

General Policy Document (Statutory)

Document Name: Teaching and Learning Policy

First Written Date: September 2017

Review Date: March 2021

Reviewed By: All Staff

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Teaching & Learning Policy

At Bramhope Primary School we view teaching, learning, planning, assessment and home learning as interwoven; therefore this policy covers aspects of all of these.

This policy identifies and describes our core beliefs (shown in bold) about the teaching and learning that we plan for the children from Reception to Year Six. The aim of doing this is to provide a cohesive experience for the pupils on their journey through our school. Our policy is informed by research into teaching and learning. Where necessary, there are references to this research in the appendix.

Aims

We believe that educating a child consists of the whole school experience. Teachers create a safe learning environment with positive teacher/pupil and pupil/pupil relationships. In such an environment, pupils will be willing to take risks and challenge themselves, helping them achieve at a high level and fulfil their potential. **The classroom should be characterised by both trust and challenge.**

We view our school as a community in which adults model to children how to treat each other. We look for opportunities to praise effort, determination, independence, thoughtfulness, resilience and seeking challenge. In addition to the national curriculum, we have a strong commitment to a broad range of foundation subjects including art, Spanish and P.E. These subjects are all taught by specialists.

A child at Bramhope Primary School can work independently and collaboratively; respects others; is interested in the wider world and is not afraid to make mistakes.

Classroom routines and learning behaviours

Pupils tend to enjoy learning and to do better when they are more intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated to achieve. However, children are unlikely to be intrinsically motivated if they do not have a high degree of success or feel that their efforts are recognised.

Teachers help pupils to observe the connections between their *learning* behaviour and their accomplishments. We have a reward system that prioritises recognising the effort that pupils have made. Teachers give frequent verbal praise, house points and certificates are awarded weekly.

Behaviours conducive to learning and appropriate social interaction should be explained at the beginning of the academic year and reinforced throughout the year. Pupils benefit from high expectations, predictable classroom routines, clear guidance and consistently enforced rules. The consistently enforced rules for good learning behaviours can be summarised by our insistence on what we refer to as 'SLANT' or 'Show 5'. We place great importance on this because we recognise that no matter how great a lesson is, if pupils aren't alert, sitting up, and actively listening, learning is limited. SLANT is an effective acronym because it identifies the five key learning behaviours that will allow pupils to be successful and absorb the most information. The acronym is:

S– Sit up

L– Listen

A–Ask and answer questions

N– No talking

T– Track the teacher

This strategy serves as a short, quick reminder of how pupils need to be acting in class. This phrase (or the alternative 'show 5') doesn't take a lot of time; therefore teachers are not wasting valuable learning time explaining what they expect from their pupils. By consistently using this acronym in all lessons, pupils understand exactly what they are expected to do. We expect children in all lessons to SLANT whenever the teacher is speaking and visual prompts are used to remind the children which learning behaviours are expected all the time.

We value pupils' social skills as well as their achievements in other areas. We plan opportunities for learning cooperation/collaboration, respecting others' views, providing constructive feedback and conflict resolution. Depending on the type of learning that has been planned for the lesson, it may be most appropriate for children to sit in rows, groups or pairs. Children should only sit at and work in groups when it enhances the learning.

We believe that emotional well-being is integral to successful, everyday functioning in the classroom and influences academic performance and learning. It is also important to interpersonal relationships, social development, and overall mental health.

All staff share a responsibility for children's emotional well-being as well as their academic progress. As learners, teachers must want to continually improve their practice and be given the time and opportunity to develop their subject and pedagogical knowledge in a focused manner. We encourage staff to learn from each other through professional dialogue, observing each other, acting on feedback and planning/evaluating together.

Teaching at Bramhope

The core purpose of a school is to provide consistent, high-quality teaching. Excellent teachers motivate their pupils, are patient and insistent on high standards. They have clear and consistent classroom rules and routines and make efficient use of time. **Pupils are encouraged to think hard about the significant skills and knowledge they have been taught** (e.g. challenge assumptions, justify opinions, learn new knowledge, recall and make links with previous learning) Pupils are challenged in an atmosphere of support and encouragement, where failure is seen as a learning opportunity.

We are adopting a mastery approach to all curriculum planning, striving to identify the most significant concepts on which to focus and to value depth of understanding over the pace of progression through the curriculum.

We have responded to recent research identifying what has the greatest impact on learning. As a result, we focus on the following:

1. (Pedagogical) content knowledge (Strong evidence of impact on student outcomes)

The most effective teachers have deep knowledge of the subjects they teach, and when teachers' knowledge falls below a certain level it is a significant impediment to students' learning. As well as a strong understanding of the material being taught, teachers must also understand the ways students think about the content, be able to evaluate the thinking behind students' own methods, and identify students' common misconceptions.

2. Quality of instruction (Strong evidence of impact on student outcomes)

Includes elements such as effective questioning and use of assessment by teachers. Specific practices, like reviewing previous learning, providing model responses for students, giving adequate time for practice to embed skills securely and progressively introducing new learning (scaffolding) are also elements of high quality instruction.

3. Classroom climate (Moderate evidence of impact on student outcomes)

Covers quality of interactions between teachers and students, and teacher expectations: the need to create a classroom that is constantly demanding more, but still recognising students' self-worth. It also involves attributing student success to effort rather than ability and valuing resilience to failure (grit).

4. Classroom management (Moderate evidence of impact on student outcomes)

A teacher's abilities to make efficient use of lesson time, to coordinate classroom resources and space, and to manage students' behaviour with clear rules that are consistently enforced, are all relevant to maximising the learning that can take place. These environmental factors are necessary for good learning rather than its direct components.

5. Teacher beliefs (Some evidence of impact on student outcomes)

Why teachers adopt particular practices, the purposes they aim to achieve, their theories about what learning is and how it happens and their conceptual models of the nature and role of teaching in the learning process all seem to be important.

6. Professional behaviours (Some evidence of impact on student outcomes)

Behaviours exhibited by teachers such as reflecting on and developing professional practice, participation in professional development, supporting colleagues, and liaising and communicating with parents.

(Reference: *WHAT MAKES GREAT TEACHING?* - Sutton Trust. Robert Coe, Cesare Aloisi, Steve Higgins and Lee Elliot Major -2016)

Learning at Bramhope

We recognise that identifying when learning has taken place is not straightforward. For example, Teachers need to think clearly about the learning over a unit of work, rather than focussing too hard on a single lesson. Similarly, behaviours that may be desirable in the classroom do not guarantee that learning has taken place. For example, *pupils being busy -lots of (written) work is being done, pupils supplying correct answers or the classroom being calm*))

At Bramhope, Teachers seek to ensure that learning has taken place by adopting what Dylan William refers to 'responsive teaching'. This requires teachers to:

- Be convinced that all pupils can make good progress.
- Be aware of prior learning (this could be from previous assessments, from setting a task or from spending time talking with pupils) *Why can't he/she do it? What do I need to teach first so that they can?*
- Have excellent subject knowledge to close the gap between current and expected learning.
- Continuously adjust planning to meet the needs of individuals, groups of pupils or the whole class.

- Not presume on learning having taken place *“Less successful teachers ask fewer questions and almost no process questions... [whilst] the most successful teachers spent more time...asking questions [and] more time checking for understanding.”* (Rosenshine)
- Use frequent low-stakes testing to ensure that children are aware what procedures and knowledge we expect them to acquire.

Evidence from frequent ‘drop ins’ substantiates the fact that Teachers at Bramhope practise responsive teaching.

Planning units of work

We have no compulsory formats for planning.

Initial planning is often collaborative and for a unit of work. This is to establish the sequence of steps in learning and to clarify what we are teaching and why. **At this stage, we identify key concepts and knowledge that we want the pupils to retain in their long-term memories.** *“...the aim of all instruction is to alter long-term memory. If nothing has changed in long-term memory, nothing has been learned”* [Kirschner, Sweller and Clark.]

Planning effectively requires excellent subject knowledge in order to establish priorities and to know what to leave out. The better we know our subjects, the better we should be able to explain the concepts to the pupils. The long-term unit plans establish the direction of the learning but are flexible about how much time it might take.

We recognise that knowledge of prior learning is essential in order to pitch the level of challenge. Formative assessment, in the form of conversations, questions and low-stakes testing, helps teachers pitch the level of challenges more accurately when planning.

At the weekly planning meetings, teams plan a sequence of small steps aiming to build a secure foundation before moving on to any new concepts. **Siegfried Engelmann** suggests that just 15% of a lesson should be new content, the rest being review of, or slight expansions on, previous content. Some lessons may be ‘nothing new: just review’ according to what teachers decide is necessary.

We are conscious of the need to plan in enough time to practise so that children can become fluent in key skills and procedures. Frequent, low-stakes testing of previously taught material helps to establish when fluency has been achieved. **Low-stakes tests of essential knowledge help children commit facts to memory**

Quality First Teaching

All our staff teach in flexible groupings, making decisions about what is the best way to use their time. Any of the children in a class may need time working with an adult individually or in a small group. This is to allow a closer matching of the task to the pupil and may be to increase the level of challenge for pupils who have already mastered what the other pupils are working on. Regardless of ability, there are often times when pupils need a bit more time, reassurance or support to reach a point of fluency. **The responsibility for all children’s progress and for deciding when and how to support them lies with the class teacher.** Class teachers often support the least able children and if a teaching assistant is given this role, the responsibility for over-seeing the impact of the support still lies with the class teacher.

Additional support (‘Quality First Teaching’) can take many forms including:

- Simplified examples of the concept (always aiming to progress until the pupil can access the same degree of difficulty as the rest of the class);
- Additional adult support (as little support as possible to avoid ‘learned helplessness’)
- Adapting the targets that the pupil is to work towards (different success criteria)
- Providing additional time, prompts or scaffolded activities.

Interventions

If children do not respond to adaptations such as these, teachers (with advice from the SENCO) may decide to use a more formal intervention. The SENCO is aware of all children who have a formal intervention and is given a copy of their support plan. Support plans are reviewed termly with class teachers, parents and the SENCO. Further details of our provision for children are explained in our Special Educational Needs Policy.

Providing Challenge for High-attaining Pupils

If pupils spend most of their time on work that is easily completed, they are denied the opportunity to develop the work ethic and resilience that is necessary to master challenges.

Meeting the needs of high-attaining pupils is based on the same principles as that of effective teaching for all pupils. However, we recognise that teachers must plan in order to ensure that is sufficient challenge for the most capable pupils in the class.

Teachers do not assume that age or test scores are always reliable indicators of what their pupils are capable of learning, particularly for pupils with advanced abilities or achievement levels. A conversation with a pupil may well provide a more accurate assessment of their abilities within a particular subject than just a test score.

Pupils with advanced reasoning abilities in a subject may lack content knowledge due to lack of prior exposure, but they may be able to master it in much less time than other children.

Pupils that are highly capable in one domain (area of learning) may not be equally capable in other subjects or even in other domains within that subject. Teachers use assessment and feedback to ensure that the planning and delivery of the curriculum is sufficiently flexible to match the needs of the children in the class.

Teachers plan for opportunities for discussion and debate to provoke deeper levels of thinking. Teachers encourage the development of pupils' critical thinking and reasoning abilities by providing opportunities for solving complex problems, particularly in domains in which pupils already have substantial knowledge. **Sustained, project, problem or design-based tasks) addressing authentic problems offer high-ability learners the opportunities they need to flexibly apply and extend their knowledge and skills. All children benefit from these experiences but children will first need to learn the knowledge needed to apply it in a different context.**

We understand that pupils with advanced cognitive abilities may not be as advanced socially and emotionally. Such children may need help with social skills development.

Tracking, Data and Accountability

Our English and Maths assessment procedures are designed to help teachers deliver the curriculum accurately. We choose to track what we have identified as mattering the most to the children's learning: phonics, reading, writing and maths. Good teachers constantly check on learning to guide future teaching, so that tasks match the children's needs.

The gathering of data must be meaningful and manageable; the data must be reliable if it is to be worthwhile investing the time in gathering it.

We combine frequent, low-stakes testing of phonics, spelling tests, table facts and maths facts with termly formal testing to allow time for progress to become apparent and secure. Assessing too soon after teaching can give a falsely optimistic impression.

We use termly, formal tests from Y1-Y6 to record the attainment of individual pupils in Reading, SPAG, Maths calculation and Maths reasoning. Teachers may also choose to collate data at other times if they are confident that it reflects an accurate picture. **As with all assessment, summative assessment may or may not be accurate. Teachers should always use their professional judgement to help inform their decisions about teaching and what is communicated to parents.** Parents have a right to know about test scores and test papers can be returned to children and shared with parents as appropriate.

The progress of groups of pupils and individuals is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team at Pupil Progress Meetings in January, April and July. These consist of discussions between class teachers, the Head Teacher and a member of the SLT with an emphasis on what actions are being taken in response to what the data appears to be

saying and reviewing the impact of previous actions. The progress of children in receipt of the pupil premium grant and those who are deemed most vulnerable is tracked separately by the Head teacher and SENCO.

Information on attainment, progress, interventions and changes to the teaching of the curriculum are communicated to the sub-committee for standards and attainment. The results of key stage tests are communicated to the full Governing body. In both cases, the data helps to inform the subsequent development plans for the school

For further details see the assessment schedule, Monitoring and assessment policy and the Pupil Premium statement.

Homework /'Home learning'

Our Home learning provides children with opportunities to prepare, embed, extend, improve or apply their learning. Home learning should be specific and purposeful so that it is clear to pupils/carers and parents why it is worthwhile. As with all learning, the tasks may be adapted to meet the needs of a group or an individual.

We communicate with parents/carers so that their role in any home learning, particularly how much support to give, is clear. We take care to ensure that the level of difficulty does not require parents to teach new concepts to the children. We use Parentmail to help teachers and parents/carers communicate about home learning and parents are informed in person or by email if work is not completed as requested. We also use age appropriate rewards and sanctions to support the home learning policy.

In our view, the home learning that impacts most on a child's learning is the regular practise of reading and foundational maths knowledge.

We are aware that within any class there will be considerable variation in the home environment and that this may affect home learning. This includes the time, space and resources available for completing the task. When necessary, we will offer support in school to enable the task to be completed (e.g. access to the library/internet).

For further details see our Home Learning policy

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

References

WHAT MAKES GREAT TEACHING? - Sutton Trust. Robert Coe, Cesare Aloisi, Steve Higgins and Lee Elliot Major (2016))

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