

# Improving the climate for learning

*It isn't going to happen overnight – be gently persistent and consistent*

## Does this sound like you?

“My pupils take a long time to focus”  
 “I never have enough time to cover everything”  
 “My pupils have a very short attention span”  
 “My pupils spend a lot of time off task”  
 “A lot of work never gets finished”  
 “I spend more time trying to keep pupils on task than actually teaching!”

## So what can you do about it?

- Be in the classroom before your pupils
- Share lesson objectives with pupils
- Move quickly into the lesson itself
- Leave time at the end of the lesson to review what has been learnt
- Have efficient homework routines
- Display all pupils' work regularly
- Use different arrangements of furniture for different activities
- Over speak to each pupil individually
- Use language to build relationship and raise pupils' self-esteem

## Good Beginnings and Endings

*Pupils learn more at the beginning and end of lessons  
 Divide your lesson up so that you have lots of beginnings and ends!*

Beginning:	Endings:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greet pupils as they arrive, smile at them, use their names</li> <li>• Engage pupils in the first minute in a learning activity</li> <li>• Have learning objective written on the board</li> <li>• Get straight into the lesson</li> <li>• The register and collecting homework can usually wait</li> <li>• If you have to take the register, give pupils a simple task to do while you read the register, or do a themed register (e.g. pupils respond with a word to do with the topic or an adjective to describe a picture)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End early – leave 10 minutes for the end</li> <li>• Have a plenary – reflection on what has been learned (see Unit 5 Starters and plenaries)</li> <li>• Set the scene for the following lesson</li> <li>• Have clear routines for dismissing the class</li> <li>• Value homework as a learning tool</li> <li>• Integrate homework with the lesson/topic</li> <li>• Provide appropriate feedback for homework as soon as possible (comments, not marks)</li> <li>• Make homework relevant – connect it to everyday life</li> <li>• Use homework planners (ensure it's written down)</li> <li>• Follow up non-completion of homework</li> </ul>

## Watch your language



Success	“I know you can...”	“I think you can ...”
Hope	“I can do it and I need help”	“I can't do it,”
Possibility	“Today you will ...”	“I always mess up ...”
No-blame	“which bit have I not explained well enough”	“which bit did you not understand?”
Encouragement	“I know it is difficult. Which part you would like help with?”	“of course you can”

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## How can I avoid constantly dealing with behaviour?

When I arrive my pupils are unsettled and not ready to learn

Have everything ready so that you can be waiting by the door to meet and greet the pupils as they arrive. Ask them in an encouraging way to get their books out and be ready to learn.

I spend a lot of time telling off the series of late comers.

Make eye contact with each latecomer and gesture with a nod for them to enter quickly and quietly. They know you'll come to them later on for an explanation, but right now they need to get on with work.

I start each lesson by reading the register and collecting last week's homework and listening to the excuses from the same old pupils who haven't done their homework.

As soon as everyone is in the room explain the lesson objectives and context of the lesson. Go quickly into the first activity which demands the pupils' full attention. Deal with homework later.

I always run out of time at the end of the lesson. I end up setting homework in a hurry and the pupils claim they didn't get it.

Plan your time and stick to it so that there is time for a plenary. Give homework high status by allowing enough time to introduce it.

The pupils scramble out at the end of the lesson. It is dangerous.

Control how pupils leave the lesson. Say something of personal interest to some pupils as they leave.

## The classroom environment

**spit pot**

<b>Displays</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your job is to plan displays, not put up or maintain.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change displays regularly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displays can be for information, instruction, guidance, notices, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a Quality Board – an annotated piece of work on a current topic to model good practice</li> </ul>
<b>Furniture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can you move your table or get rid of it?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rows are not conducive to group work or pupils moving about.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For group work pupils need to be able to face each other.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stand to the side – you can take in a greater number of pupils.</li> </ul>
<b>Non verbal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smile and use open and welcoming body language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect and listen to pupils – modelling the behaviour you want.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Try to notice every pupil.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make eye contact with pupils.</li> </ul>
<b>Verbal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep your voice pitched low, and vary it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use praise frequently but not indiscriminately.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use names frequently and affirmatively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the tone of politeness you want back from the pupils.</li> </ul>

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