to the learning pit and began to look at some strategies we can use to independently move our learning forward" @AitkenbarPS	Hands up on the carpet under a named pit wall. A learner drawing with strategies such as search it up and do preparations. Strongest X evidence is Scottish, not English KS2.	EEF: plan, monitor, evaluate, inside challenging curriculum tasks. A pit with no named way out is a mood display. The classroom object here is the learner-drawn strategies, not a bought poster.

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Scripted maths think-aloud Plan the think-aloud before the lesson: objective, task, scripted thinking, prompts, a check with a second method. Bradford RS published worked examples for a percentage decrease and comparing fractions. “How to Plan a Think Aloud in Maths: Worked Examples Two examples to support teacher modelling and explanation” @BradResearchSch	No UK primary board photo of a teacher thinking aloud was found. The evidence is a scripted blog, not a classroom photograph.	EEF, Settle (4 Mar 2026): teachers often model metacognitive talk by thinking aloud, “I’ve seen a task like this before, so I’m going to start by breaking it into smaller steps. I’ll check as I go to see if that’s helping.” Jennifer Green, Dixons, scripts the check with two methods. One teacher’s account, not a trial.
Five-question superpower card Five questions on every desk, on the washing line, and on every maths slide. Ask the card before you ask the teacher. Year 6 in Bratislava, not a UK class. “What am I being asked to do? What do I already know? How could I do this? What could help me? Have I done what I was asked?” @tes	Cards stuck to desks. The teacher asking “Have you used your superpower card yet?” before helping. Year 3 in the same school could not read it well yet.	Tes, 31 Mar 2026: Boyd defines metacognition as thinking about thinking and being the boss of your brain. The Year 3 reading limit is the KS1 design constraint, not a reason to skip KS1. UK 5 Bs display: nothing found.

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Rehearse the think-aloud, then model it US variant. 2nd grade teacher models in collab planning before they stand in front of the class. 4th grade teacher then models a think-aloud in the room. "2nd grade teacher modeling in collab planning BEFORE they get in front of students. 4th grade teacher modeling a think aloud bringing the collab to classroom to life!" @mrsj_cohen	Adults rehearsing the script with colleagues first. Then a think-aloud at the board with the class. Georgia elementary, US.	EEF: script the think-aloud because expert thinking has become automatic. Same mechanism as Bradford's planned script. Do not lead a US page with the word metacognition; US elementary posts almost never used it.
Goal sheet: yes, almost, not yet US variant. 3rd grade write a goal, plan how they will monitor, tick steps such as ask for help and check answers. Success is yes, almost or not yet. Not a reflection journal. "Students wrote their own goals and began planning how they will monitor progress and work towards achieving them throughout the year." @mscorino_math	A printed goal sheet on desks. Learners writing how they will monitor, not only the target. US 3rd grade maths.	EEF: plan, monitor, evaluate. If you want an after-task review, start from this sheet or from stop and jot, not a learning journal.

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Last year's fad, this year's oracy ● objection A reply on a Katharine Birbalsingh thread: the school was obsessed with metacognition last year, oracy this year, and it makes not a jot of difference. "My school is obsessed with 'oracy'. Last year it was 'metacognition'. It makes not a jot of difference, but it sounds clever!" @Derinda123	A new whole-school word each year. Posters and INSET, little change in the task.	EEF: it can be difficult to realise the Toolkit impact in practice. TeacherToolkit (25 Mar 2026): if learners can perform in one context only, learning is fragile. Replies from practitioners in the same window point the other way.

The EEF +8 months figure is the Toolkit mean, not a KS1 trial. These routines are teachers' own accounts, not trial evidence.