

Howard Park Community School

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

Introduction

A question we must all ask of ourselves is:

“What can we do, individually and collectively in our school, to raise the standard of teaching and learning?”

Good teachers, using the most effective methods, are the key to higher standards
Dfes Excellence in Schools. 1997

The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the opportunity to learn.

John Lubbock

◆ Values, Beliefs and the Principles of Teaching and Learning

The quality of teaching and learning is at the heart of school improvement. Real, lasting change can only come from what teachers and teaching support assistants do consistently in the classroom and other teaching and learning areas in school.

Educational change depends on what teachers do and think – it's as simple and as complex as that

Michael Fullan. 1991

At Howard Park Community School we believe that all children should be given the opportunity to learn. To enable pupils and teachers to engage in this process we will try to create an environment that will transform pupil achievement. Teachers and education support assistants will endeavour to

- Be enthusiastic and positive
- Become critical thinkers
- Be creative, imaginative and stimulating
- Be allowed the opportunity to practise leadership and management skills
- Be able and willing to scrutinise our practice and willing to make appropriate changes
- Have a desire to improve on our previous best

Within our school we will attempt to develop a culture that provides quality teaching and learning. By providing mutual support and guidance and agreeing a shared philosophy on how best to raise standards of achievement, there will emerge a unity of purpose which is a condition to achieving consistency of educational practice.

Staff will discuss, agree and implement policies in line with school expectations. We realise the importance of providing a structured, caring and consistent approach to teaching and learning with high teacher input and realistic yet challenging pupil expectations.

Good teaching is not just a matter of being efficient, developing competence, mastering technique and possessing the right kind of knowledge. Good teaching also involves emotional understanding. Good teaching is a profoundly emotional activity.
Changing Teachers, Changing Times: Andy Hargreaves. 1995

- **A Teaching and Learning Environment**

It is essential to develop a teaching culture where talking frankly and knowledgeably about teaching is acceptable and enlightening. Within our school all teaching staff, inclusive of education support assistants, are able to discuss freely the complexities of teaching and learning.

- By talking about teaching we are able to develop further our shared understanding of quality teaching and learning. We are also more able to refine and sharpen our own practice.
- Regular and planned staff meetings and team meetings discuss features associated with improving our teaching strategies in school.
- Agreed whole school INSET provides staff with a shared understanding and commitment to improving teaching and learning
- Staff professional development programmes reflect the need for developing personal competence
- Teaching resource materials available in the staffroom, resource room and around school are dedicated to promoting greater understanding and knowledge of subject areas
- Classroom and whole school displays reflect the quality of provision and standards of work expected across all levels

The school creates and reflects an environment that promotes quality teaching and learning.

- **Teaching Styles, Planning and Assessment**

In our school teachers adopt a range of teaching styles appropriate to the age, ability and situation of the children. The repertoire and range of teaching strategies is a critical part of effective teacher planning incorporating whole class, group and individual work. Teachers are engaged in long, medium and short term planning.

Teachers create a climate in the classroom that allows teaching to be:

- *Discursive* – characterised by high quality oral work
- *Interactive* – pupils' contributions are encouraged, expected, developed and extended
- *Well paced* – providing a sense of urgency and the need to make progress and succeed
- *Confident* – teachers have a clear understanding of the objectives. These are explained precisely to the children so they, too, have a clear understanding and purpose for the lesson. Objectives are displayed for children to read and be reminded of each session

- *Ambitious* – teachers establish high expectations for pupil achievement or attainment

The setting of literacy and numeracy targets is embedded in the target setting process in school. All teachers identify suitable strategies to support the targets. Children have class, group or individual targets appropriate to their level of work.

Differentiated activities for groups of children are identified in teacher planning. The promotion of self-esteem is vital to the teaching and learning process. The choice of tasks, targets and questions for learners is based on the varied abilities of pupils identified through a differentiated approach. By setting targets teachers provide clear goals for achievement and contribute to raising self-esteem.

- **Pupil Tracking, Target Setting and Assessment**

School has a well-developed system of monitoring pupil progress. EYFS outcomes and end of Key Stage results are scrutinised and analysed. Optional SATs are implemented in Years 3, 4 and 5. Other assessments are used to analyse difficulties with individual's progress.

Information provided through planned assessment opportunities, formative as well as summative, serve to influence the quality of teaching and learning practices in school.

Assessment information is used to demonstrate how well pupils have performed and whether the teaching practices are effective or not. We use this information to reflect critically on the teaching and learning strategies agreed, which in turn are reflected in the issues to be addressed in the SDP.

- **Effective Use of Teaching and Learning Resources**

The use and management of classroom resources are fundamental to the extension of the range and repertoire of teachers' skills whether it will be whole class work, group work or independent learning.

Each teacher is responsible for the management and organisation of their classroom including use and storage of resources and development of ETA's support where provided. Classrooms are arranged for ease of movement and accessibility to teaching materials and maximum pupil interaction. Teachers in school organise cupboards and drawers so children are encouraged to become independent. Great care is taken to ensure that everyone in school knows how to look after, use and replace the resources provided.

Education Teaching Assistants are made aware of the planning and teaching and learning opportunities to be provided. Files are maintained by ETA's who keep an up to date record of the progress being made. The head & deputy mentor ETAs; meetings are held regularly alongside half termly training sessions.

The library is well stocked to provide appropriate reading material including – fiction and non-fiction. Teachers are responsible for ensuring individual class libraries contain relevant good quality stock covering a range of genres. Children are encouraged to treat all reading books with respect. Monitors are appointed to ensure that the library is well maintained.

ICT Developments

In school we are very much aware of the potential for ICT within all curriculum areas. The development of the ICT resources, the timetabled use of it, and the ongoing professional development for all staff will further support the potential of ICT as an efficient and invaluable aid for teaching and learning. Through careful planning we are developing much more the potential for pupils and teachers to create, receive, collect and share data, text, images and sounds as a vast range of topics. Other technological aids used by staff to enhance the quality of teaching and the promotion of learning include Fizzbooks, Classmates, Ipads, Ipods, interactive whiteboards, digital cameras and video cameras, remote controlled vehicles, roamers, lego dacta, video, television and music players. All classrooms still have networked P.C.s in addition to the above and we have moved some PCs to the library to create a small suite for teaching basic skills..

• Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The quality of teaching is the major factor of school provision that makes a difference to pupils' achievements. In school we reflect and evaluate our own practice against agreed procedures. It is only by monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning strategies that we are able to improve.

The following procedures are undertaken in school in a planned and systematic way:

- Review attainment data to analyse trends and make comparisons in order to set appropriate targets
- Scrutinise pupils' work, including a sample of books, folders and individual pieces across the ability range and years, using NC descriptions as the set criteria
- Review the quality of marking against policy expectations so that pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve
- Use assessment to inform planning and teaching
- Observe teaching against criteria such as high expectations, effective organisation and use of appropriate teaching styles, identification of teaching and/or learning objectives
- Review the learning environment through display, resourcing, storage and retrieval systems
- Consider the use of resources and their impact on the learning
- Review the setting of homework and how it reinforces and extends learning
- Analyse planning for the quality and range of curriculum delivery
- Focus on particular aspects of teaching linked to SIP
- An established Performance Management Cycle and review, to incorporate all staff

This accounts for staff professional development, which allows for:

- The improvement of skills
- The capacity to analyse and reflect on practice
- The ability to investigate, explore and collect evidence
- The confidence to receive and give ideas

In addition, in school all staff are encouraged to, and become engaged in, discussions relating to improving the quality of teaching and learning. This reinforces and supports the whole school philosophy.

- **Community/Parental Involvement**

In order to strengthen the capacity of the school to provide effective learning we have attempted to involve the parents in this process. In order to do so we have established certain features:

- Home/School Agreements. These outline the responsibilities of the school, parent and pupil
- Consultation Evenings twice a year as well as an open afternoon in the summer term. Pupil progress is discussed and issues to be addressed for the next stage of pupil learning. Annual reports are provided in the summer term
- Regular newsletters, leaflets and literature to keep parents updated on curriculum developments
- Information on Homework
- Home / School Reading Records
- Curriculum Evenings – providing parents with an insight into how subjects are taught, and their expectations
- Displays of pupil work
- Achievement assemblies, evening events and performances
- Opportunities for parents to become involved in school voluntarily either to observe, participate in or to support learning.
- Parent groups within school
- Regular Parent / Child learning sessions

By developing a teaching and learning policy, creating a culture where values are agreed and understood by all who have contact with children and parents, it is hoped that the children in school will have the opportunities to achieve all of which they are capable.

All staff and governors have access to this policy. It will be reviewed in line with the cycle for policy review.

- **Equal Opportunities**

This policy applies to all, irrespective of race, age, sex or disability

POLICY FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

APPENDIX 1

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

Teaching – and the extent to which teachers:

- Show good subject knowledge and understanding in the way they present and discuss their subject
- Are technically competent in teaching phonics and other basic skills
- Be sensitive, and respond, to the emotional well being and developmental needs of the children
- Plan effectively setting clear objectives that pupils understand
- Challenge and inspire pupils, expecting the most of them, so as to deepen their knowledge and understanding
- Use methods which enable all pupils to learn effectively
- Manage pupils well and insist on high standards of behaviour
- Use time, support staff and other resources, including information and communications technology, effectively
- Assess pupils' work thoroughly and use assessments to help and encourage pupils to overcome difficulties
- Use home learning effectively to reinforce and/or extend what is learned in school

Learning – and the extent to which pupils:

- Acquire new knowledge or skills, develop ideas and increase their understanding
- Apply intellectual, physical or creative effort in their work
- Are productive and work at a good pace
- Show interest in their work, are able to sustain concentration and think and learn for themselves
- Understand what they are doing, how well they have done and how they can improve

POLICY FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

APPENDIX 2

ESTABLISHING STRENGTHS AND IDENTIFYING AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- How well is the task, the context, the background introduced and explained? Any evidence of some pupils lost from the start?
- How useful are the questions the teacher asks? What is your view of the replies the pupils give?
- Is there any evidence of pupils thinking and drawing conclusions themselves?
- How demanding is the reading required in the lesson, if any, and how well do pupils cope with it?
- What is the function and quality of any writing done in the lesson? Do pupils know what is expected in the particular style or format?
- When pupils are grouped in ways other than the whole class, what gains in learning, if any, result?
- How well do different features of the lesson (explanations, group work, individual work, whole-class discussion etc) fit together and build on each other?
- Do you notice any particular groups whose learning and progress is different from the majority?
- Is there any evidence of pupils making an intellectual or creative effort that you would wish to note particularly?
- Is the pace of the lesson sufficiently demanding and stimulating? Are there any flat patches where pupils turn off? Does the teacher spot them and react accordingly?
- Have you the evidence to give you a view of what pupils have learned during the lesson? Can you relate it directly to the teaching?
- Do you have a sense of a missed opportunity in this lesson? If so, why did it happen?