

Aylesford School

and Sixth Form College



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PRIMARY SCHOOL

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

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Via: Standards, Personnel and Curriculum

'from potential to reality'

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The flexible, creative curriculum reflects the school's passion for active learning and endeavours to promote real life contexts at every opportunity. The location enables us to enrich the childrens' experiences outside the classroom and as part of the Forest School at our partner school Ferncumbe. Our 'Learning Challenge Curriculum' requires deep thinking and encourages learners to work using a question as the starting point. Regular pre-learning tasks ensure that pupils are directly involved in the planning process and enables teachers to plan relevant learning based on what children actually know not what we perceive them to know.

Pedagogy

Pedagogy is how we teach and learn, classroom practice and habits of the classroom. The experience of teaching and learning is based on the research and development of two key educationalists – Shirley Clarke – Active Learning through Formative Assessment and Cooperative learning approach developed by Dr Spencer Kagan, both designed to increase pupil engagement and cooperation.

We plan the subjects we will cover within a topic with the children. This ensures that our learning focuses on the gaps in the children's knowledge, but also the areas they are truly interested in and keen to learn more. As we concentrate on maximising our teaching and the children's learning, there is a huge benefit to planning our lessons this way – pupils have ownership of their learning.

Any attempt to continue to raise standards in our school must be focused on the classroom. Continued and sustained improvement is dependent upon sustaining the high quality of teaching and learning that is taking place on a daily basis.

Across our school the expectation is that all pupils are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to consistently high levels of pupil achievement.

We expect every teacher to be at least a good teacher - no child deserves less

By adopting a whole school approach to teaching and learning across our school, we aim:-

- To provide consistency of teaching and learning across our school.
- To enable teachers and teaching assistants to teach as effectively as possible.
- To enable children to learn as effectively as possible.
- To nurture in children the skills they require to become effective, lifelong learners.
- To provide an inclusive education for all.
- To learn from each other through the adoption of an active, collaborative, enquiry based approach to teaching and learning, where good practice is shared.

Key elements and principles of teaching and learning across our school - a practical guide

All lessons across our school should include the following key elements to ensure high quality teaching and learning. They form the basis of all teacher development and new teachers will receive training to ensure they fully understand these elements and successfully embed them in their everyday practice.

All lessons have... clear learning objectives

- Learning objectives are shared orally and displayed.
- All learning objectives are written up and shared orally in child friendly language.
- Learning objectives are not muddled up with the context of the lesson.
- The learning objective is written or stuck into children's books, as appropriate.

- For learning objectives to be shared effectively, teachers must:
- Move away from saying 'Today we are doing'... and instead say 'By the end of today's lesson you will know/be able to/understand...'

- Make learning objectives specific.
- Use child friendly language - there is little point in sharing learning objectives if pupils don't understand what you mean.
- Refer to learning objectives: at the start of the lesson, during the lesson and during the plenary.
- Students must know exactly what they are going to learn and what is expected of them by the end of the lesson.

All lessons have... well planned success criteria

- All pupils are clear about how they will achieve the learning objective.
- Success criteria is displayed for the children to follow during the lesson, or generated with the children, e.g. 'Steps to Success' in Maths.
- Children use the success criteria to self and peer assess.
- Children are reminded of the success criteria during the lesson.
- Children's work is displayed on class visualisers to illustrate the success criteria in action.

All lessons are... clearly differentiated to enable all pupils to access learning.

- All learners are challenged appropriately, often with open ended, investigative tasks.
- Planning and provision shows clear differentiation.
- A range of learning styles are catered for through a VAK approach (visual, audio, kinaesthetic).

All pupils are... actively engaged in learning and work co-operatively

- Pupils are actively engaged during all parts of the lesson - teachers take into account children's concentration spans and ensure pupils are not sitting passively for lengthy periods.
- Opportunities to Think/Pair/Share and discussions with a 'Learning Partner' are regular features in all lessons. Pupils are trained to use appropriate body language when engaged in discussion with a partner.
- Mini whiteboards are regularly used for short bursts of activity, to develop/deepen understanding and to ensure children are active and engaged.
- Visuals, artefacts and auditory input are all used creatively as a way to enhance learning.
- Pupils are taught to coach each other when working with a partner.
- Children are happy and willing to support each other and respond positively to peer suggestions on ways they might improve their work.
- It is expected that everyone will participate.
- Children are encouraged to explain their ideas clearly and in full sentences.

Learning is improved by... opportunities for pupils to participate in planned talk activities during lessons

When we talk we do more than articulate our current level of understanding. The very act of talking forces us to organise our thoughts and so deepens understanding: this is partly the reason that we remember so much of what we have taught to others. At our school we believe that talking is central to learning. All lessons include planned and unplanned opportunities to discuss questions and extend thinking - a variety of Kagan structures serve as active engagement models, and appear regularly during lessons. Pupils are trained to use appropriate body language when talking to a partner and pupils understand that their TALK is valued as much as their written work.

Learning is improved through... effective use of questioning

It is adults who help pupils make sense of information. The frequency and nature of interactions between teachers/teaching assistants and pupils is highly significant. We develop understanding by:

- Using open ended, high level questions.
- Providing “thinking” time (3-5 seconds). Pupils need time to think through their answers before replying.
- Providing thinking time by giving an advance warning...’In 2 minutes I am going to ask you...’
- Allowing pupils to explore and articulate their thinking by giving them time to discuss their responses in pairs or groups. Pupils then respond with, ‘We think that...’
- Ensuring pupils fully understand the question.

All pupils receive regular and clear feedback, which moves learning on

- Assessment for learning is embedded in everyday practice and is used to inform teaching and move learning on.
- All pupils are directed how to improve their work and asked to show the improvements eg:“Harry don’t forget your speech marks” becomes “Harry put in speech marks and then come back and show me.”
- All pupils are clear about what and how they need to improve.
- Individual (Writing/Maths) and group targets (Reading) are high profile, and updated frequently.
- When marking children’s work the school ‘Feedback Policy’ is adhered to closely.
- Pupils are given regular time to address issues raised in marking.
- ICT is used to enrich learning wherever possible. Although it is regularly used at the start of lessons to engage children and in the plenary to consolidate learning, it is also used during lessons as an aid to learning.

Learning is improved through the use of... effective behaviour management

Effective, positive behaviour management is used to foster a positive learning environment in the classroom. For further details refer to school ‘Behaviour Policy’.

Learning is improved through the... effective use of additional adults

- Additional adults are clearly directed to support learning.
- Teaching assistants are fully engaged with pupils on the carpet and tables during lesson times.
- Teaching assistants are clear about who they are supporting and why.
- Teaching assistants have high expectations of the children that they are working with.
- Teachers share planning and targets with teaching assistants in advance of the lesson.
- Teaching assistants show excellent initiative in the facilitating of children’s learning.
- Teaching assistants are involved in assessing pupils’ understanding and feeding back to the class teacher.
- Teaching assistants annotate in books to indicate support and mark children’s work as appropriate (see ‘Feedback Policy’).

Learning is improved through... the effective use of a plenary and mini plenaries

- Review what has been learned.
- Reflect on how it has been learned.
- Adjust teaching appropriately to better match learning need.

Reviewing learning is a key to memory and not confined to the end of the lesson. Teachers should review throughout the entire lesson and constantly refer students back to the success criteria of the lesson, reinforcing prior learning.

Learning is improved through... a stimulating classroom environment

Across our school we aim to ensure that all classrooms, group rooms and whole school areas are spaces that everyone can use to learn in and be proud of. All classes across the school should have Read Write Inc sound charts, working walls and evidence of children's involvement in the planning of their learning.

Learning is improved by... well labelled, accessible and neatly organised resources

Classroom resources should be well organised, clearly labelled and of a high quality. Children should know where to find the resources they need for an activity, helping to foster independent learning skills.

Key Texts

Shirley Clarke - 'Active Learning through Formative Assessment'

Dr. Spencer Kagan – 'Kagan Cooperative Learning'

Pie Corbett & Julia Strong – 'Talk for Writing across the Curriculum'

Pie Corbett – 'The Bumper Book of Storytelling into Writing: Key Stage 2'

Pie Corbett – 'The Bumper Book of Storytelling into Writing at KS1'