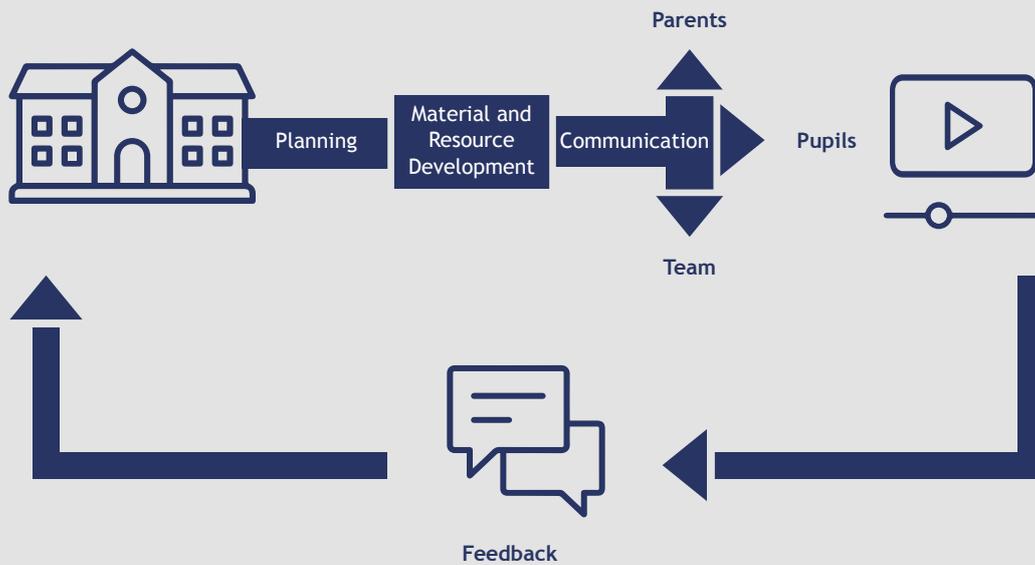


Online Teaching



The process described above is the cycle that many schools are using to reach their optimal efficiency. The feedback step is vital.



Synchronous vs Asynchronous

There are pros and cons to both. They should be used intentionally depending on what is most important for you at the time.



Synchronous

Pros

- Live debate and questioning gives instant feedback in both directions.
- This is great for making connections feel authentic and building relationships in this mode. It is emotionally “richer”.
- Visual elements are good but more importantly, the teacher can see facial expressions and better understand what the pupils are feeling.

Cons

- Everyone has to be online at the same time. This means that resources at home may be under pressure or access to devices may not be possible.
- A quiet space for this to happen at home may not be possible - headphones are recommended.
- Some may not like being in the digital “chat- room”.
- Conflicting sessions between teachers or siblings can occur.

Asynchronous

Pros

- Flexibility allows pupils to plan their time around the available resources and competing needs.
- The responses can be managed individually by the teacher and specific feedback can be given.
- Work can be downloaded overnight, printed etc. to relieve pressure on screen time.
- A variety of activities and apps can be used even for the same work.

Cons

- Feedback is not instant.
- Teachers need to have a method of checking that work is being done and understood.
- Some pupils work faster than others.
- Work needs to be well-structured and the instructions very clear.
- Teachers can fall into a rut of death-by-worksheet. Variety is needed.



Scheduling

In the planning process, this is considered and given to everyone, parents included, so that pressure is managed and potential problems can be identified early.



Communication

The whole team is kept in the loop and parents are given feedback so that they can help manage the home environment. The parents are not expected to teach, only support and help reinforce the routine that comes from the planning process.



Routine and Balance

This is not a daily routine which is inflexible. This works best in chunks or blocks of time which the children should assign activity to. This could be academic, physical exercise, creative work, eating, sleeping, social etc. Do not overload children or change deadlines or requirements without a process to see if it is possible and better than the original plan.



Expectations

Be clear about what is expected and where negotiation is possible. This is different to face to face learning at school. Accept the limitations and work within those, this will reveal where the opportunities lie and how they can be best used.



Well Being

Staff working in isolation is tough. Keep in touch and ask for help when uncertain or something is not in your current skill set. This is a learning journey for all of us. Share successes and failures - you will help colleagues by doing so and everyone will benefit. We will laugh and cry together.



Pupils work well when put in teams or work groups. However the teacher should create these and think about why they are putting certain people together. The small group support is very effective when done thoughtfully.



Teachers and parents need to work together to help the children maintain a pace that is healthy and productive. Do not try to do too much initially. This is very new to everyone and compounded by the lockdown restrictions. e.g. What if printer toner runs out at home? Can it be replaced?



Final Thoughts

- Flexibility and structure: Both are necessary, especially the flexibility.
- Focus on learning and understanding, not marks or assessments.
- Keep investing in the human element of the programme. Have some fun they will never forget it.