



## Thornhill Primary School

### Learning and Teaching policy

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#### Rationale

At Thornhill Primary School we are committed to high quality teaching and learning to raise standards of achievement for all children. This policy summarises expectations and common working practices. It reflects what has been agreed in terms of approach and consistency and makes explicit the best practice to which the school aspires. It also reflects the aims and objectives of the school and supports its vision.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our subject policies.

#### Principles of Teaching and Learning:

Learning is the purpose of the whole school and is a shared commitment. At Thornhill Primary School we recognise that education involves children, parents, staff, governors, the community and the local authority, and that for optimum benefit all should work closely together to support the process of learning. Working in partnership, we aim to:

- provide a supportive, positive, healthy, caring and safe environment, which has high expectations and values all members of the school community;
- recognise the needs and aspirations of all individuals and provide opportunities for all pupils to make the best possible progress and attain the highest personal achievements;
- ensure children can develop as literate, numerate and technologically competent individuals, within a broad, balanced, exciting and challenging curriculum;
- provide rich and varied contexts and experiences for pupils to acquire, develop and apply a broad range of knowledge, skills and understanding;
- provide a curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, physical, mental and emotional development of the pupils;
- develop individuals with lively, enquiring minds, good thinking skills, self-respect, self-discipline and positive attitudes;
- encourage all children to be enthusiastic and committed learners, promoting their self-esteem, self-worth and emotional well-being;
- develop children's confidence and capacity to learn and work independently and collaboratively;
- develop enduring values of respect, honesty, equality, integrity, tolerance, fairness and trust;
- encourage children to respond positively to the opportunities, challenges and responsibilities of a rapidly changing world;
- encourage children to value the diversity in our society and the environment in which they live;
- encourage children to become active and responsible citizens, contributing positively to the community and society.

As a school, we are committed to our mission statement – *‘Every child is unique and at the heart of everything we do’*.

### **Ethos**

The ethos and atmosphere underpin the agreed aims of the school. In the course of their daily work the staff will contribute to the development of this ethos through:

- providing a calm and effective working environment, in which each child can produce his or her best work;
- providing a welcoming environment, in which courtesy, kindness and respect are fostered;
- providing positive role models;
- providing a fair and disciplined environment, in line with the school’s behaviour policy;
- effective management of their professional time;
- developing links with all stakeholders and the wider community;
- valuing and celebrating pupils’ success and achievements;
- reviewing personal and professional development in order to ensure a high level of professional expertise

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Learning and teaching is a shared responsibility and all members of the school community have an important part to play. (See Home-School Agreement)

All members of the school community should work towards the school’s aims by:

- Creating an environment for learning that is stimulating and enjoyable for both pupils and staff
- Focusing on improving standards of attainment and progress through enquiry and curiosity
- Providing a positive ‘can do’ culture where praise, respect and encouragement prevail and where self - esteem is high
- Embedding self-respect and self-discipline in work and behaviour
- Listening to our school community, valuing their views and acting on what they say
- Working in partnership with other professionals in order to improve our provision and practice

### **Teachers will endeavor to:**

- provide a challenging and stimulating curriculum designed to encourage all children to reach the highest standard of achievement;
- recognise and be aware of the needs of each individual child according to ability and aptitude;
- ensure that learning is progressive and continuous;
- be good role models, punctual, well prepared and organised;
- keep up-to-date with educational issues;
- provide clear information on school procedures and pupil progress;
- have a positive attitude to change and the development of their own expertise;
- establish links with the local community to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life;
- work collaboratively with all involved in education to develop a shared philosophy and commonality of practice.

### **Parents are encouraged to support their child’s learning by:**

- ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, well-rested and in good health;
- ensuring that their child arrives at school wearing the correct uniform and bringing necessary equipment;
- providing support for the discipline within the school and for the teacher’s role;

- supporting the work of educational targets and becoming actively involved in the implementation of any support programme;
- participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainment;
- ensuring early contact with school to discuss matters which affect a child's happiness, progress and behaviour;
- support the school's homework policy and give due importance to any homework;
- ensuring that all contact addresses and telephone numbers are up to date and correct;
- allowing their child to become increasingly independent as they progress throughout the school;
- informing the school of reasons for their child's absence;
- actively supporting the Home-School Agreement.

**Pupils are encouraged to support the school's aims by:**

- attending school in good health, maintained by adequate diet, exercise and sleep;
- attending school regularly and punctually;
- being organised, bringing necessary equipment, taking letters home promptly, etc.;
- conducting themselves in an orderly manner in line with the expected behaviour policy;
- taking increased responsibility for their own learning.

**The community is invited to support the school by:**

- contributing to activities, such as assemblies, specialist outings, clubs, etc.;
- presenting themselves as positive role models to be emulated;
- organising activities and events throughout the year to extend and deepen pupils' knowledge and skills;
- supporting school events;

**Planning**

The foundation for curricular development is the School Improvement Plan, developed through a process of collaboration between staff, and approved by governors.

At Thornhill Primary School we are committed to following the Programmes of Study as required by the National Curriculum 2014. A cycle of National Curriculum Programmes of Study is drawn up by staff and is carefully balanced to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum, PSHCE and RE. We follow a cross curricular approach to learning where some subjects are taught through a topic and some are covered as discrete subjects. Regular staff meetings are used to discuss various aspects of the curriculum and ensure consistency of approach and standards.

Planning takes place half-termly, with reference to the National Curriculum 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage and the Whole School Long Term Curriculum Plan. Swimming instruction with specialist teachers takes place at the local swimming pool,

Termly/half-termly plans are submitted to the Headteacher/Curriculum Leaders. Plans are based upon previous assessment data, pupil need and subject expectation. Curriculum time can be planned as continuous study throughout the term, or as blocks of study. At Thornhill Primary School we are committed to raising standards of basic skills. By basic skills, we mean the ability to read, write and speak in English and to use Mathematics at a proficient level to facilitate learning across the curriculum.

**The role of the Subject leader is:**

To provide professional leadership and management for subject to secure high quality teaching, effective use of resources and improved standards of learning and achievement for all pupils.

Where leaders are fully effective, they...

- Play a leading role in preparing and reviewing policy for the teaching of their subject;
- Plan and organise the curriculum for their subject throughout the school, establishing how good standards, continuity and progression can be achieved and sustained;

- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of policy and planning;
- Regularly and systematically provide guidance to colleagues on content, methodology and resources;
- Oversee the assessment and recording of pupils' progress.

Successful leadership involves

- Observing lessons;
- Working alongside colleagues;
- Assisting with planning, teaching, assessment and reporting of the subject.
- Chairing discussion of the subject at staff meetings;
- Organising and leading in-service days;
- Running assessment trials;
- Attending relevant in-service training;
- Prompting others about relevant training;
- Auditing existing resources and advising on the acquisition of new materials;
- Representing the school in local cluster group

### **Organisation**

The learning environment will be managed in such a way as to facilitate different styles of learning.

Opportunities will be made for:

- whole class teaching;
- group work, organised according to appropriate criteria (i.e. ability, mixed ability, friendship, etc.);
- one to one teaching;
- conferencing;
- collaborative learning in pairs or groups;
- independent learning.

All areas of the learning environment will be planned for, including, where appropriate, the outside areas, in order to ensure opportunities for a range of practical activities, which will develop appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding.

The classroom will be organised to facilitate learning and the development of independence. For example:

- resources in each area will be grouped according to curriculum subject;
- book corners will be comfortable and attractive;
- labels and posters should be used wherever possible/appropriate to reflect the language diversity in the school;
- areas for imaginative play will change regularly, in order to give opportunities for a range of play and role-play which will contribute to learning in a purposeful manner;
- pupils will be involved in the maintenance and care of all equipment and resources.

Classrooms provide a stimulating and purposeful learning environment, including thought provoking and stimulating displays.

Classroom support is available from teaching assistants. Volunteer helpers assist with the many aspects of school life, including providing assistance with school visits. Students are welcomed into school and certain standards of dress and conduct are expected.

Excellence is celebrated in display and performance. Each child is given an opportunity to have work displayed during the school year. Sustained effort, including drafting and reworking, is encouraged to enhance standards. School events such as performances and assemblies are seen as opportunities for all pupils to demonstrate their own best performance. Pupils are encouraged to believe that any exhibited work (performance or display) should represent their highest standards of personal achievement. 'Worker

of the Week', and 'Special Person' awards are given weekly to celebrate individual academic or behavioural achievement. House points and attendance are also celebrated.

### **Differentiation**

So that we always have the highest possible expectations of individual learners and so they can demonstrate what they can do, understand and achieve, teachers will differentiate the curriculum according to individual needs by:

- pace;
- content;
- task;
- relevance;
- resources;
- extension;
- autonomy;
- outcome;
- teacher/adult support.

Differentiated tasks will be detailed in weekly planning. Learning objectives will be specified for all differentiated teaching and reference will be made in weekly plans to Individual Education Plans where appropriate.

Pupils with special educational needs (including gifted and talented children) receive support provided by a learning support teacher, 1:1 Tuition or our inclusion manager where appropriate. Extra support is given in the classroom from Teaching assistants. Additionally, advice is sought from relevant external support agencies when and where the need demands it. (See Special Educational Needs Policy)

### **Homework**

Homework is considered to be a valuable element of the learning process. (See Homework Policy)

At Thornhill Primary School, we encourage parents to work with their children at home. Children are expected to take pride in their work and keep their homework books neat,

- We believe that homework should be set:
  - to involve parents in their children's learning;
  - to help parents keep abreast of what their child can and cannot do;
  - to take advantage of the home context to apply learning;
  - to encourage children to talk about their work to their parents and explain what they are doing and how;
  - to extend the time for learning, thus enabling children to practise and consolidate their skills and knowledge and strategies;
  - to prepare children for secondary school experiences of homework;
  - to view learning as a life- long process and not just restricted to school hours.
- The school's agreed practice for homework is that:
  - homework is set on a regular basis, for all years, in line with our homework policy;
  - homework will generally follow on from work which has taken place in class but may take many different forms, including reading, learning multiplication facts and spellings.
  - homework may sometimes consist of preparation for work yet to be done;
  - children should understand exactly what they are expected to do, how to do it, and how long it should take;
  - homework should sometimes involve the participation of the parents;
  - children who have made insufficient effort during class time may occasionally be asked to complete work at home.

## **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

We aim for high quality teaching and learning, and at the heart of this is effective assessment which is underpinned by our belief that all pupils can succeed.

We use three main forms of assessment: in-school formative, in-school summative, and national standardised summative assessments. At Thornhill Primary School we see assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning, and it is inextricably linked to our curriculum.

We use three broad overarching forms of assessment: day-to-day in-school formative assessment, in-school summative assessment and nationally standardised summative assessment.

Assessment of learning (summative assessment) involves judging pupils' achievements against national standards. Teachers may make these judgements at the end of a term, of a year or of a key stage; in some year groups these judgements are derived using formal tests, including SATs tests.

Similar assessment procedures apply in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Summative assessments are made of the children on entry to Reception so that staff determine whether each child is working at the stage expected for their age. They also identify children who are working above and below this expectation so that they can be appropriately supported in their reception year.

## **Marking and Feedback**

Feedback to pupils about their own progress is achieved through discussion and the marking of work. At Thornhill Primary School we aim to use effective marking and feedback in order to:

- Improve a child's confidence and self-esteem.
- Celebrate and recognise achievement
- Provide constructive, accessible feedback to children about their work.
- Encourage and involve pupils in the reflection of their current learning and to set targets for future learning.
- Assess and monitor pupil's learning and provide information for future planning.
- Develop children's responsibility for their learning.
- Model and encourage progression of children's ability to peer and self-assess honestly and accurately.

We believe that pupils' self-esteem and resilience will develop through positive yet challenging feedback. As a result, this will accelerate progress.

To be helpful to the child marking may be:

- Related to the learning question/ success criteria, which has been shared with the child and is related to the task
- Focused on particular aspects of work (not picking up on everything)
- Constructive and recognising effort as well as content
- Understood by the child, with a manageable response so they know what they have achieved and what they need to do next to progress
- Given sufficient response time after the work has been completed, for children to reflect and clarify with the teacher if needed.
- Appropriate to the child's age and ability in terms of language used and the task  
(If written comments, it should be differentiated to the child's maturity, marking can be used to extend and challenge children further, or help to consolidate work)
- Consistent throughout the school, in line with this policy (i.e. consistent within subject areas and age groups)

## **Teaching Strategies and Styles**

In order to ensure equality of access and effective matching of tasks to needs, teachers will employ a variety of teaching strategies in any one session. These may include:

- discussion and questioning (open and closed as appropriate);
- previewing and reviewing work;
- interactive teaching;
- conferencing;
- listening;
- brainstorming;
- providing opportunities for reflection by pupils;
- demonstrating high expectations;
- providing opportunities for repetition/reinforcement;
- providing encouragement, positive reinforcement and praise;
- making judgements and responding to individual need;
- intervening, as appropriate, in the learning process in order to encourage development;
- providing all children with opportunities for success;
- using a range of communication strategies – verbal and non-verbal.
- A balance in terms of individual, group and whole class work. Specialist teaching and support is available from SENCo and also in the form of visitors.

The emphasis of our policy is on a good variety of experiences and we encourage children increasingly to take an active role in their own learning. This may be seen in the following ways;

- through investigative work;
- by encouraging children to communicate findings in a variety of ways;
- by providing opportunities for children to become involved in decision making and to take responsibility, for their own learning.

At Thornhill Primary School we recognise the importance of key skills. Opportunities will be made available across the curriculum to develop:

- application of number;
- communication;
- computing skills;
- problem solving;
- working with others;
- improving own learning and performance.

Thinking skills will also be developed across the curriculum. This will include:

- creative thinking;
- enquiry;
- information processing;
- reasoning;
- evaluation.

## **Learning Processes and Learning Styles**

Children enter school at different stages of development. Children learn in different ways and at different rates of progress. In the course of learning, children develop their skills through a variety of processes and learning styles. These include:

- investigation;
- experimentation;
- listening;
- observation;
- talking and discussion;
- asking questions;
- child-initiated play;
- practical exploration and role play;

- retrieving information;
- imagining;
- repetition;
- problem-solving;
- making choices and decision-making.

At Thornhill Primary School opportunities are organised to allow pupils access to these processes, and for them to develop their own strategies to gain knowledge and skills. We aim to provide opportunities to develop a wide range of learning styles. We recognise that each child has a unique way of learning and that learning preference is affected by previous experience, competence, confidence, beliefs and values. We shall ensure that learning is accessed by as many means as possible.

Teachers at Thornhill feel that pupils learn best when:

- they are happy, healthy and alert – receptive and positive
- they are interested and involved – learning is relevant and stimulating
- the purpose of a task is understood – they understand why they are doing it
- they feel secure – in terms of environment, relationships and learning
- they feel valued – teachers and other adults care about their development as learners
- they have opportunities to explore and take risks
- they are actively involved, making choices and taking responsibility in their learning
- they have an element of control and can work with independence
- they receive positive feedback and praise for achievements
- the learning environment is well-organised and resources are easily accessed
- tasks are differentiated, matched to the child
- learning is built on existing knowledge and experience – clearly defined small steps
- they have opportunities to talk about their work, reflecting, discussing and sharing ideas
- the teacher is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and motivated
- they have clearly defined targets which they can successfully achieve e.g. appropriate time scale
- Effective learning is ensured through the process of monitoring successful teaching (see monitoring policy) and pupil's learning outcome i.e. Baseline Assessment, reading ages and SAT results.
- Successful teaching takes account of children's prior learning and must ensure continuity and progression.

Linked to the above, successful teaching is:

- confident – teachers have a clear understanding of subject knowledge and setting objectives
- high expectation – there is optimism about, and high expectation of success
- well planned – there is differentiation with methods and organisation strategies which match curricular objectives and needs of all pupils
- interactive – pupil's contributions are encouraged, expected, extended
- characterised by high quality oral work
- well-paced – there is a sense of urgency, driven by the need to make progress and succeed
- informed – by assessment outcomes

## **Resources**

Classroom and central resources are the responsibility of classroom teachers and subject leaders who ensure that:

- there is a range of appropriate, accessible and labelled resources available for which pupils can select materials suitable to the task in hand;

- all children know where classroom resources are kept and the rules about their access and use;
- children are encouraged to act independently in choosing, collecting and returning resources where appropriate;
- the library is a valued resource and used appropriately;
- children work together to establish an attractive, welcoming and well organised environment, prompting respect, care and value for all resources.

Each classroom will be equipped with a basic set of resources and books appropriate to the age range. Specialist resources will be stored in the appropriate curriculum resource cupboard/area, and will be regularly audited by the subject leaders. Consumables will be replenished as necessary. Staff may contact subject leaders with suggestions for specialist materials which may need ordering.

Pupils will be taught how to use all resources correctly and safely, with care and respect and with regard for Health and Safety and waste. Care will be taken to ensure that resources reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of our society, and that all pupils have equality of access.

At Thornhill Primary School the use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum is valued and these are used throughout the school to widen children's experiences and support learning across a range of subject areas.

Time is a resource that we value. To maximise its use:

- as children progress throughout the school they are encouraged to take greater control of their own learning, including their use of time;
- opportunities for learning are maximised by ensuring that tasks are made specific by focused objectives;
- teachers will encourage pupils to work within given time scales, and will facilitate the effective use of time through the provision of appropriate resources and planning extension activities;
- all children engage in useful activities upon entering the classroom and know what to do between the end of an activity and the end of a session.

Computing is a major resource, which is used across the whole curriculum.

Health and Safety issues are the responsibility of all who work in the school. The Office Manager, Suzanne Peak, is nominated as Health and Safety representatives and all problems should be reported to her.