



Metacognition & Self Regulation at Over Hall

Metacognition can be defined as “thinking about thinking”. It is a key component of self-regulated learning, and it involves encouraging children to think explicitly about their own learning.

The term was first introduced in 1976 by US developmental psychologist John Flavell, who viewed it as “learners’ knowledge of their own cognition” - defining it as “knowledge and cognition about cognitive phenomena”.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) highlights metacognition.

Metacognition and self-regulation are teaching and learning approaches that are rated as “high impact for very low cost”, with a range of evidence telling us that developing these skills in our children can lead to learning gains.

Encouragingly, the research also suggests that disadvantaged pupils can benefit most from effective metacognition and self-regulation teaching.

Metacognitive and self-regulation methods require pupils to take on more independence for their learning, which can’t happen without appropriate scaffolding support. Teachers explicitly teach strategies to help pupils plan, monitor and evaluate specific aspects of their learning through challenge and enquiry.

Teachers model their own thought processes, alongside promoting and developing metacognitive talk related to lesson objectives.

With explicit teaching and specific feedback, all children are more likely to use metacognitive and self-regulation strategies independently and habitually, helping them to manage their own learning and overcome challenges with increased resilience in the future.

How does metacognition and self-regulation work in our classrooms?

Dr Kirstin Mulholland, Northumbria University, April 2021, encourages three simple strategies that can be used in any classroom.

1. **Talk more about less** - adults ask fewer questions or give fewer tasks during a lesson but talk about these in significantly greater depth. Talking about ideas in detail means that the thinking taking place in the classroom becomes more visible, thus allowing teachers to spot and address misconceptions.
2. **Thinking out loud** - Teachers think aloud while modelling writing or reflecting on a passage of text. This helps to broaden an understanding of the types of thinking we can draw upon.
3. **Make questions key** - shifting emphasis from the answer or learning outcome towards the process used to achieve it. Questions like “how do you know?”, “what could you do to improve?”, “what went well, and why?” and “what helped you to be successful today?” encourage children to explain their reasoning.