

Whitley Abbey Primary School



Learning and Teaching Policy

Reviewed September 2021

Next review September 2023

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Introduction

Our aim is to enable our pupils to be resilient, resourceful, responsible citizens who have the confidence, skills and attitudes to be successful life-long achievers.

Through this policy we aim to promote best practice and to establish consistency across the whole school. It aims to ensure that the children are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to a consistently high level of pupil achievement and attitude.

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 future lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

The supportive learning environment

The emotional environment

All adults are responsible for providing a caring, supportive and stimulating learning environment in which all children are helped to reach their emotional and academic potential.

Children learn best when they feel safe to take on challenges, are interested and motivated and feel valued. We recognise the importance of building positive self-esteem in children.

Children develop positive learning behaviours through embedding the principles of a growth mindset into school curriculum and daily life and through the Thrive programme.

The essentials of positive self esteem

- Belonging: each child has a contribution to make, we value and encourage these
- Aspirations: every pupil is encouraged to work towards their achievable goal. Teachers have high aspirations for themselves and the children they teach
- Safety: Consistency in expectations and standards help pupils feel safe. Clear boundaries are set and good behaviour recognised and rewarded
- Identity: a sense of self knowledge is supported by the belief that individuality is not threatened by undue pressure to conform.
- We celebrate our differences and encourage children to learn from and thrive within our diverse community.
- Challenge: acquiring coping strategies and building resilience are important for development and learning.
- Children are taught to take risks and learn through mistakes.
- Success: teachers reinforce success and build an environment where risks can be taken.
- Success is celebrated as part of our learning culture
- Children are encouraged to choose challenges which allow them to take risks in a supportive environment.

We create a supportive learning environment by:

- Encouraging a 'can do' culture – getting stuck should be seen as a learning opportunity.
- Scaffolding is provided, and problem solving strategies taught to ensure children know how to move on with resilience and resourcefulness.
- Having and expressing high expectations (see presentation non-negotiables)
- Modelling fairness, consistency and problem solving. Ensuring all adults act as positive role models (see behaviour policy and staff code of conduct)
- Separating the person from the behaviours
- Welcoming each child into the classroom and smiling
- Using positive language and praise – use 3 positives to every negative
- Providing opportunities to develop children's emotional intelligence
- Providing opportunities for success and celebration events
- Making expectations and boundaries clear by describing the behaviours we want
- Following the school behaviour policy consistently and our Code of Conduct
- Developing the use of Growth Mindset behaviours
- Championing the Whitley Character values in all that we do – kindness, resilience, honesty, gratitude, friendship and courage.
- Using our Learning Mentors and Teaching Assistants to support both individual and groups of children

Pupil Groupings

All classes organise their children into cooperative learning groups using the 'Kagan' model as follows: Children are organised in groups of four mixed ability children, each child has three children they can work with, including a shoulder partner and face partner

Teachers ensure that groups work cooperatively by using 'kagan' structures throughout their lessons to promote reciprocal learning, independence and team work. .

Teachers and learning assistants should work with groups of children who are drawn from the whole class and need support, development or extension in a particular skill. It is very important that children do not feel that they are in the 'lowest' group.

The physical environment

There are positive effects on standards and motivation of pupils associated with the physical environment. Factors include the use of displays, music, the use of resources including ICT, the consideration of pupil groupings in the physical layout of the room. Teachers are responsible for ensuring classrooms are an exciting, stimulating and welcoming place to be by:

- Arranging furniture and space to create a safe flexible learning environment including a carpet focus area where age appropriate
- Creating an environment which stimulates interest in the subject or topic of study e.g. door display, themed book corner, role play area, topic displays using artefacts and books.
- Making sure the equipment is labelled and accessible to promote independent learning
- Creating a personal space for each student; labelling trays and pegs
- Teaching, and expecting, children to respect and care for their environment
- Ensuring classrooms are tidy and free from clutter to promote a calm, productive learning environment
- Creating a 'growth mindset' through displays and modelling a can do attitude ~~ethos~~

- Working walls for literacy and maths which clearly support the children in their learning journey.

Display

The aim of display is to enhance and accelerate learning and to build self esteem and belonging.

We use display to support and reinforce learning. Display should aid recall, stimulate further thinking, give new information, make connections, celebrate achievement, remind children of rules and targets and motivate children towards further learning. Each child should have the opportunity to have work displayed in school.

Working walls should support and extend current learning.

Each class should have:

- English and maths working walls clearly supporting the learning journey.
- Class rules/ good listening posters/ anti bullying information/growth mindset and pshe work
- Learning tools in the form of key words for topic/English/maths, posters, prompts, number lines, spelling aids, punctuation pyramids, word banks, tool kits, success criteria, counters, numiconetc.
- Marking codes
- Esteem raising well-presented displays of high quality work children's work that reflects their achievements – WOW Work
- Positive inspirational slogans
- Interactive displays reflecting current topic to promote investigation and curiosity including artefacts
- Displays that reflect the make-up of the school population i.e. positive images of culturally diverse groups, examples of community languages and images that challenge stereotypes of gender and disability
- Visual timetable on display at all times during the day using symbols where appropriate to support children with SEND.
- Up to date achievements for each class on the school website

The curriculum

Teachers are responsible for maintaining strong and up to date ~~a very good~~ subject and pedagogical knowledge and for ensuring the best possible learning opportunities are planned, delivered and monitored. Teachers are expected to be the 'chief learners', attending courses, observing good practice, building and disseminating knowledge and best practice.

We use the objectives from the National Curriculum to underpin the taught curriculum. The curriculum has four identified key drivers which have been chosen to shape our curriculum breadth. They are derived from an exploration of the backgrounds of our students, our beliefs about high quality education and our values. They are used **to ensure we give our students appropriate and ambitious curriculum.**

Our Curriculum Drivers and meeting the needs of our children

Our Curriculum Drivers			
Possibilities	Reading and Vocabulary	Wellbeing	Citizenship
Our curriculum is designed to promote aspirations; to allow pupils to make connections between what is learnt in the classroom and open-up possibilities for them in later life. Teachers support children in making links between their learning in the classroom and careers and opportunities in adult life.	Our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the children we serve placing great emphasis on the development of tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary and fluency in reading. At Whitley Abbey we recognise that vocabulary development helps children to communicate effectively and to understand what they hear. Reading enables pupils to develop independent learning skills – skills that will serve them well in later life.	Our curriculum is designed to promote pupil's wellbeing and resilience through the Thrive approach and Whitley Character Values. Research suggested that better emotional wellbeing is associated with higher achievement in primary school. When pupils feel safe they are able to better access learning in the classroom.	Our curriculum is designed to prepare the children to take their place successfully in a changing world. It focuses on the importance of citizenship on a local and global scale through the development of the core transferable skills of collaboration, communication, resourcefulness and reflection. Through learning and understanding the school values of friendship, kindness, courage, resilience, gratitude and honesty alongside the British Values children are better prepared to become successful citizens.

Curriculum Organisation

The curriculum lies at the heart of education and at Whitley Abbey Primary School, it is planned to meet the needs of the diverse school community placing great focus on vocabulary development and exploiting opportunities to read. The curriculum determines what children will know and do, but also helps them discover possibilities by making links to employment and helping pupils to identify their talents and passions. Throughout our curriculum, we promote 'The Whitley Abbey Character Values' (Friendship, Kindness, Gratitude, Honesty, Resilience and Courage) which support children in becoming confident people, able to take their place in society as happy, responsible citizens who care for others and the world they live in.

Whilst our curriculum is not organised into 'themes' we exploit natural links between subjects to support children in making connections- when logical and practical to do so. We believe that this approach facilitates the promotion of 'depth of knowledge' surrounding a subject or idea and as such the development of Cultural Capital.

Despite these links, each subject still retains its autonomy and is taught explicitly to support the development of semantic memory. Teachers plan opportunities for knowledge retrieval at spaced intervals to support the creation of long term memories and knowledge.

We intentionally plan visits, visitors and special events at midway or end points so that pupils have developed the language and knowledge they need to help to immerse in the experience and to bring their learning to life.

Our curriculum is planned to allow pupils to consolidate learning through regularly revisiting skills (deliberate practise); skills which are framed within the development of new knowledge. The consolidation of these skills allowing children to master key learning that can then be independently applied.

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is the essential knowledge that children need to prepare them for their future success. It is about giving children the best possible start to their early education. Our understanding of 'knowledge and cultural capital' is derived from the following wording taken from the national curriculum:

'It is the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.'

Cultural capital is understood to contribute to success in life, for example, being able to perform well in school, knowing how to talk in different social groups or societies, accessing higher education and being successful in work or a career. Cultural Capital is not something that is 'given' or 'taught'. It is about experiencing culture, language, and traditions. At Whitley Abbey therefore, we intentionally selected vocabulary and reading as one of our curriculum drivers to support this overall aim and further support

this by teaching children about key historical or significant figures from a range of social, cultural and economic backgrounds and from different periods in time.

Whitley's curriculum is successfully adapted, where needed, to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs, developing their knowledge, skills and abilities to apply what they know and can do with increasing fluency and independence, and ensuring that they make progress from their starting points.

We aim to address social disadvantage and, as a result, our curriculum reflects the school's local context by addressing typical gaps in our pupils' knowledge and skills. It is therefore crucial that as well as being taught essential knowledge and skills, pupils are taught explicit and engaging vocabulary across the curriculum and have access to a wealth of books and resources to help feed their thirst for knowledge.

The curriculum delivers Programmes of Study for the National Curriculum 2014 and allows for children to learn from exciting, challenging and opportunity rich learning experiences that celebrate the differences and diversity in our school community whilst promoting SMSC development and British Values.

Describe the outcomes

- Learning objectives and challenges are shared, prominently displayed and referred to as a key element of throughout each lesson.
- Children collaborate to devise the success criteria as a class or group for key skills, led by the teacher, using modelled examples for example for letter writing, character description, vertical addition. These can then be added to the working wall and the skills transferred across the curriculum.
- Teachers make the outcomes and reasons explicit using key phrases "By the end of today/ this unit we will be able to"
- The audience and purpose for the learning task are shared whenever possible, to give tasks more meaning. Real life examples are used where possible and links made to children's lives and possibilities for the future.

Activate

- Give the key information and vocabulary needed for the lesson
- Use a multi sensory approach
- Pose a range of pitched questions which engage curiosity and challenge learners to think deeply.
- Use speaking and listening activities, including use of talk partners, with thinking time
- Use random selection by lolly-sticks and Kagan structures to ensure engagement of all pupils
- Use a variety of groupings, particularly mixed ability groupings wherever possible to raise self-esteem, groups are created to support specific learning needs and tasks
- Make it memorable – use props, stimulating resources, 'hooks', openers and music.
- Ensure tasks are clearly understood by using questioning and recall.
- Plan for a range of groupings to best meet the learning needs and to ensure are children have the confidence to 'have a go' and do not feel they are in the 'bottom group'.
- Minimise time spent out of class on interventions by targeting support, quality first teaching with targeted support where possible.

- Plan and deliver timed, high quality, fixed-time interventions only and ensure impact of outcomes is high, use data to access impact.

Demonstrate

- Provide opportunities for children to show they can use and transfer their skills across the curriculum.
- Take into account multiple intelligences by allowing choices in the ways children present /share their understanding, whether it be to a partner, group, whole class, another class or the whole school – look for different audiences for the children.
- Teach skills such as mind mapping
- Use movement as a demonstration and memory tool
- Provide opportunities for collaborative, collective and individual activity
- Plan for a range of groupings to best meet the learning needs
- Insist on high standards of presentation and achievement, including hand writing.
- Ensure that greater depth children are always given the opportunity to work at greater depth wherever possible, including cross curricular work.

Review (refer to Marking Policy)

Teachers are responsible for ensuring feedback leads to improvements in learning, it should: build self esteem, encourage and motivate, support development, be relevant to the aims of the lesson and lead to progress.

- Planned review sessions happen during, at the conclusion (plenary)of learning experiences and at the beginning of next lessons.
- Opportunities for feedback, peer and self evaluation are built into all lessons (live marking or intervention at the point of teaching).
- Children are taught to reflect on and evaluate their learning, progress ~~towards their targets and~~ the aims of a lesson using the success criteria and feedback to plan next steps in their learning.
- Teachers give planned time for reflection/review and for improvements to be made.
- Teachers give written and oral feedback in line with the school's policies on marking and assessment.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work hard to ensure the right feedback at the right time is given.

Questioning

The use of open and closed questioning is vital to teaching and learning. Questions are used to assess children's starting points, to deepen understanding and to check children's progress.

A range of question types should be used from literal to higher order. Children should be given thinking time and a range of strategies are employed in this school to facilitate a 'no hands up' approach: talk partners, think-pair-share, numbered point replies, 100% response.

We teach children how to raise their own questions and how to use a range of techniques to find the answers to questions which have been posed.

Learning styles

We recognise children learn in different ways and therefore plan and deliver a multi-sensory, differentiated approach to engage all learners using auditory, kinaesthetic and visual stimuli. A wide range of resources, including those available on interactive whiteboards are available.

We recognise multiple intelligences and differing learning styles by providing a range of opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their understanding. These include opportunities for pupils to communicate ideas through speaking and listening, writing, music, drama, ICT and art.

Equal opportunities

The delivery and content of lessons should be sufficiently differentiated to ensure all pupils can access and achieve within the curriculum. Teachers must take account of SEND, greater depth, disadvantaged and EAL needs when planning and teaching lessons to ensure learning opportunities are provided which match pupils' ability and potential.

Music

Music is used for a variety of purposes:

- To influence mood and atmosphere e.g. to energise or relax a class or to create a calm start or end to the day
- To demarcate time on a task e.g. using a timed piece of music for tidy up time, changing for PE or during handwriting
- To carry content e.g. through learning songs which carry subject content; learning with music enhances the ability to store and retrieve related information

Trips and visitors

We are fortunate to be located within easy reach of a variety of interesting and educational places which we use to enhance the curriculum and stimulate learning. Teachers should plan a minimum of one visit/visitor per half term with a range of experiences being provided across the year. Teachers must obtain written permission from parents/carers for out of city visits.

Working with others

We work with a number of agencies, schools and providers to enhance curricular and pastoral opportunities for all our pupils. We work with others in the community to broaden our pupils life experiences.

Parents

We actively encourage the participation of parents as partners in learning and aim to create a welcoming atmosphere. Parents are informed of their children's progress, learning foci and ways to support learning through consultation meetings. A range of learning opportunities are provided to parents both formal and informal, at their level and to support homework. All year groups offer a variety of workshops throughout the year including: reading, maths, phonics, spag and SATs preparation.

Teaching and learning assistants

Teaching and learning assistants are shared across the school to support key groups of learners and individuals; teachers are responsible for the effective direction and deployment of TA's to support learning. Teachers involve teaching assistants in the planning and evaluation process. TA's and teachers should work with a variety of children across the week and are trained on specific high impact intervention programmes or support quality first teaching in class.

Specialist support

Additional support is provided to identified pupils so all children can access and fulfil their potential. Support may be given to support pupils with special educational needs, to pupils who speak English as an additional language, to support children with speech and language difficulties, and children in need of counselling and pastoral care.

Homework (refer to homework policy)

Homework is an opportunity to reinforce what has been covered in lessons and to involve parents in their child's learning. Teachers are responsible for setting and marking homework in line with the school policy.

Monitoring

Standards are monitored across the school by the SLT, including phase leaders and ~~maths and literacy~~ subject leads. Standards are monitored in a variety of ways including reviews of planning and children's books, pupil interviews, learning walks, observations, phase meetings, discussions, mentor and peer support. Teachers act on points for development in a professional way and are open to professional dialogue regarding standards in the class, their subject and in their phase. SLT share good practice with colleagues and encourage teachers to observe each other teaching.

Extended provision

We provide a varied menu of activities to support and enrich learning; these include lunch-time and after school clubs. These range from sporting activities to cookery, creative, dance and music .

The role of governors

Our governors on the Performance and Standards Committee determine, support, monitor, review and challenge the school policies and practice in 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 best used to support successful teaching and learning
- Monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations
- Monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising

pupil attainment

- Ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching
- Monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning policies through regular feedback from curriculum coordinators and the Head teacher.

The role of parents

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 workshops for parents to explain our school strategies for teaching literacy, numeracy and health education
- Sending information to parents at the start of the year in which we outline the topics that the children will be studying during each term at school
- Keep parents informed via the Head Teacher's newsletters, the school website and social media.
- Sending regular reports to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can improve further
- Open sessions for parents are held throughout the year, enabling pupils to share their school work with parents
- 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 provide induction sessions for parents of new entrants to school which include our procedures in school, working with your child at home and our handwriting scheme
- We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies.
- Engaging in the use of new learning platforms which encourage parental involvement for example Purple Mash and Accelerated Reader.
- Supporting children engaging in remote learning for any period of school closure

We would like parents to:

- Ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible
- Ensure that their child is equipped for school with the correct equipment, uniform and PE kit
- Do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school
- Inform 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.

Monitoring and review

We are aware of the need to review the school learning and teaching policy regularly so that we can take account of new initiatives, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. School governors have agreed to review this policy every two years or sooner as required.

