



Learning and Teaching Policy

January 2018
(Next review January 2020)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following key policies:

- *Assessment for learning policies*
- *Environment for learning*
- *Behaviour for learning*

In our schools we aim for every child to be engaged and excited by learning, to become an effective learner and to begin to understand how they learn best. Our learning and teaching policy is at the heart of all we do. It sets out clear expectations, provides a standard uniform approach, a minimum entitlement for every pupil and can be easily monitored ensuring equal opportunity for all our pupils.

Aims of our policy

- We aim for every class in our schools to be an effective learning community where our young people will begin their journey as lifelong learners.
- We aim to ensure that the children in our schools are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to a consistently high level of pupil progress and achievement.

Through the application of our learning and teaching policy we aim to achieve the following outcomes for our young people:

What capacities do we want to develop in our young people?

- Confident and resilient youngsters
- Successful in their learning
- Contributing effectively to the school, local and global communities
- Being a responsible citizen within them

We want our young people to develop strong values that relate to:

- themselves, as individuals capable of spiritual, moral, social, intellectual and physical growth and development
- their relationships, as fundamental to the development and fulfillment of happy and healthy lives, and to the good of the community
- their society, which is shaped by the contributions of a diverse range of people, cultures and heritages
- their environment, as the basis of life and a source of wonder and inspiration that needs to be protected

What skills will our young people need for life in the 21st Century?

- Literacy skills
- Numeracy skills
- ICT skills
- Communication skills
- Problem solving skills
- Personal and Social Development – resilience to cope with change

What are the beliefs and values that underpin learning and teaching in our schools?

- We recognise that we learn best when:
 1. We can relate to, feel comfortable with, like and feel liked by the person we are learning from
 2. We can make learning our own by relating it to our own experience and understanding
 3. We feel included and active in the process and not just a recipient
 4. We see a need and a reason for learning something – what’s in it for me?
 5. We need to know something in order to teach someone else
- We believe emotional literacy is the key to learning effectively. Emotionally literate people are aware of and manage their own emotional states and are aware of and manage other people’s emotional states. They recognise what is being felt, why it is being felt and know what to do about it. In our school we learn to express feelings clearly and appropriately and to make sense of the role that feelings play in decision making and taking action.
- We believe that children learn best when their self esteem is high and children feel a sense of belonging and inclusion. In our schools we make every effort to know children as individuals, understanding where they come from and who is part of their family. We also encourage pupils with praise. This is the responsibility of every adult in the school and we do this at all times in order to maintain and boost pupil morale.
- We believe “Children learn what they live.” Better learning equates to better behaviour and vice versa. The positive behaviour of everyone in the school will promote good learning. All behaviour is learned and can be changed. Children will follow the model of adults. We believe that a calm and purposeful learning environment is best and all staff will use supportive, quiet and purposeful voices and avoid shouting.
- We encourage pupils and adults to see things from different perspectives and view points and to have the opportunity to learn with different groups of children – age, experience and abilities.

What does high quality learning look like in our schools?

High quality learning is active, often collaborative, learner-driven and focused on the process of learning.

- **ACTIVE:** learners are engaged, motivated to learn, take responsibility for their own learning and seek to participate in all learning opportunities;
- **COLLABORATIVE:** learners often participate in joint learning projects with others; classrooms are developed as learning communities in which knowledge and understanding are constructed together; assessment is often collaborative;
- **LEARNER-DRIVEN:** learners have choice in their approaches to learning and are involved in planning their learning;
- **LEARNING-FOCUSED:** learners talk about their own learning and that of others; there is explicit emphasis on understanding how you learn best and how to improve your learning.

In all classes there should be a clear learning process of planning, action, reflection and application used by both teachers and young people.

What learning approaches and skills do we promote across the curriculum?

- Communication
- Social & Emotional learning
- Creativity
- Thinking
- Physical learning
- Learning about Learning.

COMMUNICATION: Speaking & listening, reading, writing, ICT, demonstrating, creating visuals such as posters and artworks, using tables, charts and diagrams etc.

- By focusing on communication with others, we encourage children to see a purpose in what they are learning and build a sense of audience. The so-called 'basic skills' of reading and writing are a means to an end: to express your own ideas meaningfully and to understand the ideas of others. Speaking and Listening are emphasised as key tools in developing your own thoughts as well as central means of communication in life.
- Children need to evaluate how well they are communicating individually, in groups, as a class and begin to decide when to use different forms of communication e.g. ask children how and to whom they think they should communicate a piece of learning.

THINKING: questioning, comparing, debating, explaining, problem-solving, logical thinking, reasoning, separating fact from opinion, weighing up evidence etc.

- By focusing on thinking skills, we help children to develop different approaches to different learning situations as well as sustaining curiosity and willingness to challenge authority and ask for evidence to back up opinions.
- Philosophy for Children is an excellent model for developing children's thinking across the curriculum (generate questions from a stimulus or theme, group and categorise the questions, then decide which question to examine and discuss in depth, helping children to make connections between different children's ideas).
- Children need to evaluate how well they are thinking individually, in groups, as a class and begin to decide when to use different approaches e.g. ask children what thinking skills they need for a particular piece of learning.

CREATIVITY: risk-taking, generating ideas (brainstorming, hypothesising, speculating), making interesting connections, making unusual comparisons, looking at everyday things in original ways, asking unusual questions, setting personal criteria.

- By focusing on creativity, we help children to develop confidence in being original or different and willingness to try things out and make mistakes. Creativity is about exploration and curiosity about the world.
- Creativity is not just about art – you can be creative in Maths, Science and all subjects. For example, Einstein was a highly creative thinker who often visualised his ideas on sub-atomic physics in terms of images and metaphors.
- Children should become increasingly aware of what creative learning is like and learn to talk about their own creative learning. This should focus on:
 1. Asking and encouraging open questions which move the learner forward
 2. Encouraging learners to be imaginative and innovative within a clear and supportive framework
 3. Developing skills and then using them in real life situations which have purpose and value
 4. Giving learners the opportunity to make real choices and take risks
 5. Trying something new or different whilst being adaptable, open minded and flexible
 6. Linking learning to previous learning across subjects and in new and meaningful contexts
 7. Using creative and attention grabbing entry points for learning such as artefacts, problems, stories, topical event, visitors / specialists, media

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL: self-awareness, self-control, empathy, social skills, sharing, turn-taking, co-operation, leading, negotiating, playing, following rules.

- Children can't leave their emotions outside the classroom and learning is often a very emotional experience (excitement, frustration, elation, fear, panic etc).
- Children need to learn to understand their own emotions and realise that emotions are not bad but sometimes need to be managed or channelled.
- 'Emotional literacy' and 'emotional intelligence' are different names for the same idea: we need to be more aware of how our emotions affect us so that we can express them in ways that help our learning and development.
- Older children could explore whether there is such a thing as *positive* anger e.g. anger over injustice or poverty or *positive* fear e.g. fear of danger so that we stay safe

PHYSICAL: role play, drama, simulations, brain gym etc.

- Children need a balance of physical and intellectual learning activities every day. Learning is better when it is varied and broken up by physical activity.
- Simulations: finding physical ways to represent concepts e.g. children show physically (linking arms, running about etc) the difference between water, ice and water vapour by representing how the molecules relate in each state.
- Extended simulations: e.g. re-enacting a Tudor banquet at Hampton Court in costume, visiting somewhere such as the Rag School and dressing up as Victorian school pupils
- Collaborative learning approaches often involve moving around and working together
- Being involved in productions of learning e.g. class assemblies, end of term productions

LEARNING ABOUT LEARNING: reflecting, evaluating, planning, sharing, choosing strategies etc

- Children are able to think and talk about their own learning right from the start! As they get older they get more articulate and can explain their thinking in more detail.
- Talking about their learning enables children to identify how to apply skills, knowledge and understanding to different situations.
- By making it OK to explore learning openly, including mistakes, children can become more resilient and prepared to risk sharing their thinking with others.
- In a classroom where it's the norm for there to be ongoing talk about learning, a shared understanding of what learning means can develop. Children begin to see themselves as contributing to a learning community.
- Learning about learning helps children to see the purpose of being at school and then to take responsibility for moving forward in their learning, accessing the resources they need. Children's understanding of learning is something that will help them in their lives beyond school.

What attitudes to learning do we need to promote across the curriculum?

High quality learning is also supported by positive learning attitudes which need to be nurtured across the curriculum, including:

- **Resilience:** exploring mistakes as learning opportunities rather than losing motivation when things do not go as planned;
- **Resourcefulness:** using initiative and creatively adapting learning resources to meet particular needs;
- **Confidence:** stating views clearly; not needing to prove competence by winning;
- **Persistence:** sustaining concentration and motivation over extended periods;
- **Curiosity:** relentless desire to learn about the world;
- **Willingness to question:** refusal to take things for granted, even though they may have been presented by an authority;
- **A belief in the value of effort:** commitment to improve through personal application rather than a fatalistic belief in 'ability' or 'natural talent'.

What is expected of teachers in our schools? (see Appendix 1: non-negotiables)

All teachers are subject to the requirements of the current School Teachers Pay and conditions regulations and all teachers have agreed job descriptions.

We expect teachers to:

- Plan learning opportunities carefully using agreed planning procedures, policies and the agreed curriculum map.
- Work in partnership with parents to support children's learning
- Set out and maintain a stimulating and effective learning environment (See separate environment for learning environment policy)
- Use a wide variety of techniques and approaches, methods of presentation and organisation to hook pupil interest
- Deliver optimum learning by ensuring that each lesson is built around each of the following features:
 1. Setting the context for learning (sharing the big picture)
 2. Connecting it to previous learning
 3. Sharing the learning intention with the children
 4. Exploring, discussing and making clear the success criteria involving children's' views as appropriate
 5. Using strategies and methods which support the different ways that children learn
 6. Building many opportunities for children to talk to each other about their learning

7. Giving feedback relating to the learning intention/success criteria
 8. Making learning non-stressful – using fun, humour
 9. Reviewing learning regularly (daily, weekly, monthly) so that it locates in the long term memory
- Evaluate children’s responses and assess their learning (see school assessment policy and assessment calendar)
 - Set and share with children achievable and challenging targets for learning

How do we plan the curriculum to promote high quality learning?

The school reviews and designs its curriculum map on a regular basis. This tells us what we teach. In designing the map we consider the following principles:

- Progression
- Coherence
- Relevance
- Providing pupils with choice / personalisation
- Challenge

From this map teachers then plan how they will cover what has to be taught over each half term, term and the year. The completed Medium Term Plans will be saved on the Teachers Server. Some aspects may be seasonal and best taught at certain times of the year. Others may link well and so should be taught together in order that both teachers and pupils can make links in learning.

As a school we ensure that we provide pupils with the statutory requirements set by the Department for Education and that when we add to and enhance the curriculum map we are clear about why we are teaching what we are and that it can be fully justified in developing our pupils. By the same token we recognise the need to remove from the map aspects that do not meet the above principles or enhance pupil learning.

How do we organise the learning environment to promote high quality learning?

- See the Environment for Learning policy

How do we enable children to access learning beyond the national curriculum?

In our schools we strive to provide children with a wide range of learning experiences out with the constraints of the national curriculum. We do this both during the school day and out with normal school hours. We do this in a range of ways. For example by taking children on trips to various places within the immediate and wider community, taking children on School Journeys for extended periods of time, inviting groups and organisations to come in to work with our pupils on a one off basis or for longer periods of time, providing teaching and learning in areas of the curriculum out with that which is prescribed such as philosophy. We also provide a wide range of after school clubs that cover a range of areas such as the performing arts, chess, sport etc

How do we know that children are learning?

Also see school Assessment for Learning Policy

We know children are learning by watching them, listening to them and asking them questions. We are informally assessing pupils in a variety of ways all of the time. We will also formally assess pupils from time to time using what we call summative assessment methods. We will record the assessments on the Learning Ladders tracking programme. The outcomes will be evaluated and will be used to inform planning and provision.

Pupil progress is central to what we do in our schools. Every pupil’s progress is carefully tracked by their class teacher. Teachers then meet with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on a half termly basis to review the progress of their pupils. Teachers will also review progress and patterns in pupil attainment across year groups and Key Stages.

How do we monitor and evaluate the quality of learning?

- Following the Quality Assurance yearly overview each half term pupils' books, planning and data will be monitored by the SLT
- Teachers submit MTP plans to the SLT on a half termly basis outlining the learning that is planned including an overview of all interventions.
- Performance management includes a focus on the teachers' view of learning in their class;
- Pupil Tracking meetings each half term or termly explore the learning of each child from a broad perspective with members of the SLT.
- Termly observations in classrooms focus on the quality of learning; more frequent learning walks are also undertaken
- Annual focused review of the schools' work through the Challenge Partners Organisation
- Surveys periodically collect views of children, parents and staff on the quality of learning.

How does the Governing Body evaluate the quality of learning?

- Governors will observe learning in areas where they are "linked" to ensure that they are aware of the current practice of the school. In the main governors are linked to targets in the School Improvement Plan.
- Governors are involved in reviewing the attainment data of the school to identify areas where there is particular strength and also to identify where improvement is needed
- Where practically possible governors will observe learning as part of a supported observation with a member of the school management team. One way we do this is part of an annual Governors' day.

What do we expect of children at our schools when it comes to learning?

At our schools we expect children to:

- Come to school punctually, calmly and ready to learn
- Be proactive, busy, questioning learners
- Aim high!
- Contribute to and enhance their own learning and the learning of others.
- Be prepared for learning i.e. bring the right equipment for each day's learning

Please see the Home School Agreement

What do we expect of parents at our schools when it comes to learning?

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:

- holding parents' evenings to explain our school strategies for teaching literacy, numeracy and health education;
- the curriculum for each year group is available on the website.
- teachers will provide more detailed information on Class Dojo when required.
- sending reports to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can improve further;
- explaining to parents how they can support their children with homework. We suggest, for example, regular shared reading with very young children, and support for older children with their projects and investigative work.

We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We would like parents to:

- ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible;
- ensure that their child is equipped for school;
- do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
- inform the school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour at school;
- promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general;
- fulfil the requirements set out in the home/school agreement.

Please see the Home School Agreement

- Each child moves forward in their learning in *every* lesson
- Questioning is used at the start as a tool to review of prior/most recent learning
- At the start of each lesson - teacher to *share* learning intention– so they know *what* they are doing and *why* (have this displayed for all children to see - and refer to throughout lesson)
- Steps to success and learning intentions are well-matched to children’s abilities and *shared* with them so that they understand what they need to achieve
- Focused talk-partners to be used to increase discussion opportunities and response (avoid over-reliance on individual questioning and feedback) Talk partners *must* have a purpose, an added value
- Pace is appropriate to learning and enables all children to explore ideas and concepts
- Focus groups in every lesson where appropriate – with the teacher ‘teaching’ a planned sequence within the group
- Teacher modelling is essential – reading, writing, thinking, questioning, counting, adding, subtracting
- Teachers facilitate dialogue by ‘bouncing’ responses and engaging all learners
- Plenaries and ‘mini-plenaries’ to be evident in lessons – reviewing and assessing learning but also moving learning forwards or reviewing misconceptions as they arise. **These must be precise and purposeful**
- Behaviour for learning – have high expectations in the way children talk, sit and behave in their learning. Children should sit still and listen when being taught or when someone is saying something. There should be no talking over people and no fussing, including points of transition
- Noise levels – appropriate for the task – calm and quiet classrooms and ‘appropriate’ noise levels for collaborative learning
- ‘Face the Speaker’- child or adult
- Learners *know* their next steps in learning
- All displays are beautifully presented and have labels that explain the learning, question for further learning and contain pupil reflections. High quality learning at all times. See Environment for learning policy
- TAs contribute effectively to learning at all times. In the main teaching session, TAs will not be sitting and listening
- Children to remain on carpet for no more than 20 minutes at a time unless this is required to introduce a new topic – this is with the aim of ensuring that children are engaged and actively participating in the learning process.
- Teaching for PP, EAL, SEND and G&T children should be clearly evident in planning.
- Children learn to read through a mixture of individual and whole class reading. One English lesson per week is designated as a Big Reading session so that the key skills of reading are explicitly taught and modelled for that particular year group. Two follow up sessions are then used throughout the week to further consolidate these skills. Each teacher is also required to read aloud one storybook or on-going chapter book daily to their class, as well providing opportunities to learn and recite classic and modern poetry.
- It is essential that children must have a ‘book in the bag’ at all times, bringing it to school and taking it home again every day. The expectation is that children will read to an adult at home 4 times per week, comments being written into the reading record book. There is separate guidance available .(See *English Policy for further detail*)
- Teachers should use the agreed teaching and marking codes to ensure consistency. Children must also respond to the feedback through improvements in learning.

Presentation

- No doodling on/ in books
- No rubbers
- Use of rulers for diagram, underlining dates, titles and margins
- Pencils in all books – until handwriting is secure
- Use of green pen for marking and feedback comments
- Presentation must be of the highest standard in all areas of the curriculum. Writing should be as high quality in history as it is in literacy.