

Brooke VC C of E Primary School



Teaching and Learning Policy

Signed: _____

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Overview

We aim to provide a stimulating, safe and structured environment where children can explore areas of learning, develop their skills and grow through pushing their boundaries in a caring and positive atmosphere. We want children to experience excitement and success from their learning. We provide a range and breadth of opportunities that will allow all pupils to explore new areas, learn from mistakes without fear of failure, develop independence and reach a high level of attainment. Positive reinforcement of progress and attitude is key, even small steps forward will be praised and valued.

Planning

Through the planning process, we aim to ensure that all children cover the learning intentions set out in the National Curriculum, according to their individual needs, and to ensure continuity and progression throughout the child's education. Planning will reflect progression, National Curriculum objectives, differentiation and state the learning intentions and success criteria.

Our plans incorporate three levels of Curriculum Planning:

Long Term Plans: A Curriculum Map

(An overview of the year organised as a three or four-year rolling programme)

Long-term plans are a broad framework for all grades, which reflects the school's overall curriculum aims and objectives and which:

- Ensures coverage of the learning intentions for all curriculum subjects and R.E.
- Organises content into manageable and coherent units of work
- Sequences work
- Provides progression and continuity in each subject
- Shows balance and coherence within and across subjects

Medium Term Plans: Each School Term

Medium term plans are a detailed specification for each unit to be taught within the term. They remain flexible and may be amended in response to the needs of the children. They set out:

- Specific learning objectives
- Cross curricular links and references to other units of work
- Resource requirements
- The nature of the children's activities
- Assessment opportunities

Short Term Plans: Each Week or Day

Short term plans are produced on a daily or weekly basis and ensure effective day-to-day teaching. They include:

- The activity taken from medium term plan
- Clear Learning Intentions
- Organisation of groups where appropriate, and differentiation
- Use of other adults

- Assessment notes - record only children who do not fulfil or who exceed the Learning Intention

These weekly and daily plans are personal to staff.

All plans will be available for the Headteacher to monitor.

Planning Files Checklist

The following should be in your planning files:

English - medium term plans,
 - weekly handwriting, spelling, phonics,
Maths -medium term plans
 -weekly tables, learning focus, mental starters
Science
Computing
Art & Design
Music
PE & Swimming
History
Design and Technology
Geography
PSHE
RE

Assessment

The principles of Assessment

Assessment is a key part of the teaching process; it informs both the teacher and the student of how much they have understood learning intention and what the next steps should be. It is not just putting a tick or cross at the end of a page of sums or writing 'Good Effort' at the bottom of a list of sentences. Real assessment contains and passes-on meaning. Ideally work should be assessed in the presence of the student, but realistically, with a whole class of children to work with, this is not going to happen. So we need some strategies to enable our assessment of students' learning to be meaningful.

Assessment for learning involves using assessment in the classroom to raise pupils' achievement. It is based on the idea that pupils will improve most if they understand the aim of their learning, where they are in relation to this aim and how they can achieve the aim (or close the gap in their knowledge).

Assessment for learning should:

- Be part of effective planning of teaching and learning
- Focus on how children learn
- Be central to classroom practice
- Be sensitive and constructive
- Motivate the children
- Promote understanding of learning goals and success criteria
- Help the children know how to improve
- Develop the capacity for self-assessment
- Recognise all educational achievement

Formative Assessment

(Day to day assessment based on how well children fulfil learning objectives, providing feedback and involving children in improving their learning). Assessment notes will be jottings only about children who have not achieved or who have exceeded the learning objective. These notes will feed directly into the next day's or week's planning and are the most manageable record of children's attainment.

Sharing learning intentions

Within lessons this is a key strategy to ensure the children are focused on a clear, concise and achievable Learning Intention and are aware of how to meet the success criteria that are closely matched to the Learning Intention. Sometimes called Learning Objectives or referred to by the acronyms WALT (We Are Learning To...) and WILF (What I'm Looking For) Learning Intentions and Success Criteria will be clearly communicated to the class.

Strategies:

- Initially tell the students what they are going to learn during the lesson
- Write the learning intention on the board (for older children)

- Repeatedly remind children, during the lesson, of the learning intention and success criteria – how they can show they have grasped the intention
- Ensure the learning intention is at an appropriate level
- Ensure the success criteria are attainable; they are of a sufficiently narrow focus to show the learning in the area of the learning intention

Pupil Self Evaluation

Our aim:

- Children will learn to evaluate their own achievements against the learning objective and the success criteria
- Children will be involved in setting their own targets as appropriate

Marking and Feedback

Work will be marked with reference to the Learning Intention and Success Criteria. Too often, tasks that have been given to demonstrate learning in, say, characterisation, connectives or adjective use, have been marked with reference to spelling, handwriting or effort. Marking and feedback should refer to the learning intention and the student's progress towards meeting the success criteria. Comments should be constructive and direct the student towards improvement. Where appropriate time will be given to redraft written work in response to constructive comment.

For assessment to be formative, the feedback information has to be used. We aim to use marking as an assessment tool to:

- Provide clear feedback to children about strengths and indicate the next steps in their learning
- Reflect the learning objective of the task
- To refer the student to their progress in meeting the success criteria

Strategies:

These can be written or oral:

- Discussion with the child
- Written comments based on the learning intention and success criteria
- Build in a short time for the child to reflect on marking

Record of Achievement

We aim to celebrate significant aspects of achievement in order to provide motivation and self-esteem and therefore enable the children to achieve academic success more readily.

Strategies:

- Golden book, where particular achievements or progress are recorded
- Annual reports - our annual reports highlight the children's strengths and areas for development, progress in reaching their targets in academic work and personal /social development and those to aim for next.
- Children are to add their own self evaluative comments, from Year 1, about their achievements in school.
- Parents are invited to comment on the report and on achievements outside school.

Summative Assessment

(Snapshot testing which establishes what a child can do at the time)

The following tests are used in the school:

QCA and SATs tasks and tests

These are used for benchmarking - to enable pupils' and schools' performance to be compared and targets set for improvement. They are taken May each year. Children should be prepared for these tests at the beginning of the Summer Term by practising similar tests.

Class Tests

Created by individual teachers and used during day-to-day lessons e.g. mental maths tests, spelling tests etc. where appropriate.

End of Year Teacher Assessments

At the end of each year teachers assess each child to ascertain whether or not they are working at age-appropriate expectations. These assessments are in maths and English using the age expectations found in the National Curriculum.

The Learning Environment

Classrooms should be communities of enquiry where children both think and behave creatively and develop skills for learning. The way a teacher organises the classroom has an effect both on the teacher and the children.

We aim for the learning environment to be one where:

- Children feel physically and emotionally safe and secure
- Children are confident and happy
- Children have high self esteem
- The emphasis is on learning collaboratively and independently
- The surroundings are relaxing and stimulating
- Everyone is treated with respect

Consideration should be given to the following aspects:

- Grouping of tables to allow sufficient space for movement and to facilitate cooperative group work when appropriate
- The availability of a carpeted area where the class can be gathered together for instruction
- The use of music to relax, inspire or stimulate moods
- The arrangement and labelling of resources to enable children to select, use and return them independently
- General tidiness to encourage care of equipment

Display – we aim to make the room an attractive and welcoming place.

Displays will celebrate children's work and provide stimulation and information. Care will be taken with mounting, labelling and naming. Space should be provided for the display of models, where appropriate, as well as wall space. Teachers should use a variety of labelling styles e.g. stencils, computers etc.

The setting up of specific areas e.g. an attractive book corner, a well-organised art and craft area and a computer area where space permits. EYFS and KS1 classes should have an area available for role-play e.g. home corner, shop, dressing up etc. Through drama activities such as Mantle of the Expert, children at all stages of their learning journey are given the opportunity to think, speak and act 'in role' as part of investigations into a range of subjects.

Working Walls

Each class teacher will set aside space for both an English and a maths 'Working Wall' in the classroom. These are not fixed, permanent displays but rather spaces that help to reinforce the particular topic or strand the children are studying at the time. They may include teaching posters, exemplar work, reminders of Learning Intentions, extra applications of learning, web-links, mounted and displayed work etc. In essence all the aspects of the work the children are doing to support their learning will be exhibited there.

Time

Time is a valuable resource and Time Management within the classroom needs careful thought. When fixing times for the use of the hall, ICT or music, teachers should aim to maximise teaching

and learning time. Teachers should ensure that the appropriate proportion of time is spent on each subject.

Classroom routine- it should be clear to children exactly what is expected of them:

- On entry in the morning
- During registration
- At playtime and dinner time including wet playtime
- In assembly
- When changing for P.E.
- When going to the toilet
- When they need help
- When they need resources
- When they have finished work
- When tidying up
- At the end of the day
- After School clubs
- The routine for changing home readers
- When the teacher wants the attention of the whole class i.e. putting hands up

Classroom Ethos

The classroom atmosphere should be conducive to productive working and learning. Children should be aware of the behaviour and values expected of them. Ground rules for behaviour should be discussed and agreed with the children at the beginning of the school year. These rules, which will be fairly, firmly and consistently applied, should be displayed and referred to when inappropriate behaviour occurs.

The children are expected to show care and consideration for others. The children should respect each other and all adults working or helping in the school and they should know the consequences of inappropriate behaviour. All children should feel valued and experience a supportive relationship with the teacher. Teachers should praise good behaviour to emphasise what is expected. The giving of stickers, stars, Right Choice Tickets or House Points for effort should be encouraged. The 'Golden Book' and award of Headteacher's Stickers is recognition of outstanding contribution during the week.

Encouraging Responsibility and Independence

We wish to encourage children to think for themselves and to develop their self-discipline. Movement should be careful and quiet so as not to disturb others. Noise should be kept to a minimum.

Children are expected to settle quickly to a task and find, use and return their own equipment. When working co-operatively, children should show sensible behaviour and realise the importance of listening to each other.

Older children should know how to find information without interrupting the teacher. All children should be encouraged to think for themselves before asking for help. Similarly, in P.E. and Art, children should try to do things for themselves and help each other.

The importance of looking after personal belongings and class equipment should be stressed. Children should be taught the correct and safe use and storage of equipment.

Outdoors

It is our intention to use every part of the school grounds to extend the children's learning experience. Children will be encouraged to explore learning opportunities outside from their first days at school. We place a great emphasis on the development of an outdoor curriculum. We encourage children to take an interest in the environment around them and the weather so they can dress appropriately for the conditions. Throughout the school outdoor opportunities are planned into the teaching and learning in all areas of the curriculum.

Off site visits

Children benefit greatly from off-site visits linked with their learning. To this end we have access to the school buses during the day. All Off-site visits get approval prior to going. Risk assessments are carried out on all activities.

The Children's Learning Experience

- We aim to create a learning culture with a positive ethos in all areas of the school. We believe that children learn best when they are:
- Relaxed-feeling physically safe and emotionally secure
- Alert, attentive, motivated and inquisitive
- Positive learners - having a strong self-belief in their capacity to learn and achieve

Learning must be focused on an individual child's needs and abilities. The teacher's task is to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes the National Curriculum and the social, moral, and aesthetic values we wish to foster.

The strategies for teaching and learning should be varied, for example:

- Practical tasks
- Investigative tasks
- Stimulating and active learning
- Reading
- Reinforcement
- Games
- Speaking and listening
- Discussion or role play
- Creative activities
- Imaginative activities
- Learning through play

Teachers need to cater for different learning styles - auditory, visual and kinaesthetic - and build this into their plans.

Grouping

Organisation for effective teaching and learning must be flexible. The grouping of children should be considered and a balance of whole class, group and individual teaching should be used as appropriate. Different groups will suit different tasks and children need experience of a variety of groups including:

- Ability
- Mixed ability
- Friendship
- Pairs

Children should have the opportunity to work collaboratively within a group. When children are working in groups, the teacher should aim to be mainly with one group. The others must be able to work independently to some extent.

Teaching Strategies

Teachers need to practise a range of techniques and a balance should be sought between direct and indirect teaching methods.

The range of techniques includes:

- Explaining
- Instructing
- Facilitating

- Questioning - both open and closed
- Listening
- Observing
- Assessing
- Diagnosing
- Interacting
- Giving feedback

Alongside these, the teacher will offer praise, encouragement and opportunities for autonomy.

Differentiation

While aiming for children to progress according to their ability, it is important that their learning is correctly matched to their ability. The work should be sufficiently challenging and should be appropriate to the stage of learning that the child has reached.

Children also need practise and consolidation where appropriate.

This differentiation should either be by task or outcome. Expectations should be made clear to the children in terms of clear Success Criteria. They should be encouraged always to produce work to the best of their ability.

Special Educational Needs

Children with learning difficulties should be monitored by the class teacher and referred to the Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO) if necessary, following discussion with the parents.

Any child receiving intervention work from the Special Educational Needs team will have the targets of the interventions recorded on an Individual Education Plan (IEP). This will be agreed with parents prior to the programme starting and will be reviewed on a regular basis, with no more than a term between reviews.

Teachers must also be aware of the more able children and ensure that their needs are met. Such children with particular gifts or talents will be given planned opportunities to develop their potential.

Equal Opportunities

All efforts will be made to ensure that children have equal access to all curricular activities. This differs from treating all children equally insofar as it recognises that all children are different and require individual treatment to gain the greatest benefit from the opportunities offered.

Teachers should avoid generalised assumptions about particular groups of children, especially relating to race, gender or social background. Teachers should also be sensitive to books and resources that are used and be aware of negative or stereotyped images, which may be portrayed. We aim to build positive attitudes towards an understanding and acceptance of differences between people.

Professional Development

Staff Development

Staff development has a major role to play in the effectiveness of the school. A variety of In-service (INSET) opportunities, school based, cluster based or external, are used both to further an individual's needs and the requirements of the school as a whole. Limited resources mean that careful consideration must be given to the allocation of INSET. Our aim is to offer a balance between school and individual needs and to allocate resources as fairly as possible.

Staff Meetings

General day to day information is given mainly via notices or email to enable more curriculum based discussion to take place during the regular, weekly after school meeting. The context of these meetings is generally based on priorities within the School Improvement and Development Plan. The discussion, exchange of ideas and final agreement provide an opportunity for staff to learn from each other. Subject Leaders also have the opportunity to develop their own areas of the curriculum. Regular staff meetings help to provide a coherence and consistency throughout the school, contribute to greater staff awareness, provide an agreement as to what constitutes good practice and ultimately benefit the children and raise standards.

INSET Days and half days

These are planned by the school leadership Team and are mostly school based. The longer time available allows in depth development to take place benefiting both staff and school. These may be school led or outside help may be used.

Visits to other schools

The value of visiting other schools during the working day is acknowledged. This may be requested by individual staff or suggested by the Headteacher.

Course Attendance

It is our policy to try to give staff the training opportunities that they request, subject to a consideration of the budget and school as a whole. All staff, including non-teaching, are encouraged to attend courses.

Individual help within the school

One of the advantages of working within the very supportive F7 cluster is that there are specialists in all subjects available to offer guidance, advice and support. It is hoped that mutual respect and trust will encourage staff to use each other's expertise. At times, teachers may spend time in other classrooms either to benefit from other teachers' expertise, to help teachers in their own classes or to have other teachers watch them.

The INSET budget

The money allocated for INSET will need to be carefully managed in order to ensure that it is fully committed for the financial year. In order to maintain value for money, staff should give consideration to the quality of INSET provided.

Identification of INSET needs

A variety of factors will contribute to the identification of INSET needs.

Individual requirements will be identified from:

- A performance management review
- An individual's request
- The Headteacher's or a subject leader's assessment of an individual's needs
- A teacher's specific responsibility
- A change of teaching requiring updating or new training

School needs will be identified from:

- Staff discussion
- The School Improvement and Development Plan
- Governors' requests
- Subject leaders
- Assessment of children's specific teaching requirements
- An Inspector's report
- Changes to statutory requirements

It is important that all staff are involved in the needs identification process and that they are fully informed of how decisions for the prioritising of INSET are made.

Dissemination of INSET

Efficient dissemination of the knowledge and skills, which teachers learn on training courses, is necessary if both the individual and the school as a whole are to benefit from the training.

Staff have the opportunity to feedback to other staff during weekly meetings.

The dissemination of INSET also extends to the support which is considered necessary from other staff, subject leaders or the Principal.

Governors will be kept informed of staff INSET through Headteacher's report to the Governors.

Monitoring and Evaluation of INSET

Initially, individual staff who attend courses will need to evaluate whether the course was considered worthwhile and 'value for money'. This will have implications for future INSET.

If training is to be of value, it is important that it is effective - contributing to the improved quality of teaching and learning. Staff should be able to identify improvements which have followed INSET. The Performance Management process also provides an opportunity to see if the benefits have been made from the previous INSET. The Principal has overall responsibility for the monitoring.

The administration of INSET

This is primarily the responsibility of the Headteacher. Any member of staff wishing to apply for a course should talk to the Headteacher. The school secretary keeps a file of course applications whilst expenditure is monitored by the finance officer.

Teaching Assistants

Aim

Teaching assistants are an invaluable support to teachers. We aim to provide as much teaching support as possible within the constraints of the budget. They are equal members of staff and part of the team. They should be kept informed of decisions that affect the school as a whole. Training opportunities will be offered to teaching assistants. Teaching assistants work in partnership with teachers and it is important that they feel valued and receive and give both thanks and praise.

Areas of Responsibility

A teaching assistant's role in the class is extremely varied. We recognise the skills of an experienced teaching assistant and while their job may involve general, repetitive tasks, where possible these should be given to parent helpers. Teaching assistants should spend the majority of their time working with groups of children under the direct supervision of the teacher. Sometimes they may be asked to supervise the class while the teacher works with a group. In view of this, children are expected to give teaching assistants the same respect as they do teachers and follow their instructions. Where applicable, some teaching assistants will be trained to teach intervention. We will encourage Teaching Assistants to pursue training and, ultimately qualified teacher status by supporting their study needs and releasing them for training days.

Planning and Assessment

Tasks, discussion points and suitable questions, including the aim of the activity, should be carefully explained to the teaching assistant. This could be via a contact book. They also need to be aware of any child who has special needs. The teacher should discuss the activity with the classroom assistant at the end of the lesson where possible and discuss any relevant notes that may have been kept. Special Needs assistants working with children on the Special Needs register should receive copies of the I.E.P.'s and any other relevant curriculum plans.

General

All teaching assistants will receive a job description that is subject to annual review. They should be kept aware of any changes in personal circumstances that might affect the children they work with and need to be aware of the need for confidentiality. A copy of all policies will be kept in the office to which classroom assistants will have access. Part of a teaching assistant's duty will involve doing playground duty and they should be aware of the school's behaviour policy.

Parents & the Community

Aim

We recognise that meaningful links between home and school and between community and school are invaluable. We have a key role in promoting community cohesion. We aim to foster such links and make full use of the parents and various support services who offer their help e.g. the church, the school nurse, dentist, police, fireman, performers, students etc.

If there are close links between home and school, children's achievement is improved and they are more highly motivated. The Home/School agreement serves to outline the responsibilities of parents, pupils and the school. Children learn through contact with all people. Visitors to school or excursions into the local community provide a link with the real world and a relevance to their work. We wish to encourage an atmosphere and ethos, which is warm and welcoming. Teachers are ready to meet parents anytime by appointment.

Parents have a right to know, to discuss and to challenge the education that their child receives.

Parents' Meetings

There are several formal meetings for parents:

- An initial meeting and home visits for Reception parents
- Parent consultation in the Autumn and Spring terms
- An open afternoon to view work throughout the school
- Occasional curriculum evenings e.g. Maths, English etc.
- Residential trips
- Parents are also encouraged to visit the school prior to their children starting school and are invited to termly class assemblies.

Information

All parents receive a school brochure and a copy of the behaviour policy.

A class brochure is sent to parents at the beginning of each term to explain class procedures, work to be covered, homework etc. Information is distributed to parents regularly via a weekly newsletter. Detailed formal reports are sent home at the end of the year. Parents have an opportunity to discuss their child's report with the class teacher.

Parent Help

We firmly believe in the value of teachers and parents working together. Parent help is enlisted for reading at home and regular homework is sent to practise spellings and to carry out a maths task or other work connected to a topic.

Parents are also asked to help with school outings and in the classrooms, although we do not encourage parents to help in the class that their children are in. A booklet has been produced, and is available in school, which offers guidelines to parent helpers.

Fund Raising

The Parent, Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA) arrange fund raising events during the year and are very welcoming of new members.

Community

We aim to build purposeful relationships with the wider community. Various money-raising activities take place each year for charity and the school supports different charities each year. We invite the community into school for fund raising events.

Additional Activities

An important part of our curriculum is to provide a wide range of after school activities such as football, cricket, drama, rugby, cross country, table tennis, theatre, athletics etc. Such provision is reliant upon voluntary help from staff, parents and members of the community.