

Orchard Community Primary School



Teaching & Learning Policy

This policy was approved by the Governing Body of Orchard Primary School at their meeting on.....

Signed

Chair of Governors

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INTRODUCTION

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for teaching and learning at Orchard Primary School. It is directly linked with the Core Strategic Plan, our Monitoring and Evaluation procedures and our Continuous Professional Development provision.

The policy aims to:

- Reflect the professional consensus of the staff and governing body
- Provide a sense of direction
- Ensure a consistent approach to enable staff to operate within a clear framework
- Promote effective classroom practice
- Provide a basis for evaluation

RATIONALE

Teaching and Learning is the over-riding purpose of our school. It is the means through which we offer a curriculum which is broad, balanced, and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, R.E. and Collective Worship.

At Orchard we firmly believe that teaching and learning is a process of cooperative team work; all members of our school community, teachers, support staff, Governors and parents, and the pupils themselves have a vital role to play in creating a learning environment in which all children can flourish.

As a school, we recognise the potential of every individual to achieve excellence. We are committed to providing the best possible education for all of our children in an inclusive, stimulating and caring environment which enables pupils to develop high self-esteem and experience success in learning and in their personal growth.

We pride ourselves on creating an exciting learning environment which is rich in opportunity through the implementation of a wide ranging and challenging curriculum that meets the needs of the whole child and encourages independent thinking and learning skills.

We value all pupils equally and believe that their time in school should be rewarding and fulfilling.

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN OUR SCHOOL

The key aims for teaching and learning at Orchard Primary School are to help our children to:

- recognise and develop their own personal skills to the best of their ability in order to make outstanding progress in their learning
- access a rich, balanced and relevant curriculum in a variety of ways
- become resilient, reflective, resourceful and reciprocal learners who are able to cultivate their ideas and skills in a creative manner
- work within a happy, secure and nurturing ethos where an appropriate level of both challenge and support allows children to grow
- enjoy their learning thereby engendering a positive and enthusiastic approach towards education
- become independent, confident learners who take increasing responsibility for their own learning
- experience success by having their efforts and achievements recognised and celebrated
- acquire the necessary skills for learning, now and in the future, by developing lively, enquiring minds and the ability to question, share ideas and work co-operatively
- use language and number effectively, as a foundation for learning, and to feel confident in all areas of the curriculum
- develop an understanding of other beliefs, cultures and ways of life
- achieve their full potential in all areas of the curriculum through equality of opportunity and an inclusive approach to learning

THE CREATIVE CURRICULUM

The curriculum at Orchard Primary School is seen as 'the entire planned learning experience'.

At Orchard, we aim to foster a life-long love of learning, by adopting an exciting, memorable, highly practical cross-curricular approach to learning whereby the knowledge and key skills needed to make progress in each subject are embedded within a cross curricular Learning Adventure-based programme of study to inspire both pupils and teaching staff.

Our innovative knowledge enhanced 'Creative Curriculum' aims to lay the foundations for 'learning for life' by delivering a twenty first century education that will equip our children with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to be independent and responsible citizens.

We are committed to enhancing pupils' individual capabilities by providing high quality, innovative teaching, and through involving pupils actively in the learning process.

We take a thematic approach to the curriculum to provide context, interest and continuity to lessons, endeavouring at every opportunity therefore to connect learning, and give children real life experiences that they can relate their learning to.

To ensure the full coverage of the National Curriculum, each subject area has been carefully mapped to ensure that during their time with us each child experiences a broad, balanced curriculum where skills, knowledge and understanding are developed in a variety of contexts.

The key knowledge and skills deemed essential for pupil progress from each subject are also mapped to each Learning Adventure throughout the school. Each key stage generally studies one engaging Learning Adventure per half-term or term which provides a broad and balanced learning experience that meets the school's statutory obligations within the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and the National Curriculum programmes of study, providing a base for an education that ensures quality and progression.

We use the humanities and the arts to enhance and reinforce work in the core subjects and foster opportunities for music, sport and languages. As well as providing a platform for cross-curricular learning, whereby the Learning Adventure is used to link together Literacy, Numeracy and Science, these themes also provide the impetus for stimulating learning experiences, starting with an 'Inspiration Day' for example at the beginning of each term (a trip, visitor or 'wow' activity) to motivate and enthuse the pupils about the Learning Adventure ahead, and an 'outcome' event to which parents may be invited, to celebrate the conclusion of the Learning Adventure.

At Orchard, we also develop and enrich the learning experiences we offer our children by being flexible with the organisation of our school day and weekly timetable. With the exception of English, Maths, IT and PE, subjects may not be taught every term therefore, due to blocking subjects for relevancy within the Learning Adventure theme.

This curriculum is underpinned by an environment rich in language opportunities and oral communication.

Creative Curriculum planning is truly inclusive at Orchard with a variable mixture of Learning Adventures, projects, out of class experiences, Discovery Days and themed weeks to motivate the pupils and give them enthusiasm for their learning. We also develop a curriculum which reflects the cultural backgrounds, and life experiences of our children and their families.

Personalised learning is central to this approach - we put our children at the centre of their own learning and place great emphasis on nurturing skills and attitudes such as resourcefulness, resilience, co-operation and reflection/evaluation.

Systematic monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice ensures that teaching and learning within the Creative curriculum continues to be of the highest quality and self-evaluation, by both the staff and the children themselves, focuses on what the children experience and what the children achieve.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

At Orchard Primary School, we acknowledge that the experiences provided for children in their primary years has a major impact on their future wellbeing and success.

It is for this reason that we have made a whole school commitment to the teaching and development of character traits, attributes and behaviours which underpin achievement and success; endeavouring to ensure that developing 'character' goes hand in hand with high educational aspirations and achievement.

Through our rich and exciting creative curriculum, we focus on teaching pupils to be their best selves, to take pride in their work, and to be positive members of the school, and greater global communities.

We want to create children who thrive on challenge, love learning, respect each other and have attributes that will ensure that they will be valued members of our society.

We also create a culture where staff are empowered to take risks and be inventive with the curriculum and learning, where mistakes are seen as a valuable part of the learning process, where all staff and governors support each other and the ethos of the school and most importantly where the relationships in the school between all stakeholders provides a secure foundation for skill development.

GROWTH MINDSET

The term 'growth mindset' refers to a way of thinking, learning and taking on challenges. A person with a growth mindset is open to constructive criticism, takes feedback and uses it, takes on new challenges, pushes themselves outside of their comfort zone and shows resilience and perseverance.

Some key aspects of Growth Mindset at Orchard:

- We remember it's always OK to make mistakes – we learn from them
- We never give up. We try a different approach, or use a different strategy
- We learn from each other – peers often make the best teachers
- We don't compare ourselves with others, but we do learn from others
- We challenge ourselves – working outside our comfort zone really helps us make progress
- We take risks – we don't limit ourselves by taking the easy option
- We join in as much as possible – and we learn much more by being involved
- We remember that mastering something new feels so much better than doing something you can already do
- We remember that the brain is making new connections all the time – the only thing you need to know is that you can learn anything

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING

At Orchard the following principles underpin all lessons.

Children need to:

- Be involved and enthused in lessons in order for effective learning to take place
- Take responsibility for their own learning by knowing what the next steps are in their own learning and how they can achieve these
- Understand the 'bigger picture' through contextual, real-life learning experiences
- Be involved in setting and assessing their own progress targets
- Be given opportunities to apply learning to other situations
- Be given opportunities to explain what they have learnt or teach it to someone else
- Know what makes it difficult for them to learn and what helps them to learn best in order to have the flexibility within lessons to work within their preferred learning style

- Feel good about themselves and feel proud of their learning
- Know when they have succeeded and achieved well

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Teaching is only effective and purposeful if learning takes place and enables pupils to 'know more and remember more'. At Orchard we believe that a number of components are involved in achieving 'quality first' teaching:

Before lessons

- We use an agreed format for planning at the long, medium and short term level
- Where possible, planning across subjects is linked by a theme to provide context and meaning to the learning experiences
- As part of the planning process, children's current attainment and understanding is assessed using key skills progression grids to ensure the lessons meet the needs of all children
- On short term planning, objectives and learning outcomes are clearly indicated and are chosen to be challenging, ensuring that children make the best progress possible
- Scaffolding should be built into Schemes of Work and lesson plans.
- Teachers must be aware of and make use of pupils' provision maps and SEND plans, reading and spelling ages, prior attainment at KS1, target levels for the year or end of key stage etc.
- Prior assessments are used to help plan appropriate scaffolding, but challenges and open-ended activities are provided for all children so that children are not limited in their achievement
- Assessment for Learning and personalised learning are key tools which we use to ensure maximum progress, and to give children ownership over their own learning. Assessment opportunities are therefore included within the short term plans
- Short term planning is reviewed and modified throughout the week according to ongoing assessments
- Especially in core subjects, guided/conferencing sessions with the teacher are planned for and groupings are based on next steps for individual learners, not fixed class groups
- Where additional adults such as TAS or LSAs are deployed, they are thoroughly briefed before the lesson on the aims, outcomes and expectations for the children they are working with
- Across the week, Support Staff do not work with the same group as all children need to learn independence and be given the opportunity to apply their skills
- A range of activities are planned throughout the week which reflect different learning strategies – group, paired or independent work; discussion and drama opportunities and other active learning strategies including use of the outside environment

During lessons

- Staff set high expectations of all pupils which challenge and deepen understanding
- The QFL (Question for Learning) and outcomes are made clear for children at the start of each lesson
- Children understand what they need to do to be successful and are often involved in negotiating their own success criteria
- Children are encouraged to work purposefully and a calm working environment is maintained
- Throughout the lesson, the teacher reminds children about objectives; encourages self-reflection and shares good examples through a series of 'mini-plenaries'
- Lessons maintain good pace and include a variety of engaging, stimulating activities
- Time and resources are used effectively
- Children have the opportunity to personalise their learning through, for example, extending or adapting an activity, being given freedom to choose how they show their learning or by having open-ended challenges
- In order to achieve high quality learning, staff apply different styles to suit the children they are teaching and the learning objectives they hope to achieve. Approaches may include: Exposition - by the teacher disseminating information; Explanation - by the teacher developing understanding; Demonstration - using a model to show a method skill or application; Discussion & Questioning - to draw out and challenge understanding, and develop speaking and listening; Practical - encouraging children to find out through

doing; Investigation & Problem Solving - using activities in more open ended contexts to challenge and develop understanding and to enable pupils to apply skills, concepts and knowledge in a creative way

- Teachers will be involved in direct teaching through the whole session through: challenging and differentiated questioning, modelling for children and working with the whole class, guided groups or individuals
- In order to develop our children's 'Critical Thinking Skills', we always incorporate key questions into our work, particularly at the start of a new Learning Adventure, to encourage children to ask a variety of questions.
- Oracy and strategies such as 'Think/Pair/Share' and 'Talk to your partner,' are regular features in all lessons
- Staff teach in an atmosphere of kindness, trust and respect for all. Staff are positive and praise children for their efforts and help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general
- All our staff follow the school policy with regard to behaviour
- At the end of the lesson, children are given time to reflect on the success criteria and their own learning, carrying out a self-assessment or helping a partner with peer-assessment
- Staff will collect assessment information as planned for – this might be for individuals, groups or even the whole class

After lessons

- Support Staff will give feedback about the achievement of the children they work with
- Teachers will evaluate pupils' work following the Feedback Policy guidelines and feedback to help children to see how they have been successful and how they can improve further
- Staff will adapt short term planning in the light of marking or other assessment opportunities
- Their evaluations/assessments will be used to inform ongoing records of children's achievement
- Homework should be planned so that it supports, reinforces or extends the learning in the lesson

While these lists are not exhaustive, they are intended as a guide for teachers to provide continuity across school and the highest standard of teaching and learning for all children in every class.

OTHER APPROACHES TO SECURE EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Our commitment to high quality teaching and learning is also demonstrated through:

- Providing opportunities for teachers to share good practice by observing each other or sharing ideas in staff meetings. In this way we hope to constantly develop teaching and learning in our school
- Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations, work sampling etc.
- Rigorously tracking pupil attainment and progress
- Providing specific improvement targets and advice to close the gap between current attainment and challenging targets
- Identifying and supporting pupils who are underachieving, gifted or talented, and closely monitoring their progress and attainment
- Receiving feedback from pupils and parents
- Constantly monitoring and improving teaching and learning through self-evaluation with staff reflecting on their strengths and weaknesses in order to plan their professional development needs accordingly.
- Staff having responsibility for key areas of learning and support other staff to develop their skills in these areas
- Preparing and implementing personalised action plans to specifically address those needs in vulnerable and challenging children.
- Deploying Support Staff 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 of classroom equipment and displays.
- Sharing the learning with parents through our monthly newsletters and updating the school website with photographs, curriculum overviews, curriculum maps and news about school activity and learning

- Having a strong Pupil Voice in our school through pupil Leadership Teams and an active School Council who are regularly consulted on school choices and decisions
- Specifically working on developing our children's ability to reflect on how their learning relates to the world around them through Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural and Global Citizenship lessons and activities

OUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning, and an exciting classroom promotes independent use of resources and high-quality work by the children.

We try to make our classrooms attractive learning environments. Each classroom has well-ordered clearly labelled resources. We change displays regularly to ensure that the classroom reflects the Learning Adventures studied by the children. We ensure that all children have the opportunity to display their work at some time during the year. All classrooms have a range of dictionaries and fiction and non-fiction books, as well as displays relating to literacy and numeracy.

We aim for our learning environment to:

- be welcoming
- be challenging and stimulating
- be peaceful and calm
- be well resourced, organised and tidy
- be encouraging and appreciative
- provide for equal opportunities
- provide for a working atmosphere
- support the development of independent learners

Our learning environment is organised to ensure that the children have the opportunity to learn in different ways. These include:

- research and finding out
- group/paired work
- independent work
- whole-class work
- asking and answering questions
- use of IT
- investigation and problem solving
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest
- creative activities
- responding to musical or recorded material
- debates, role-plays and oral presentations
- designing and making things
- participation in physical activity

To ensure consistency the following is also used across the whole school:

- Good inclusive classroom organisation – e.g. labelled and accessible equipment, classroom layout
- Inclusive Strategies to support pupils' Speech, Language and Communication needs for example
- Agreed School Calculation Policy for Maths
- Maths and Literacy resource banks
- Planned opportunities for outdoor learning
- Visual Timetables
- Other languages – spoken, written, displayed – where appropriate

ACHIEVEMENT

We take every opportunity to celebrate the achievement of our children. Examples of methods used are:

- verbal or written praise by teachers, peers, head teacher
- displays of work
- opportunities to perform or share
- positive comments to parents, notes, phone calls
- certificates and rewards

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The school offers a wide range of additional extra-curricular activities to extend children's learning. In addition to school staff, we also use external providers to support these activities. The programme of clubs changes half-termly so that a full range of activities is offered throughout the year.

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Pupils throughout the school are offered opportunities to take responsibility, to show initiative and to extend their social and cultural experiences. These roles include: Classroom Monitors; School Council Representatives; House Captains; Anti-Bullying Ambassadors (ABA); Librarians; Playground Pals/Play Coaches, Digital Leaders and Sports Ambassadors.

THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS

Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school policies on 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

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

We have separate policies relating to the provision for:

- Special Educational Needs
- Inclusion
- Safeguarding Children/Child Protection
- Assessment
- Feedback
- Equality and Accessibility
- Behaviour

REVIEW

This policy will be observed in practice by the Head Teacher on a termly basis as part of the monitoring process. It will be updated every three years, or as necessary.