

The Orchard School



Teaching & Learning Policy

Draft: September 2018

Ratified: September 2018

Review: September 2019

Chair of Governors:

Headteacher :

The Orchard School

Teaching and Learning Policy

Introduction

At The Orchard School we believe that carefully planned, purposeful and well directed teaching and learning is essential to achieve raising of standards in our pupils. Pupils who come to the school will usually arrive with a history of exclusions, part-time education, several changes of school and periods of very little formal education. Many will have had little support in their learning beyond school and have no incentive to increase their knowledge or skills and to achieve their potential. An increasing number have emotional damage that is so embedded that they are not able to absorb new concepts, skills or information despite them having the cognitive potential to do so. As a result pupils will have weak basic skills, including their literacy and numeracy, and fear taking risks when faced with any new challenge. This complex combination of need significantly impacts on their ability to learn and requires constant reinforcement, encouragement, flexibility, reassessment and refocus collectively from all staff in all potential learning situations.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to ensure that, through high quality teaching, we enable all our pupils to:

- Achieve their potential
- Be fully literate and numerate
- Have confidence and competence in their use of technology
- Develop high self-esteem and a strong belief in themselves as independent learners
- Have a strong sense of physical, emotional and intellectual well-being
- Foster an interest in the creative and expressive arts
- Possess a strong sense of moral values with a tolerance, appreciation and understanding of other cultures, faiths and backgrounds
- Achieve a range of accreditations that will facilitate continued learning and increased economic prospects
- Enjoy being at The Orchard School

How learning takes place

We know that young people learn in a variety of different ways. Understanding the different strategies they use for learning is important in planning and delivering successful lessons. The following principles all play a part in ensuring our pupils can learn effectively:

- Pupils experiencing success are more likely to succeed at the next task therefore all activities set should give them the opportunity to succeed
- Pupils are more likely to respond positively to a challenge that extends their knowledge, skills and understanding which is enjoyable, stimulating and interesting
- Learning needs to be revisited with many concepts and skills returned to and presented differently and / or extended. Frequent practice through repetition and reinforcement has an important part to play in the mastery of key skills
- Learning is mastered more easily if it is based on practical experience and makes use of as many senses as possible. Many of our pupils learn kinaesthetically and visually and will not respond to high levels of teacher talking/explaining/giving instructions
- Pupils are better motivated when they are learning in a structured and stimulating environment
- Some learning is enhanced by the opportunity to share and discuss ideas with others. Collaboration and cooperation have an important role in developing pupils' social skills
- Some learning activities are better tackled alone and in a quiet environment in which children can concentrate and reflect
- Pupils often learn effectively through discovering things for themselves and is most effective when presented in a well-structured and safe environment
- Pupils learn through question and answers. A carefully planned didactic approach to teaching which involves the whole class is one of the most efficient uses of the teacher's time and one which encourages our more reluctant enquirers to develop vital skills
- Pupils' learning is enhanced by having a flexible curriculum that responds to personal experiences and immediate events such as focus days and enrichment projects
- Young people learn more effectively if they feel good about themselves. They need to experience praise and feel valued by both teachers and support staff

Supporting teaching and learning

At The Orchard School we maintain high expectations in terms of attitudes to work, behaviour and attendance and do not excuse the special needs of our young people as a barrier to their continued learning and developing. We have clear systems in place the support positive attitudes to these areas, which are constantly monitored and reinforced throughout the day. Our pupils are supported through difficulties they encounter in their learning by carefully tiered interventions using different personnel in the school with the ultimate aim always being to maintain each individual pupil on track with their learning. To that end every lesson is carefully planned to ensure that pupils

1. Acquire new knowledge or skills
2. Develop a concept or process

3. Use, consolidate or refine skills and deepen understanding

Staff will include the following teaching approaches as appropriate:

- Employ a variety of teaching styles, adapted to the needs of individual learners or the demands of the curriculum. Individual, group and whole class teaching
- Use provision mapping and differentiation to ensure high quality provision for all
- Ensure that, wherever possible, teaching is interactive and supported
 - by practical resources and auditory or visual prompts
- Use open-ended questions to engage curiosity and challenge understanding
- Identify key vocabulary and reinforce it visually
- Display key information on the classroom wall
- Create a positive and supportive learning environment in which the pupils are encouraged to be responsible, resourceful and resilient with regard to their own learning
- Publicly and privately (as appropriate) recognise and praise pupils' efforts and achievements
- Use thinking skills techniques to help the pupils understand their own learning
- Allow access to a supply of water as dehydration leads to drowsiness and poor learning performance
- Set individual targets that are shared with the pupils and regularly reviewed.
- Encourage pupils to verbalise what they are doing, why they are doing it, what they have learned and what they need to do next
- Practice for exam/test situations

Opportunities for learning

We aim to offer a rich and varied range of opportunities for learning. Many of our pupils will have had very limited experiences in their lives and are fearful of anything new. We aim to provide as many opportunities for new experiences as possible to reduce their reluctance to engage in these and to increase their confidence in themselves in a variety of situations. This is also important in motivating the pupils and encouraging them to become independent learners and includes:

- Well-structured lessons
- Early morning whole school Literacy and Numeracy session
- Interactive displays, including the pupils' own work and commercially produced materials, which are labelled with questions, explanations and vocabulary
- Use of the school grounds
- Visits to places of interest including the local environment, museums,

- exhibitions, galleries, wildlife areas, theatres, rural and coastal settings, London, etc.
- A residential visit which provides the opportunity for in-depth study recreation, social responsibility and understanding
- Class assemblies, concerts and drama productions
- Shared learning across the primary and secondary phases e.g. paired reading, sports support, etc
- Specialist teachers, artists, musicians, theatre groups, coaches and other visitors both on and off-site
- Celebrating talents, interests and achievements with pupils from other special and mainstream schools
- Extra-curricular clubs and activities
- Curriculum theme weeks and Focus Days and other opportunities for cross curricular working
- Enrichment Curriculum
- Morning 'Meet and Greet', 'Chill out and Work out Breakfast Club', 'Wake and Shake' session and lunchtime social opportunities with staff
- Practical activities and opportunities for teamwork

Homework is always a challenge when pupils' lives outside of school present inconsistencies in support and environmental factors. Clearly there is also value in providing pupils with independent learning opportunities to be completed in their own time. Therefore homework should not be seen as something we do not offer. Homework may be necessary to complete a particular task in school or for coursework requirements for accreditation. In these circumstances the use of the Pastoral Support Officers liaising with home to try to stress the importance of the particular assignment should help produce a more positive outcome. Equally pupils taking home activities that develop basic skills such as reading can be offered again with individual home support enlisted as appropriate.

Our principles

The following principles underpin all teaching and learning at The Orchard School. Thorough planning of Programmes of Study, Schemes of Work and daily lesson records on set templates give a detailed overview of the focus of all planned learning intentions and activities for each year group in every subject. These can be found on the Google Drive.

- Phases within lessons should support the learning objective of the lesson by introducing, developing and reviewing this focus while maintaining a sharp beginning, cohesion across the phases of the session and a clear end
- Pupils should know what they are learning, and why, as well as the extent of the progress they are making

- While the teacher orchestrates the structure of learning, pupils should have opportunities to enquire, question and explore so that they can apply their learning and practitioners can consolidate and build on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills
- Opportunities to reinforce literacy, numeracy, ICT, creativity are integral to all planning and teaching
- Timings of different parts of the lesson should fit the purposes of the intended focus for learning
- While it is necessary to plan across terms and weeks, to build in progression and to cover content, such planning should be adapted to meet the needs of pupils' learning in response to assessment and on-going review
- Within the Primary Department the importance of building on children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) should be recognised; looking at learning across all six areas of learning provides the best foundation for children's future success
- All planning makes full use of any Support Staff resource available to encourage effective learning, independence, focus and classroom organisation
- Assessment and evaluation is ongoing both formally and informally and includes planned opportunities for self and peer monitoring

The classroom conducive to teaching and learning

Excellent classroom management is essential to effective teaching and learning. Our pupils need to feel completely secure in each learning environment if they are to be in a stress-free state in which to learn. Staff at The Orchard School will ensure that they provide this environment by utilising the following classroom management strategies.

- Routines are set so that the pupils know what is expected of them at different times of the day and in different situations
- Pupils are set work that is appropriate to their ability and stage of learning
- Staff ensure that the pupils' clearly understand the learning task, what they are expected to do and the reason for doing it. Learning objectives and success criteria are clearly explained to the pupils. Pupils can access the Learning Objective throughout the lesson
- Assessment for Learning techniques is used to enhance learning
- Pupils are taught to be organised and to take responsibility for their learning and generally around the school
- High standards of presentation of work are expected. Books should be carefully looked after, all work should be dated and titles underlined using a ruler
- Pupils can access their personal targets and subject targets at any time

- Pupils are taught to value the school resources and to use them carefully and effectively
- Teaching resources are appropriately filed and stored and are provided in a way that enables the pupils to develop independence from the teacher
- Displays and resources support all learners by using a variety of methods and reinforcing key vocabulary

Monitoring of Teaching and Learning

All staff will be formally monitored against thorough criteria to ensure the highest standards of Teaching and Learning are taking place in all classrooms. This will usually be undertaken by the SLT and in some instances other personnel and take place three times annually as follows:

1. Term 1 in a known lesson
2. Term 3 during a known week
3. Term 5 during a known month

Staff who achieve a 'below' or 'expected' standard observation will be offered further support which will include additional observations.

Standards in Teaching and Learning are reported by the Headteacher to the Governors three times annually. Standards of observations are benchmarked in consultation with Local Authority Officers and independent consultancy through joint observations.