



The Academy at
St James
Aspire, Achieve, Believe

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TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

Reviewed and Approved by:-

Date of meeting:- 28/11/2017

Signature:-

Position:-

Date:-28/11/2017

Next review date:- 27/11/2020

THE ACADEMY AT ST. JAMES

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This policy forms the context into which all other policy documents will fall. It states the philosophy behind our approach to teaching and learning.

Underpinning our teaching is the belief that children only get one chance at primary schooling. It is our duty to provide the very best we can by maximising the teachers and resources available to use. We believe that good pupil progress is the outcome of effective teaching and learning and that every child has the right to be taught well. We would therefore expect every child in our school to make at least good progress, whatever his or her starting point.

We believe our school must be welcoming, safe and vibrant for our children to learn well. We also believe that happy children learn more effectively and consequently make greater rates of progress.

It is our experience that children will rise to and thrive upon the high expectations set for them by their teachers. We will therefore expect high achievement in all areas of school life and will not be limited by a ceiling of low expectation.

Highly effective teaching and learning is our priority. What we believe to be excellent primary practice is described under the following main headings:

- Relationships
- Teaching, learning and assessment
- The curriculum
- Attainment and progress
- The environment for learning.

AIMS

1. To maximise achievement. To enable each child to achieve his/her potential in terms of academic achievement, social development and cultural, spiritual and moral awareness.
2. To enable children to become effective and independent learners.
3. To provide equal access to the curriculum.

RELATIONSHIPS

The effectiveness of any school is dependent upon the quality of the relationships amongst those working in it on a day to day basis. We believe that the positive relationships existing between children, parents, teachers, support staff, governors and the community help make ours an outstanding school, and we take great care to nurture those relationships.

A clear hierarchy of rewards and sanctions exists to help teachers and other adults maintain positive attitudes and good behaviour at all times. However we know that the greatest aid to this is teaching that engages, motivates and inspires pupils.

We believe that:

- All staff must have consistently high expectations of children's attitudes and behaviour and take joint responsibility for implementing these expectations at all times.
- We must treat everyone with the respect that we would wish to receive ourselves, taking an active role in praising, complementing, and thanking others.
- Good manners and social skills should be modelled by all.
- Children should be helped to develop self-respect and expression
- We need to invest in building and maintaining positive relationships with pupils, staff, parents, governors, and community
- It is important to know the value of others and of being part of a team.
- There is a good system of rewards and incentives in place for all staff to use.
- Everyone needs to be aware of their rights and the responsibilities that go with them.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Teaching is the most important direct influence on how well pupils learn.

We believe that every child has the right to be taught well and deserves to make at least good progress. To ensure that we are able to intervene effectively where children may not be achieving their best we must be able to track and monitor progress carefully. Children need to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

We recognise the need for accurate assessment in order to plan and evaluate learning effectively, is a constant activity that happens formally and informally, formatively and summatively. We particularly recognise the power of many of the Assessment for Learning methods.

We believe it is vitally important that assessment does not become a time consuming burden. If an assessment is not going to be used by a future audience to further a child's learning it need not be formally recorded.

The most effective assessment is conducted as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. It is not a bolt-on exercise.

Key factors contributing to effective teaching are:

1. The teacher's knowledge of the subject material and how it is learned.
2. Classroom organisation and teaching methods.
3. A range of effective teaching strategies.
4. Personalised learning strategies (V.A.K.)
5. AfL
6. High quality stimulating resources including new technologies.

Effective teaching strategies

- Clear, shared learning objectives. (See paragraph 'Sharing learning objectives')
- High expectations of achievement.
- High quality, well-planned, differentiated activities.

- Appropriate use of groupings and range of activities. (See 'Teaching Methods')
- Balance between instruction, explanation, research, discussion, questioning, listening to answers, task setting, assessing.
- Use of modelling to illustrate and reinforce teaching points
- Vocabulary boards highlighting vocabulary being used in subjects, i.e. Maths, English, Science.
- Direct teaching inputs using I.C.T. where appropriate.
- Good pace and no time wastage - Children understand the quality and quantity of work expected by certain deadlines
- Involvement of pupils in organising their own learning where appropriate.
- Effective intervention/questioning/addressing misconceptions - during and at end of lessons.
- Challenge, encouraging risk taking and learning from mistakes.
- Children are clear what is expected of them.
- Managing pupils well and achieving high standards of discipline.
- Assessing pupils work thoroughly and constructively, and using assessment to inform teaching. (See Assessment Policy).
- Using the home/school partnership effectively to reinforce, extend and practise what is learned in school.
- Enables all pupils to take an active part in the lesson, e.g. whisper partners, whiteboards, number fans.
- Mixed ability groups i.e. whole class, groups, partner work.

Sharing learning objectives and success with children

Children learn more effectively if they are clear about what they are learning and what is expected of them.

We aim to share learning objectives explicitly with all children. In KS1 and KS2 these are usually displayed on the board.

Children should be able to explain what they are learning.

Similarly children should know what would make a piece of work successful, (success criteria) e.g. the story should follow a plan to give it shape.

Teaching Methods

A range of teaching methods should be employed that are appropriate to the age and ability of the class and the subject matter being taught. The criteria of 'fitness for purpose' should govern teachers' choice of forms of grouping.

Teaching methods should include:

- **Whole class teaching** - gives the teacher the opportunity to engender enthusiasm and raise expectation. Pupils benefit from detailed exposition and challenging questions.
- **Group work** - allows for focused teacher intervention, takes into account variations in pupils' capabilities, allowing a better match to task. It enables the teacher to combat underachievement and provides opportunity for collaboration and more effective use of resources.
- **Partner work** – Provides opportunity for collaborative learning and peer support.

- **Individual work** - where this is used it is important that pupils are given appropriate support, challenge and adult intervention.

Whatever the organisation, **direct teaching** is essential. The teacher is not just a facilitator. Direct focused teaching should take place to the whole class, to groups and to individuals so that teaching closely matches children's attainment and builds on it.

Teaching Techniques

- Teaching styles suit the purpose of the subject and learning needs.
- Good balance between instruction, explanation, discussion, questioning, listening to answers, task setting, organising and assessing.
- Teachers use both direct and indirect teaching techniques.
- Variety of tasks are set requiring children to solve specific problems.
- Arrive at correct solutions or others where a variety of valid outcomes is possible.
- Demonstrations are used to illustrate and reinforce teaching points.
- Teaching points are made prior, during and at the end of lessons.
- Children are clear what is expected of them.
- Pupils required to work at a good pace - understanding the quality and quantity of work expected by certain deadlines.
- Teachers monitor work systematically and know when to intervene.

Beginning and ending lessons

In addition to clear exposition at the beginning, lessons should finish with a short conclusion where children can share and evaluate their work with others, where the teacher has an opportunity to reinforce what has been learnt in the lesson, address misconceptions or to outline the next steps of learning. When appropriate, this approach may also be used during lesson at relevant, key points.

EFFECTIVE LEARNING

Effective learning takes place when children are:

- Involved in and enjoying their work.
- Developing independence and the ability to sustain concentration.
- Making progress in knowledge, understanding and skills.

Opportunities need to be structured for pupils to be able to listen, to observe, to discuss, to explore ideas, to experiment, to research and to read for information and enjoyment.

Effective learning strategies

- To ask and answer questions
- To concentrate and listen
- To make relevant contributions to discussion.
- To co-operate and collaborate where appropriate.
- To generate ideas and solve problems.
- To select and use relevant resources.

- To develop organisational skills.
- To respond to focused and challenging tasks.
- To take calculated risks, learn from mistakes and apply existing learning to new contexts.
- To persevere and complete tasks.
- To improve work and to take pride in the finished product.
- To take pride in and to value every piece of work, the paper and exercise books that are used. To this end children are taught to care for all their school books and folders. They are not allowed to deface them in any way.
- To seek assistance when they are not clear or do not understand what is expected of them.

THE CURRICULUM

Primary education is a critical stage in children's development – it shapes them for life. As well as giving them the essential tools for learning, primary education is about children experiencing the joy of discovery, solving problems, being creative, developing their self-confidence as learners and maturing socially and emotionally.

At Low Moor, we strive to ensure our curriculum is exciting and engages pupils. It provides opportunity for our children to learn in a range of different ways whilst ensuring – all learning and teaching is of a high quality. At Low Moor, the curriculum is planned and managed so that every child is supported and challenged

Well thought out planning and preparation is essential if teaching is to be good. A good teacher, however, is also a creative and imaginative teacher who is not afraid to seize upon unplanned learning opportunities that may arise during a lesson and who can make productive links to other curriculum areas where appropriate. We make explicit and effective use of cross-curricular links so that learning is experienced as integrated and complementary rather than being compartmentalised.

We believe it is especially important that:

- Core skills are practised regularly across the whole curriculum.
- The curriculum is exciting, relevant, and innovative, using a wide range of resources, including the community
- There is a broad and creative curriculum to develop the whole child.
- Planning is relevant to the task, built on previous assessment, with opportunities for independent learning.
- Planning allows for flexibility and teachers have confidence to follow children's interests or current affairs
- Planning is accessible, user friendly and available.
- There are strong, relevant cross curricular links.
- Children should have ownership of some areas of the curriculum

English Teaching

KS1 5 hours explicit English teaching including comprehension and extended writing
In addition to the 5 hours other weekly English teaching which includes phonics, spelling, guided reading and handwriting.

KS2 5 hours explicit English teaching, including comprehension and extended writing (on alternate weeks).
In addition to the 5 hours other weekly English teaching which can include handwriting, guided reading, phonics, grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Mathematics Teaching

All classes in KS1 and KS2

5 hours explicit mathematics teaching. Mini oral starters should refer to the 'Learn by Heart' facts (or the equivalent of). These are consolidating activities and should not take any longer than five minutes within a lesson.

Terror Tables (KS2 only) and basic skills (KS1 and KS2) to be completed once a week outside the mathematics hour.

CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT

The curriculum is enriched by:

- Exciting, inspirational topic days at the beginning or end of a new topic.
- Visitors to school (theatre visits, authors, poets, storytellers, dancers, musicians, artists, sport coaches, religious speakers).
- Educational visits.
- Role play tasks.
- Participation in cultural events (Music festivals, Carol Services, Art competitions, Cultural weeks, Linking Project), sporting opportunities, concerts and celebration assemblies.
- Extra-curricular activities.
- New technologies.
- Before and after school clubs.
- Lunchtime clubs.
- Residential visits.
- Choir/ church events.
- Links with church.
- More-Able Challenge days.

ATTAINMENT AND PROGRESS

If relationships and teaching and learning within an exciting and well planned curriculum are good, then we would expect children's progress to be at least good.

Pupils' attainment and progress will be measured at key points throughout the year, as well as at key times during a child's progress through the school.

As a result of our assessment and tracking process we expect:

- That all children make good progress in order to meet their individual potential
- Children are keen to achieve their next step in their learning
- Children are aware of how they are achieving and how they can improve or develop
- Good attainment and progress is rewarded and celebrated.
- Regular reporting to parents of attainment and next steps
- Progress targets personalised to include out-of-school circumstances as well as in-school help
- Parents to be involved in their child's learning
- Strategies are in place for targeted children to support them.
- Intervention programmes being used swiftly and effectively.

SETTING TARGETS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Each year the school sets realistic targets for the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 performance, based on careful teacher assessment and prior attainment of the particular year group. We draw up curricular targets and outline teaching strategies to achieve these targets and to improve on last year's performance.

We recognise that end of key stage results will not necessarily improve every year and that some targets will be lower than the previous year because of the nature of the cohort (number statemented, non-statemented SEN, performance baseline on entry etc.) but we aim to see a year on year improvement over a period of time, 3 to 5 years.

In addition, each of the other year groups set targets for individual pupils to have achieved by the end of the academic year. Targets are monitored regularly by the Headteacher and Unit leaders.

Each classroom displays curricular targets in the core subjects for that half term. In addition, each half term pupils set their own school personal targets and these are displayed on the Investors in Pupils Board. Class targets are also set half termly and displayed.

ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING

- Resources - tidily stored, clearly labelled, easily accessible - applies to classroom and areas of provision.
- The appropriateness, range and quality of resources in curriculum areas to reflect a wide range of cultures.
- Displays that enhance and stimulate learning including childrens' work and do not detract from the learning environment, for example, on window ledges.
- Book corners displaying dictionaries, thesauri, relevant topic books, fiction books, poetry books, comics, magazines.
- Provision of first hand experiences.
- Handwriting on boards matches the school script.
- Clearly understood routines and procedures.

- In KS2 classes, a timetable for the day is displayed on the board
- High standards of behaviour
- A varied classroom layout to meet the needs of the subject taught.
- Best use of available space.
- Pupils demonstrate good attitudes to their work and achieve acceptable standards within a set time limit.
- Other adults' roles and tasks in the classroom are clearly defined - they complement and enhance the work of the class teacher.
- A stimulating, inspiring, organised and motivating environment which celebrates learning.
- Work by all children displayed, regardless of ability.
- Interactive displays covering different subjects and areas of learning which include aids to scaffold learning.
- Child initiated displays and environment.
- Children involved in and taking pride in their learning environment.
- Use of wider community and use of expertise to support learning.
- Use of the outdoor classroom and locality as part of the curriculum.
- An environment which promotes equality and inclusion.
- Use of a variety of environments to inspire and discover other interests and talents.
- Safe, and enjoyable outdoor play areas and experiences.

Organisational Strategies

- Variety of groupings - whole class (could be working in groups, pairs, individually), ability, mixed ability - based upon nature of the subject and/or the learning needs of the pupils.
- Pupils have opportunities to engage in collaborative group and partner work.
- Other adults, and sometimes pupils, used in an instrumental capacity – they are well briefed beforehand and supported by the class teacher.
- Where teachers give extended attention to a group or individual, other pupils are given tasks that allow them to work independently.
- Pupils to understand routines and procedures for finished work and what task to undertake next.
- Organisation and management of teaching materials are directly linked to the learning outcomes.

Routines and Procedures

Rubbers

In every day work no rubbers. If a mistake is made put one straight line through it. Rubbers may be used when special work is being completed, e.g. for display or competition etc.

Children should not bring rubbers, pencils, pens etc. from home.

Sharpeners

The organisation of the sharpening of pencils is the responsibility of the class teacher, e.g. through class monitors/volunteers/students etc. However, occasions will arise where children will need a sharpener and this will be provided. Staff must ensure that time is not wasted by pupils sharpening pencils.

Pens and Pencils

Pencils to be used in KS1. Pens introduced in KS2 via a pen licence. The majority of pupils in Y5 and Y6 will be using a pen.

Pencil/crayon storage

Each class has baskets provided for the storage of pencils and felt pens. Ensure pencils are of a good quality (e.g. not too short, chewed or blunt).

Monitors

Each class teacher to allocate monitors to help with routine jobs in classrooms, e.g. dinner register, tidying bookcase, tidying away pencil baskets, collecting exercise books etc.

Collective Worship

Have high expectations - pupils are expected to enter and leave collective worship silently. Preparation and reflection time following worship.

Milk

YR – free access throughout morning.

KS1 – outside at playtime.

KS2 – at the discretion of the class teacher.

Corridor

Walk on the left through the 'green spot' door.

Evening Prayers

Each class has a booklet of prayers.

P.E. - Pumps.

- For P.E. - floor/movement and apparatus - no pumps to be worn. Children walk to hall in pumps then remove and store tidily.
- Silence when working on apparatus for safety.
- Pumps should be worn for games skills.
- No jewellery should be worn (stud earrings to be covered).
- Hair tied back. Glasses – teachers to use discretion / check with parents.

THE ROLE OF PUPILS AND PARENTS IN DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE LEARNING

We encourage pupils to become increasingly responsible for their own learning by:

1. Working to the best of their abilities, listening and participating actively in lessons.
2. Being organised, e.g. bringing necessary kit, taking letters home promptly, returning reading books and homework in a timely manner.
3. With the help of the teacher, setting targets and knowing what they must do to improve their work.

We keep parents well informed of their child's progress through regular parent/teacher consultations. Parents are also welcome at other times should a need arise.

We encourage parents to contribute to their child's learning by:

1. Ensuring their child attend regularly, punctually and without unnecessary absence.
2. Participating in discussions about their child's progress, attainments and behaviour.
3. Showing an interest and valuing their child's work.
4. Helping their child with homework i.e. Reading at home, spellings, tables and other work that may need to be completed at home.

ST. JAMES' STAFF BELIEVE THAT CHILDREN LEARN BEST WHEN:

- Teaching is interesting and creative, differentiated and personalised.
- Assessment forms part of a cyclical process, informs the current and next lesson
- There are clear learning objectives, and success criteria.
- Children are assessed on what they can do and what they need to do next.
- Assessment is relevant and manageable and informs planning.
- Marking is child-friendly, related to learning objectives and informs children how to improve their work.
- Children are aware of and involved in assessment of their progress.
- Children feel confident to take risks and make mistakes
 - Teachers are able to respond to situations that arise and able to use their expertise.
- Interested and motivated and have the confidence to achieve,
- Tasks are relevant, structured, and pitched at the right level,
- Challenged to reach their maximum potential,
- Given first hand, practical experiences,
- Given clear instructions and information,
- Given praise and encouragement,
- The teacher is enthusiastic and fosters a positive attitude,
- They know why they are doing something and what is expected of them,
- Learning builds on existing skills and knowledge,
- There are opportunities for questions and discussion,
- The environment is comfortable and secure,
- There is active parental involvement.