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Neurodivergent-friendly schools: Ten strategies

Neurodivergent children bring a range of strengths and challenges to the classroom. In this Best Practice Focus, **Dr Pooky Knightsmith** offers 10 techniques primary schools can adopt to create a positive learning environment for neurodivergent pupils, with practical classroom ideas and easy 'do now' suggestions for each approach

Ten approaches to support neurodivergent learners

Neurodivergent learners bring extraordinary strengths, and specific challenges, to the primary classroom. This *Best Practice Focus* distils 10 practical steps to shape your school routines, spaces and relationships so that every child can thrive.

Use it as a dip-in guide during planning, a conversation starter in staff meetings, and as a reference when you need ideas. Above all, remember – small, consistent changes add up to a more inclusive culture where all learners feel safe, seen and supported.

Step 1: Make your day predictable

When pupils know roughly what to expect, their anxiety eases and they can focus on the task at hand. Clear routines free-up working memory for learning rather than wondering “what comes next?”.

Predictability fosters trust: when you deliver on the small promises of the day, learners feel safer taking risks with their ideas and contributions.

Over time, that consistent reliability builds a classroom culture where every child feels secure enough to engage. Here are four ideas you could try right away:

Visual timetable: A visual timetable gives everyone a constant reference point. Use photographs or icons that match pupils’ interests such as a football for PE, a book for reading. By updating it as you go, you reinforce the link between the timetable and reality and reduce “what are we doing?” questions.

Transition cues: Transitions are hotspots for confusion, off-task chatter and dysregulation. A two-minute verbal warning helps pupils prepare, and a consistent sound signal, such as a soft chime or brief melody, brings their attention back. Over time, the cue itself becomes a clear prompt, smoothing movement between activities.

Anchor points: Anchor points link new or varied tasks to something familiar, cutting through the novelty that can derail focus. For example, always follow registration with a two-minute breathing pause. The pause becomes a mental reset and a reliable signal that learning is about to begin.

Routine scripts: Simple, repeatable phrases support pupils who struggle with processing

multi-step instructions. A script like “first we clear our desks, then we gather on the carpet” gives a clear sequence. By modelling the script each morning, you help learners internalise the language and reduce the cognitive load of figuring out what comes next.

Putting it into practice

At one school, quieter learners began raising their hands more often after the teacher pinned a small “Now-Next” board by the door. The board used pictures for both columns and matched each icon to the visual timetable.

Within days, questions like “what are we doing?” reduced notably and pupils with planning difficulties began initiating tasks without prompts.

You might choose one part of the day that most often causes confusion or dysregulation, perhaps the shift from playtime back to class, or the change from maths to literacy. Focus your routines there first rather than overhauling the whole timetable at once.

If you only do one thing: Set up a “Now-Next” board today. On scrap paper, a small whiteboard or with simple pictures, show the current

activity under “Now” and the very next under “Next”. This single tweak will reduce questions, calm the class, and buy you valuable teaching time.

Step 2: Create a calm and safe environment

Neurodivergent learners are often

WHY TRUST TAKES TIME

Trust does not arrive overnight for neurodivergent pupils. When sensory overload or unexpected changes leave them feeling vulnerable, they need extra breaths, small steps and consistent signals before they believe you are “in their corner”. A single missed routine or rushed explanation can reinforce fears. Instead, offer brief, reliable rituals such as a calm greeting each morning, a quiet check-in before a task and repeat them without fail. Over time, these tiny acts show pupils that your support is dependable. With each successful routine, they gain confidence that you will keep them safe and help them learn.

especially sensitive to sensory input. Harsh lighting may trigger headaches, sudden noises can spark dysregulation, and strong smells may overwhelm. By tuning into light, sound, smell and space, you create a classroom where everyone can settle more easily and focus stays on learning rather than overwhelm. Here are four small ideas that make a big difference:

Soft-lighting corners: A lower-wattage lamp or desk light in one area gives pupils who need less brightness a place to work or calm down. For learners with light sensitivity, this means fewer headaches and less irritability when they are expected to concentrate.

Felt-pad chairs: The scrape of chair legs on hard floors can feel like nails on a chalkboard to someone with auditory sensitivity. Adding felt pads mutes that noise, helping pupils stay regulated rather than distracted or distressed by repetitive sounds.

Scent-neutral routines: Neurodivergent pupils may find cleaning products or air fresheners overpowering. Where possible, ventilate rooms before pupils arrive and avoid introducing strong fragrances during lesson time. A neutral-smelling space reduces the risk of overwhelm or the need to withdraw.

Zone-based seating: Divide the room into clearly marked areas for quiet work, group tasks and movement breaks. Visual markers such as rugs, coloured tape or simple signs, help pupils know where to go when they need different levels of stimulation. A dedicated quiet zone gives neurodivergent learners a safe retreat without leaving the classroom entirely.



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Putting it into practice

In one year 3 class, a pupil with sensory processing challenges found the hum of fluorescent lights and chatter too much after morning break. The teacher set up a “quiet nook” with a soft lamp and beanbag under a table draped with a sheet. Within days, the pupil began choosing that space when feeling dysregulated, returning to the group once calm. His engagement in lessons rose and he required fewer one-to-one interventions.

You could start with a single sense audit this week. Notice whether your pupils’ energy dips or anxiety spikes at particular times; just after lunch, for example. Then test one change: open a window, dim overhead lights, or add felt pads to a few chairs. Observe how your neurodivergent learners respond.

If you only do one thing: Choose one sensory tweak and test it. It could be adding felt pads to five chairs, installing a lamp in a corner or opening a window five minutes before registration. Notice how neurodivergent pupils’ behaviour and focus shift and share your findings at your next staff meeting.

Step 3: Support executive functioning

Neurodivergent learners often find the hidden demands of planning,

organising and shifting between tasks overwhelming. Executive functions such as working memory, task initiation, flexible thinking, and impulse control can feel like invisible barriers in the classroom. When pupils cannot hold information in mind or break a project into manageable steps, they may appear reluctant, forgetful or stuck, yet it is not by choice. By reframing “won’t” as “can’t yet” and offering clear scaffolds, you give every child a chance to build these vital skills. Here are four simple scaffolding strategies:

Chunk tasks: Large tasks can swamp working memory. Break activities into two or three clear stages – draft ideas, write sentences, edit work – so pupils tackle one manageable piece at a time. This reduces overwhelm and builds confidence as each chunk is completed.

Checklists and timers: A simple checklist keeps multi-step tasks visible; a clear timer shows time remaining. For neurodivergent learners, seeing steps ticked off and time counting down turns abstract expectations into concrete data, making it easier to stay on track.

First-then boards: Resistance often comes at the start of tasks. A “First... Then” visual board pairs an expected activity with a preferred follow-up. For example: “First we begin our handwriting, then we choose a reward activity.” This structure offers clarity and motivation.

Visual anchors: Colour-coded cards or flowcharts act as signposts through complex processes. Use symbols for each stage – read question, underline keywords,

write answer – and display them where pupils can glance up rather than juggling instructions in their heads.

Putting it into practice

In a year 4 lesson on story-writing, one child with working memory difficulties kept forgetting the next step. The teacher provided a laminated checklist and set a visible timer for each phase. Within two weeks, the pupil completed all three stages without adult prompts and even began using the checklist to help a partner. His sense of achievement and his independence grew.

If you only do one thing: For your next lesson, choose one scaffold and trial it with one pupil. Create a two-column checklist for a short activity or set up a “First-Then” board. Observe how it affects engagement and note whether the pupil begins to internalise the steps.

Step 4: Simplify communication

Neurodivergent pupils can become overwhelmed when instructions are long or include multiple steps. Their processing speed and language comprehension may vary from minute to minute, and too many words at once can trigger a “freeze” response. By simplifying your language, you reduce cognitive load and give every learner a clear path forward. Here are three key ideas that are easy to implement and will make a rapid difference:

Say less, pause more: Speak in short, digestible chunks and allow at least three seconds after each instruction. This gives pupils time to process and ask questions before moving on. Over time, they learn to anticipate the pause and prepare for the next step.

Repeat don’t rephrase: When a pupil looks confused, repeat the exact same wording rather than rephrasing. Changing words can add a second layer of processing and introduce new vocabulary to decode. Consistency helps neurodivergent learners anchor their understanding.

Use consistent scripts: Develop go-to phrases for common routines such as “first we put our pens

down. Then we stand behind our chairs”. By modelling the same script daily, you help pupils internalise the language and reduce the mental effort needed to follow instructions.

Putting it into practice

In a year 2 classroom, a teacher noticed several pupils were starting free-choice time before clearing away resources. So she replaced “When you have finished, please tidy up and then you may choose your activity” with two short statements: “First we tidy our tables. Then we choose our activity.”

Pausing between the phrases, she found almost all pupils followed the sequence correctly and without reminders.

To break-up text-heavy instructions in written work, she also introduced a simple visual word bank. Key verbs such as tidy, choose, wait, and move were illustrated with small icons alongside a single word. Pupils began referring to the word bank rather than asking what each instruction meant.

If you only do one thing: Pick one routine instruction that you use daily and boil it down to two brief sentences. Practise speaking to pupils with a clear pause in-between, then stick to that script for a week. Notice how neurodivergent pupils respond and adjust as needed. This small change will make your expectations crystal clear.

Step 5: Regulation before learning

When neurodivergent pupils experience stress, their fight-or-flight system hijacks attention and reduces capacity for problem-solving, memory and creativity. If a learner’s brain is in survival mode, no amount of scaffolding or clear instruction will land.

By putting regulation first, you help pupils move from reactive states into calm readiness, where genuine learning can take place.

Regulation is a prerequisite. Stress floods the brain with cortisol, shrinking working memory and making even simple tasks feel impossible. For a child prone to sensory overload or social anxiety, this can mean shutting down, acting out, or fleeing the space. Regulation practices

interrupt that cycle, shifting physiology back toward calm and opening pathways for new information.

Co-regulation means sharing the regulation process: you guide pupils through sensory or emotional reset activities until they can manage for themselves. These techniques give neurodivergent learners structured, supportive ways back to calm so that teaching and learning can resume. Here are three simple techniques:

Breath breaks: Teaching the group a five-second inhale, five-second exhale routine can settle bodies and minds. Do it together at natural pauses – after registration or before transitions.

Sensory corners: A dedicated low-stimulus space (beanbag, soft lighting, headphones) gives pupils remote control over their environment. Encourage them to self-refer before overwhelm peaks.

Partner check-ins: Pair pupils briefly to share how they feel on a simple scale (1 to 5) or with a “thumbs up/down” signal. Verbalising stress levels builds self-awareness and links pupils to peer support.

Tiered supports

A tiered approach matches the intensity of support to each pupil’s needs. Whole-class rituals build a shared calm baseline. Small-group tools offer extra resources for those who need more support without singling them out. And targeted one-to-one check-ins catch rising stress before it becomes a barrier to learning.

Whole-class rituals: Begin each morning with a three-minute mindfulness or movement session. A shared routine primes every learner to settle as a group.

Small-group tools: Offer a mini-toolbox (fidget objects, stress balls, visual timers) to groups of two or three who need extra support. Rotate tools to discover what works best.

One-to-one check-ins: Schedule brief “temperature” chats at agreed times; start of day, mid-lesson or after break. A quick private chat can nip dysregulation in the bud before it escalates.

Putting it into practice

In one year 5 class, a pupil with high anxiety often shut down during story time. The teacher introduced a two-minute breath break before each reading session and invited the class to practise together. Within a week, the child began contributing ideas and asking questions.

If you only do one thing: Choose one regulation practice – perhaps a group breath break or a simple “feelings check” signal – and try it tomorrow morning. Notice how neurodivergent pupils respond and build from there.

Step 6: Know their triggers (and yours)

Neurodivergent pupils often respond to seemingly small changes with outsized reactions because their nervous systems can be tipped into fight, flight or freeze by sensory, social or task-based triggers. If you understand what sets off distress, you can reduce those moments and teach pupils to notice warning signs in themselves. Equally, recognising your own emotional hotspots helps you stay calm and model regulation. Before you can prevent meltdowns, you need to map them. These three actions help you gather the insights you need:

Identify individual triggers: Walk the classroom with fresh eyes and note moments of tension. Is it the echo of footsteps in the corridor, the buzz of overhead lights or the chatter of group work? Task-based triggers might include open-ended questions or long periods of independent writing. Use simple charts or tick-lists to record when and where each pupil seems most dysregulated.

Use pupil passports and profiles: Co-create a one-page pupil passport with each learner and their parents or carers. Include sections on sensory likes and dislikes, known triggers, effective calming strategies, and preferred interests. Display a summary version in a secure staff area so every adult can see what helps each child stay regulated and engaged.

Cultivate adult self-awareness: Keep a brief emotion journal or stress log for a week. Note which



moments in the day prompt frustration, impatience or overwhelm and what thoughts run through your mind. Reflecting on your own triggers – a sudden noise, a missed deadline, too many emails – helps you respond more patiently when pupils reach their limit.

Putting it into practice

In one year 6 class, a pupil with social anxiety repeatedly froze during group tasks. The teacher reviewed her passport and noticed that this pupil felt overwhelmed by mixed-gender groups and loud discussion. By grouping her with one trusted partner in a quieter corner and sharing that set-up with teaching assistants, the pupil began contributing ideas without panic. Over time, she practised in slightly larger groups as her confidence grew.

Start by choosing one pupil and one type of trigger this week. Perhaps observe environmental triggers for two lessons in a row or update a passport with fresh insights. Small changes like seating a child away from a busy door or pre-teaching a tricky vocabulary list can prevent upsets before they happen.

If you only do one thing: Pick one pupil’s most common trigger and

test a simple adjustment. It could be swapping their seat away from the speaker, offering noise-reducing headphones, or giving a short preview of the task ahead. Notice whether this change keeps them calmer and share your finding with colleagues.

Step 7: Adapt your response, not their behaviour

When a neurodivergent pupil acts out, it is often a signal rather than simple defiance. Their behaviour can communicate overwhelming sensory input, unmet needs or confusion. By changing how you respond instead of trying to force behaviour to fit a norm, you validate their feelings and guide them back into learning with compassion and clear boundaries.

Behaviour as communication

Rather than viewing every outburst or withdrawal as “naughty”, consider what the pupil is trying to tell you. A child flapping hands may be seeking sensory input; a pupil who bolts for the door could be escaping an environment that feels unsafe.

When you name the need – “You seem upset by the noise; let’s find a quieter spot” – you show you are listening and offer an alternative

FIVE PHRASES TO DE-ESCALATE

When tension rises, these brief, compassionate stems can help calm a neurodivergent pupil and keep you connected:

- 1. “I can see this is hard for you right now.”
- 2. “Let’s take three deep breaths together.”
- 3. “Would you like to pause and try again in a moment?”
- 4. “I’m here to help when you’re ready.”
- 5. “You are safe. Let’s find a solution together.”

Using the same wording each time builds familiarity. Speak calmly and allow space after each phrase. This consistency reassures pupils that their feelings are heard and supported.

that meets the same need. Clear limits help pupils feel secure, but the tone and wording matter.

Use choice to offer agency, for example: “Would you like to finish this task here or over by the window?” “You can work with a fidget object, or we can pause for a breath break.”

Restorative follow-up

After a difficult moment, repair and

reflection build trust and reinforce learning. Invite the pupil to describe what happened in their own words: “Can you tell me what felt hard just now?” Then re-teach any routines or expectations gently: “Next time we need quiet hands, remember we can...” This process helps the pupil link feelings to strategies and reduces the chance of repeat incidents.

Putting it into practice

In a year 4 class, one pupil would shout out when frustrated by group work. Instead of reprimanding, the teacher stepped back and said quietly: “You seem frustrated. Would you like to stay here and finish on your own, or work with Tom?” When the pupil opted to work with his friend, his volume stayed calm. Afterwards, they talked about what made group work hard and practised a simple breathing exercise before returning to the team.

If you only do one thing: Choose one pupil who often struggles to stay regulated and try a compassionate boundary. Offer a choice that meets their need and follow with a brief de-escalation script. Notice how this shifts the interaction and helps the pupil to feel understood rather than controlled.

🗨️ *Neurodivergent pupils often hear messages about what they struggle with rather than what they excel at. Shift your focus to their talents and interests* 🗨️

Step 8: Celebrate strengths and interests

Neurodivergent pupils often hear messages about what they struggle with rather than what they excel at. Shift your focus to their talents and interests. This not only boosts self-esteem but also creates powerful hooks for motivation and engagement. When learners see their strengths reflected in the classroom, they’re more likely to take risks, persevere through challenges, and build positive relationships with you and their peers. Here are three approaches you could try:

Spotting strengths: Focus on strengths by naming what you observe (“I notice you’re really detailed when drawing that map”). Carry out a quick interest inventory at the start of each term: five simple questions about hobbies, favourite topics and dream jobs. This information helps you weave pupils’ passions into lessons and shows how you value them as individuals.

Interest-driven planning: Design mini-projects or choice boards that allow pupils to explore curriculum topics through their interests. For example, in a history unit on ancient Egypt you might offer options to build a model pyramid, write a short play or compose a travel brochure. Neurodivergent learners who might find traditional writing tasks daunting can shine in formats that match their strengths.

A ‘strength carousel’: Set aside five minutes each week for pupils to praise one another’s skills or creations. Rotate the focus: this week could be “creative thinkers”, next week “problem-solvers”. Use simple tokens such as sticky stars, ➤

stickers or digital badges to make recognition visible. Pupils learn to value each other’s unique contributions, fostering a more inclusive classroom culture.

Putting it into practice

In one year 3 class, a pupil with strong spatial reasoning but anxiety around reading was invited to lead a “map-maker” station during geography. Her confidence soared as peers sought her expertise, and she began tackling written tasks by drafting her ideas first in diagram form. The teacher noted a marked increase in her willingness to volunteer answers and a happier demeanour in lessons.

Rather than waiting for a “big project”, try weaving pupils’ interests into daily routines: play a favourite song during brain breaks, pose maths problems about football scores, or use character names from a beloved book. Small gestures signal that you see and value each learner’s individuality.

If you only do one thing: Create a simple “interest spotlight”. Display a question such as “What is your superpower?” on the board and invite two or three pupils to share in quick succession. Acknowledge each response publicly and make a note of how you might link these strengths into upcoming lessons. This tiny step puts a range of talents front and centre.

FIVE PHRASES TO USE FOR STRENGTHS-BASED PRAISE

Using strengths-based praise helps neurodivergent pupils recognise their talents and boosts their confidence. Short, specific feedback guides them to repeat positive behaviours and feel valued. Try these phrases (with examples):
1. You really noticed... (how the vowel sounds changed in each word – great listening).
2. Well done for persevering when... (questions got tricky).

3. I admire the way you... (used diagrams to explain that scientific idea).
4. Thank you for showing... (kindness when you helped Samantha to settle into the lesson).
5. Your creativity in... (choosing colours brought your map to life).
Rotate these phrases regularly to keep praise genuine and focused on each learner’s strengths.

Step 9: Collaborate with the pupil

Neurodivergent learners flourish when they feel ownership over their learning and know that the adults around them share common goals. Involving pupils in setting targets, keeping carers informed and working alongside external professionals builds consistency and trust. When the child, the family and the school speak the same language, support becomes seamless and meaningful.

Student voice and choice

Invite pupils to set one or two simple, specific goals each term, framed positively (“I will use my fidget tool when I feel restless”). Use choice menus to offer control over how they demonstrate understanding. For example, a

science task might allow drawing, talking or building a model. Giving neurodivergent children agency reduces anxiety and increases engagement, because they see themselves as active partners rather than passive recipients.

Parent partnerships

Parents and carers hold vital insights into what helps their child regulate, learn and feel safe. Co-create a one-page passport or “snapshot” together, capturing triggers, successful strategies and personal interests. A shared home-school diary, whether a simple notebook or a digital log, allows quick daily notes on mood, sleep or sensory events. This two-way channel ensures that wins and concerns travel between home and school in real time.

Multi-agency team-work

Beyond the classroom, other professionals such as educational psychologists, occupational therapists, or speech and language therapists may offer targeted expertise. Use simple meeting templates with clear sections: purpose, pupil voice, agreed strategies and review date. Circulate simple notes promptly so all adults (including supply teachers) can refer to the same plan. Consistent language and shared strategies across agencies help prevent mixed messages and support generalisation of skills.

Putting it into practice

In one school, a year 5 pupil co-authored her learning passport with her parent and the SENCO. They agreed on three colour-coded strategies:

- Red for “I need a break”
- Amber for “I need help”
- Green for “I’m ready”

The teacher and teaching assistant both use the same language and save notes daily in a home-school diary. Within weeks, the pupil’s requests became more specific, and she lost fewer minutes to dysregulation because everyone recognised and respected her signals.

If you only do one thing: Invite two pupils to set one simple learning goal each and record it on a visible “goal board” in class. Share these goals with their parents by email or in your existing diary system. This small step gives neurodivergent learners ownership and starts a habit of partnership that will pay dividends all year.

Step 10: Whole-school inclusion

Neurodivergent pupils thrive in schools where every adult understands and values their differences. Lasting change happens when inclusion moves beyond individual classrooms into policy, practice and culture across the whole school.

By equipping staff, auditing environments and empowering pupils as neurodiversity champions, you embed supportive routines that benefit everyone.

Beyond the classroom

Real inclusion extends beyond individual classrooms into leadership, policy and the built

environment. When every member of staff understands neurodiversity and your school audits its practices, neurodivergent pupils experience consistency whether they are in assembly, the dinner hall, or the playground.

Staff training: Offer regular in-house workshops or invite specialists to explain sensory processing, executive function challenges, and communication differences. When all staff learn neurodiversity fundamentals, pupils experience consistency wherever they are.

Policy reviews: Check your behaviour, homework and assessment policies through an inclusion lens. Does your behaviour policy allow for sensory-based dysregulation? Are homework expectations flexible for executive function differences? Simple adjustments, such as alternative evidence of learning or staggered deadlines, ensure fairness and reduce stress.

Sensory audits: Form a small panel (including pupils) to walk the school and note sensory hotspots: echoing corridors, bright glare in halls or busy seating plans in the library. Collate recommendations and share with senior leaders.

Peer-led inclusion projects Neurodiversity champions give

pupils agency and build peer understanding. Invite interested pupils to form a lunchtime club where they:

- Plan awareness activities (posters, assemblies, book recommendations).
- Mentor younger pupils in calming routines or executive function hacks.
- Collect feedback from class-mates on what works and what needs tweaking.

These projects develop leadership skills and foster empathy, as pupils teach one another practical strategies for regulation, communication and collaboration.

Sustaining change

Embedding inclusive practice requires regular review. Feedback loops keep your actions grounded in lived experience, and an annual (but simple) mini-review ensures that policies, training and environments evolve in step with your pupils’ needs.

- **Feedback loops:** Use short surveys or suggestion boxes to gather input from staff, pupils and parents each term. Ask what’s helping, what challenges remain, and for any new ideas.
- **Mini-reviews:** Embed a simple review of neurodiversity practices into your school development plan. Once a year, revisit key strategies and

update them based on feedback and new insights.

Putting it into practice

At one school, the senior leadership team scheduled a half-day sensory audit led by pupils from years 4 to 6. They mapped favourite chill-spots and problem zones, then worked with premises staff to install soft lighting in the library nook.

Simultaneously, a neurodiversity champions club ran a “Calm Corners Journey” assembly, showing the whole school how to use breathing techniques and fidget tools.

If you only do one thing: Ask one colleague from another phase (EYFS, key stage 1 or 2) to trial a simple classroom tweak such as a Now-Next board or a sensory corner and share back their experience in your next staff briefing. Small cross-phase collaborations spread best practice and reinforce that inclusion is everyone’s responsibility.

Final thoughts

Predictability and simplicity reduce anxiety and free-up working memory. Remember:

- Calm, sensory-safe spaces keep pupils regulated and ready to learn.
- Executive function scaffolds and clear communication foster independence.

- Regulation practices and trigger awareness nip dysregulation in the bud.
- Compassionate responses, strengths-based praise, and collaborative networks build trust.
- Whole-school inclusion cements these changes in policy, culture and environment. Keep this guide close, pick one “If you only do one thing...” prompt whenever you need a quick win, and share your successes and questions with colleagues. Every step moves your school closer to a place where neurodivergent pupils can flourish.

TEN STRATEGIES: A SUMMARY

1. **Make your day predictable:** Pin a “Now-Next” board by the door, using pictures or words to show the current and next activity.
2. **Create a calm environment:** Add felt pads to five chair legs and observe if the classroom noise level drops.
3. **Support executive functioning:** Prepare a simple two-column checklist for a key activity and trial it with a couple of pupils.
4. **Simplify communication:** Reduce a routine instruction to two clear sentences, pausing between them.
5. **Prioritise regulation:** Lead a three-minute guided breath break after registration.
6. **Know their triggers:** Move one pupil’s seat away from a busy door or noisy area and note any change in focus.
7. **Adapt your response:** Offer a choice statement such as “Would you like to finish here or over there?” when tension rises.
8. **Celebrate strengths:** Invite three pupils to share a personal strength in circle time and acknowledge each.
9. **Collaborate with their network:** Ask two pupils to set and display a simple learning goal on a visible board.
10. **Whole-school inclusion:** Invite a colleague from another phase to trial one of these tweaks and report back at your next meeting.

