

POLAM HALL SCHOOL

Teaching and Learning Policy

This Teaching and Learning Policy is to make explicit and accessible the shared, agreed, broad principles and practices upon which teaching and learning are based.

This policy will act as an 'umbrella' policy for other school policies and guidelines in that, along with the aims of the school, it will provide the philosophical framework for them.

We believe that learning is a continuous process which involves acquiring knowledge, skills and concepts, and developing positive and worthwhile attitudes. This learning process is designed to enable the learners to take on levels of responsibilities depending on their age and stage of development.

We believe that the purpose of teaching is to promote active learning and that there are four main elements which affect the learning process, namely:

- What the child brings to the school
- What the school offers to the child
- The influence of parents/guardians
- The influence of the wider community

The ethos and atmosphere underpin the agreed aims of the school. Teachers will provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which will develop the skills, concepts and knowledge necessary for future learning. In the course of their daily work the staff will contribute to the development of this ethos in a variety of ways.

The Child

To acknowledge that children bring previous experiences, expectations and styles to their learning.

- Observation of children in school
- Class information booklet (Nursery – Junior 6) Welcome to School booklet (eg Y7)
- Communications between staff at transfer times (eg Yrs 2/3, 6/7, 9/10, 11/12)
- Sharing information with parents/guardians
- Time available for sharing language, experiences, artefacts and knowledge.
- Provide opportunities for children to build on experiences other than those in school

To acknowledge that individual children develop academically, emotionally, socially, physically and spiritually at different rates

- Children enter school at different stages of development; they learn in different ways and at different rates of progress. In the course of learning children develop their skills through a variety of processes which include: investigation, experimentation, listening, observation, talking and discussion, asking questions, practical exploration and role play, retrieving information, imagining, repetition, problem-solving, making choices and decision-making. Teachers should provide opportunities to allow pupils to have access to these processes.
- Differentiate the curriculum in all areas and at all levels by: task, outcome and teacher/adult support
- Maintain purposeful and informative planning, record-keeping and assessment documents, in line with the school's Assessment, Reporting and Recording policy.
- Offer open-ended activities
- Value and celebrate pupils' successes and achievements eg displaying their work, presentations in assembly
- Provide children with meaningful, purposeful tasks
- Encourage a sense of 'awe and wonder'.

To acknowledge that children need feedback and information on their progress in school

- Conversations with children about their work and progress
- Setting targets both formally and informally
- Marking written work, at times with children, and writing meaningful comments
- Regular assessments of pupils' work in order to establish their level of attainment, and to inform future planning. Record-keeping and assessment procedures are defined in the Assessment, recording and Reporting Policy which incorporates the Marking Policy.
- Using the reward/achievement and sanction system
- Reviewing targets set by children and staff

To acknowledge that children's involvement in their own learning is a strong positive influence

- Providing a learning environment that encourages choice and gives pupils opportunities to explore their own ideas
- Encouraging children to work collaboratively where appropriate

The School – Learning

To build self-esteem and encourage respect for all other individuals

- Providing a calm, quiet and effective working environment at all times, in which each child can achieve his or her maximum potential
- Providing a fair and disciplined environment. Refer to the school's Behaviour Policy, Code of Conduct and Mission Statement and additionally, in the Junior Department, Pupil Guidelines and Home School Partnership guidance
- Providing a welcoming environment, in which courtesy, kindness and respect are fostered
- Staff to be an example to children eg working collaboratively, valuing and praising the contributions of others (staff and children). Provide positive models of relationships and behaviour by staff and other adults in school
- Encouraging the constructive discussion of issues in the classroom

To include all children in a variety of opportunities to enable them to have equal access to the whole curriculum

- Refer to SEN Policies
- Refer to school's Equal Opportunities Policies
- Differentiate learning tasks and activities
- Provide open-ended activities
- Use a range of teaching organisations – class, group, individual – to enable staff to focus on individuals
- Use planned support effectively
- Provide adequate and appropriate resources

To encourage children to develop independent learning skills

- Develop good classroom organisation and provide appropriate and easily accessible resources
- Ensure that children feel comfortable and happy with their routines
- Plan to provide a progression of skills

To teach children a range of interpersonal learning skills to enable them to make full use of the curriculum offered

- Systematically encourage and develop the skills of collaboration eg listening, taking turns, building on the ideas of others
- Children presenting their work to each other

To promote positive attitudes to learning and self-discipline

- Refer to school's Behaviour Policy, Code of Conduct and Mission Statement
- Make children aware of the staff's high expectations eg by sharing and praising good work, marking work constructively
- Setting challenging but achievable tasks and activities
- Encourage opportunities for self-assessment and self-reflection
- Enthuse and motivate pupils in their learning

To encourage the development of critical thinking

- Plan for investigative activities where possible
- Help children to use well-structured questioning techniques eg Why?, When?, Where?, Who?, How?
- Positive appraisal of the work of others eg in P.E., Drama

To make speaking and listening important parts of the learning process

- Provide structured opportunities and unstructured situations for individual feedback – one-to-one, staff to pupils, child to class (presentations, relating experience), paired work (Sharing a book, computer work), group work, class discussions
- Assemblies (whole school, year group)
- School Councils
- Drama and role play

To provide opportunities for pupils to take an active part in their learning

- Make sure that everyone feels secure in school routines
- The starting point of activities may reflect the interests and experiences of the children
- Opportunities for children to make choices and express preferences

To encourage children to become reflective learners

- Develop re-drafting skills where appropriate
- Develop self-evaluation/assessment skills eg positive feedback before negative, starting with what they can do

To maintain an attractive physical environment to motivate children's learning

- Provide displays which reflect current work
- Well-organised classrooms and corridors with appropriate labelling
- Defined class/school areas with tidy and accessible resources

The School – Teaching

To ensure the curriculum has breadth and balance and provides progression and continuity

- Have Schemes of Work/curriculum plans in place
- Liaise between key stages
- Liaise between year groups
- To offer optional extra-curricular activities where possible

To plan, deliver, monitor and evaluate the curriculum effectively

- Regular termly and half-termly year group plans
- Daily/weekly individual plans
- Up to date Schemes of Work
- Ongoing evaluations of work to inform future planning
- Use data to track attainment

To employ a range of teaching strategies to include the learning needs of all the children

- See Homework and SEN Policies
- Children learn in a variety of ways, and for this reason it is necessary to ensure that planning incorporates as many styles as possible. These styles include: individual learning, collaborative learning in small groups, or pairs, one to one learning with an adult, or more able pupil, whole class, independent learning

To assess regularly each child's learning progress

- Discussions of individual's work and behaviour
- Planning for assessment and learning outcomes
- Formal assessments and tests
- Sampling of children's work
- Moderation of standards across classes, year groups and nationally
- Set appropriate targets for children, including IEPs and PSPs

To deploy all available resources appropriately to promote the most effective teaching

- See the school's INSET Policy
- A range of resources, well-organised and accessible, in the classroom. Children taught to take care of resources
- Co-ordinators/Heads of Department to organise and maintain resources for their areas
- Effective management of the school budget
- Staff being responsible for returning equipment and maintaining tidiness
- Staff inform the relevant personnel of the need for the replacement and repair of stock

To use the physical environment to the best possible teaching advantage

- Arrangements of furniture to suit teaching styles
- Easy access to all relevant areas and resources
- Designated areas for different purposes
- Maximise and plan for the use of non-classroom areas, both indoor (eg hall) and outdoor (playgrounds, grounds)
- Use the locality for teaching purposes

Parents & Guardians

To acknowledge the importance of the learning which takes place in the home environment

- Refer to Homework Policy
- Encourage children to bring their home culture/interests/language into school
- Provision of resources which reflect those cultures, interests and languages
- Remember that the starting point for learning is what the children *can* do

To involve parents and guardians appropriately in the work and life of the school

- Provide information to parents/guardians about topic and other plans
- Invite parents/guardians to special events, displays, exhibitions, concerts, performances
- Encourage parents/guardians to contribute any special skills
- Encourage parents/guardians to bring to school their cultures/interests/languages
- Encourage all parents/guardians to be active members of the Parents' Association

To inform parents and guardians of their children's progress and involve them in their children's learning

- Keep parents/guardians informed through newsletters, open evenings
- Provide a variety of opportunities to talk to parents about their children, both formally and informally
- Invite parents to work in school
- Issue formal written reports
- Hold SEN consultations and reviews of Statements

To value the unique insight into and support for children's learning that parents and guardians can provide

- Provide a variety of opportunities for parents/guardians to talk about their children, both formally and informally

Parents'/Guardians' Role

Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning by:

- Ensuring that their child comes to school feeling confident and positive
- Ensuring that their child arrives at school punctually and is only absent when it is absolutely necessary and informing the school of reasons for their child's absence
- Sharing with the teacher any problems in school that their child is experiencing
- Supporting their child by attending Open Evenings and other meetings
- Supporting their child and the teacher by becoming actively involved in the operation of the Individual Education Plan, and any Special Educational Needs processes
- Ensuring that all contact addresses and telephone numbers are up to date and correct
- Ensuring that their child arrives at school wearing the correct uniform and bringing the correct equipment eg pens, pencils, books etc
- Agreeing to the school's policy concerning a child's behaviour
- Agreeing to, and supporting, the school's homework policy
- Responding to letters sent home from school
- Informing the school of any significant matters at home which may affect their child's progress, happiness or behaviour
- Supporting extra-curricular activities, such as visitors to school, concerts, visits and fairs

To provide a range of documentation

- Refer to school policies eg
 - Admissions
 - Anti-bullying
 - Child Protection
 - Complaints Procedures for Parents
 - Disability
 - Equal Opportunities
 - Health and Safety
 - Sex Education
 - Special Educational Needs

The Wider Community

To maintain and actively develop links with the wider community

- Visit local organisations and community services
- Welcome visits from members of the local community (eg students, work experience pupils)
- Hold fund-raising events for national and local charities
- Maintain and develop links with other educational establishments
- Establish collaborative projects with other schools and institutions
- Where appropriate, make local purchases
- Develop links involving other countries
- Recognise and celebrate the contribution of surrounding community eg the Chinese Dragon dance, which reflects the school's intake

To ensure the school ethos reflects the wider community

- Develop the community lets
- Display any events celebrating and valuing a variety of cultures and languages

To promote the ethos of the school within the wider community

- Advertise school functions locally (press, shop windows)
- Participate in community activities eg Carol singing at Croft Church and St Cuthbert's Church and in community centres

To acknowledge that all members of the local communities are involved in the learning process

- Co-opt governors from local business and establishments
- Value children's achievements outside school eg Brownies, drama, swimming
- Invite speakers into school eg religious leaders, police, road safety, fire-fighters

Review, Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be kept under review by the school's senior management teams. The monitoring and evaluation of this policy will be the responsibility of the senior management team. This policy is a working document and therefore is open to change and restructuring as and when the need arises.

Signed

Chair

Head

Last reviewed: October 2009
Next review: October 2010