

Whitnash Primary School

Teaching and Learning Policy



(To be read in conjunction with our policies on Assessment, Early Years Foundation Stage, Inclusion and Special Educational Needs)

1 Introduction

- a) We believe in the concept of lifelong learning and regard the teaching and learning which takes place in our school to be part of a learning continuum which begins before the child comes to school and continues into adulthood. Both adults and children learn new things every day. Learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; in short, it should be fun. Through our teaching, we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

2 Aims and objectives

- a) We believe that people differ in the ways in which they learn most effectively, and the conditions for optimum learning also differ in relation to the context in which the learning takes place. In some situations, we may prefer to learn by listening, in others we can only learn effectively by actively doing, and these preferences may differ for each individual. At our school, we aim to provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows all children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.
- b) Through our teaching and our learning environment, we aim to:
 - ensure that children develop a self-image of themselves as capable learners;
 - enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners;
 - nurture children's self-esteem, and help them to build positive relationships with other people;
 - equip children with the key knowledge, skills and understanding which they need for the next phase of their education, and in order to maximise their life chances and economic well-being in adulthood;
 - develop children's self-respect, encourage them to understand the ideas, attitudes and values of others, and teach them to respect other people's feelings;
 - show respect for a diverse range of cultures and, in so doing, to promote positive attitudes towards other people;
 - enable children to understand their community, and help them feel valued as part of it;
 - help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.

3 Effective Learning

- a) Research tells us that people learn in many different ways in different situations, and respond best to varying types of input (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic); we must therefore teach in a variety of ways, tailored to the context for learning and the differing aptitudes of our children. We take into account the different forms of intelligence, for example, verbal, mathematical/logical, visual/spatial, interpersonal, musical, when planning our curriculum and our teaching.

- b) We ensure the best possible environment for learning by developing a positive atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and feel they belong, in which they enjoy being challenged, but in which they enjoy learning, and feel that they will succeed, because the learning challenge will have been set at the right level. We want children to feel a sense of 'ownership' of their own learning, and not to feel that education is something which is done to them.
- c) At times, we seek to create a conducive learning environment by playing music to accompany learning, provide 'brain breaks' at various points in the lesson to refocus children's attention and make sure that the children have access to drinking water to ensure good levels of hydration.
- d) All teaching will be structured to maximise learning opportunities and lessons will be planned in accordance with the following principles:
 - teaching should build on previous learning;
 - pupils should be given the 'big picture' of the intended learning and understand how the lesson fits into this;
 - the teacher should explain the learning objectives, and why the lesson is important;
 - the lesson should incorporate opportunities for a range of learning styles to be accommodated;
 - children should be given opportunities to reflect on and review what has been learnt;
 - there should be planned opportunities for feedback to the children, celebrating success, reviewing learning strategies, and assessing learning;
 - teachers should indicate what the next step in the learning will be.
- e) We offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways. These include:
 - investigation and problem-solving;
 - research and discovery;
 - listening;
 - group work;
 - paired work;
 - independent work;
 - whole-class work;
 - asking and answering questions;
 - using ICT to support learning;
 - fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
 - creative activities;
 - looking at pictures and other visual images, including appropriate DVDs, media clips and television;
 - listening and responding to music or audio material;
 - play, including 'small world' play and role play;
 - group discussions, debates and giving and listening to oral presentations;
 - designing and making things;
 - participation in athletic or physical activity.

We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way in which they learn, and to reflect on how they learn – what helps them learn, and what makes it difficult for them to learn.

- f) We help children to understand different types of learning. These include 'new learning' and 'consolidating learning'. Teachers ensure that lessons are rich with the former, but that children have sufficient opportunities to ensure that previous new learning is securely embedded, through practice and improvement. We encourage children to recognise when they are 'treading water' in their learning, and unnecessarily and repeatedly re-practising things which they have securely learned already. We also want them to recognise when they are overloaded with new learning, which is too much for them to cope with. By encouraging children to recognise and talk about their learning in these ways, they can become partners in learning with their teachers, who will be able to better match their teaching to the learning needs of individual children.

4 Effective Teaching

- a) When we are teaching, we focus on motivating all the children, and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, so that they reach the highest level of personal achievement. We use the school curriculum plan to guide our teaching. This sets out the aims, objectives and values of the school, and details what is to be taught to each year group.
- b) Teachers make on-going assessments of each child's progress, and they use this information when planning their lessons. It enables them to take into account the abilities of all their children. Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge and skills of all our children. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability. When planning work for children with special educational needs, we give due regard to information and targets contained in provision maps. Teachers modify teaching and learning activities as appropriate for children with disabilities. We value each child as a unique individual, and teachers are familiar with the relevant equal opportunities legislation, covering race, gender and disability. We will strive to meet the needs of all our children, and to ensure that we meet all statutory requirements related to matters of inclusion.
- c) We set academic targets for the children linked to their learning, and we share these targets with children and their parents/carers. We review the progress of each child half-termly, and set revised targets.
- d) We plan our lessons with clear learning objectives. We take these objectives from the Early Learning Goals of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the new National Curriculum. Our lesson plans contain information about these objectives (which may differ for groups of different ability), the planned learning activities, the resources needed, and the way in which we will assess the children's learning. We evaluate all lessons, so that we can modify and improve our future teaching.
- e) In our lessons, we ensure that the learning intentions are shared with and understood by the children, and, to that end, are expressed in appropriate, child-friendly language. We also ensure that children understand the 'Success Criteria' for the lesson – i.e. what they need to ensure they do or pay attention to in order to succeed and achieve. Often, these success criteria will be decided jointly with the children, to ensure that they have full understanding of them. Learning intentions and success criteria will normally be displayed in lessons.

- f) Each of our teachers makes a special effort to establish good working relationships with all the children in the class. We treat the children with kindness and respect. We recognise that they are all individuals with different needs, but we treat them fairly, and give them equal opportunity to take part in class activities. All of our teachers follow the school policy with regard to discipline and classroom management. We set and agree with children the class code of conduct, and we expect all children to comply with the rules that we jointly devise to promote the best learning opportunities for all. We praise children for their efforts and, by so doing, we help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general. We insist on good order and behaviour at all times. When children behave inappropriately, we follow the guidelines for sanctions as outlined in our Behaviour Policy.
- g) We try to ensure that all tasks and activities that the children engage in are safe. When we plan to take children out of school, we follow a strict set of procedures to ensure safety: the venue is visited, risk assessments are completed, and various permissions are obtained. We inform parents or carers, and obtain their permission, before the visit takes place.
- h) We deploy Learning Assistants and other adult helpers as effectively as possible. Sometimes, they work with individual children, and sometimes they work with small groups. Our adult helpers also assist with the preparation and storage of classroom equipment.
- i) Our classrooms are attractive learning environments. We change displays frequently, so that the classroom reflects the topics studied by the children and supports their new learning. We ensure that all children have the opportunity to display their best work. We also use 'working walls' and displays of work in progress in order to demonstrate effective learning strategies and to model good practice. Not all displays of children's work will be pristine and exemplary, therefore. However, other displays also showcase the highest standards to ensure that all have high expectations of what children can achieve.
- j) All classrooms have a range of dictionaries and of both fiction and non-fiction books, as well as displays relating to English and Maths. We use displays as resources for learning, often providing prompts for the children. We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning, and that an exciting classroom promotes independent use of resources, which results in high-quality work by the children.
- k) All of our teachers reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, and plan their professional development accordingly. We do all we can to support our teachers in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice.
- l) We conduct all our teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all.

5 The Role of the Headteacher and Other Senior Leaders

- a) The head teacher and other members of the senior leadership team are primarily the leaders of teaching and learning. Their own practice models high quality teaching. They have a responsibility to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in the school. This will be achieved through:
 - the formal performance management and appraisal of teachers, involving lesson observations;
 - team teaching and working alongside teaching colleagues;
 - leading lesson study activities, when teachers plan, observe and evaluate their children's learning together;
 - talking to children about their learning in lessons;
 - scrutinising pupil's work in their books;
 - overseeing pupil assessment records.

The role of governors

- a) Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school's approach to teaching and learning. In particular they:
- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
 - ensure that the school buildings and premises are used optimally to support teaching and learning;
 - check teaching methods in the light of health and safety regulations;
 - seek to ensure that our staff development and our performance management both promote good-quality teaching;
 - monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning approaches through the school's self-review processes, which include reports from the head teacher, senior leaders and subject leaders, and a review of the continuing professional development of staff.

7 The Role of Parents and Carers

- a) We believe that parents and carers have a fundamental role to play in supporting their children's education. We do all we can to inform parents and carers about the curriculum, teaching and learning strategies, what their children are currently learning and the outcomes of assessment. We do this by:
- holding parents' evenings to explain our school strategies for various aspects of the curriculum such as literacy, numeracy and health education;
 - sending information to parents and carers, at the start of each term, which outlines the topics that the children will be studying during that term at school;
 - sending parents and carers regular reports in which we explain the progress made by each child, and indicate how their child can improve further;
 - explaining to parents and carers how they can support their children with homework, and suggesting, for example, regular shared reading with younger children, and support for older children with their projects and investigative work;
 - welcoming information from parents and carers about their children which may impact on their learning in school, or tell us about their learning and achievements beyond the school gate.
- b) We believe that parents and carers have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We would therefore like parents and carers:
- to ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible;
 - to ensure that their child is fully prepared for school with the correct equipment for lessons, uniform and PE kit;
 - to do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
 - to inform school if there are matters outside school that are likely to affect a child's learning or behaviour;
 - to promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general;
 - to fulfil the requirements set out in the home-school agreement.

8 Monitoring and Review

- a) Senior leaders and the governing body monitor the school's Teaching and Learning Policy, and review it regularly, so that we can take account of new initiatives and research, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. We will therefore review this policy every three years or sooner if necessary.

Reviewed: January 2016

Next Review: January 2017