Siraj-Blatchford identified certain characteristics of effective teachers. They:

- assess children’s performance to ensure the provision of challenging yet achievable experiences
- provide feedback during activities and differentiate their planning and teaching
- model appropriate language, values and practices, encourage sociodramatic play, praise, encourage, ask questions and interact verbally with children
- understand pedagogy and both ‘teaching’ and the provision of instructive learning and play environments and routines
- provide both teacher-initiated group work and freely chosen yet potentially instructive play activities
- work to achieve an equal balance between adult-led and child-initiated interactions, play and activities
- have good curriculum knowledge and child development knowledge
- use interactions that guide but do not dominate children’s thinking
- use behaviour strategies that support children in rationalising and talking through conflicts
- view cognitive and social development as complementary
- share educational aims with parents supported by regular communication.

The findings from this research indicate how central the role of the teacher is to the quality of children’s educational experiences. Effective teachers create a balance between what is planned, organised and available in the learning environment and the quality of their interactions with children. Sensitive and supportive interactions are characterised by children and teachers working together to solve a problem, explore ideas, or discuss understandings. Both children and teachers actively contribute to the thinking processes, with teachers taking into account children’s prior knowledge, experiences and current understandings.

Teachers actively engaged in children’s learning use a range of teaching strategies to support successful interactions. Key teaching strategies identified in the research include sustained shared thinking, scaffolding, co-constructed learning, use of questioning and negotiation with children. Each of these strategies is closely linked to a view of learning as socially situated and constructed in meaningful social and cultural contexts.

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