

Harlescott Junior School



Teaching and Learning Policy

February 2016

To be reviewed February 2018

Aims and purposes

Any attempt to raise standards in our school must be focused on the classroom. Continued and sustained improvement is dependent upon improving the quality of teaching and learning that is taking place on a daily basis.

Across our school the expectation is that all children are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to consistently high levels of pupil achievement.

By adopting a whole school approach to teaching and learning across our school, we aim to:

- Provide consistency of teaching and learning across our school.
- Enable teachers to teach as effectively as possible.
- Enable children to learn as efficiently as possible.
- Give children the skills they require to become effective lifelong learners.
- Provide an inclusive education for all children.

Learn from each other, through the adoption of a collaborative, enquiry based approach to teaching and learning, where good practice is shared.

There is no single recipe for improving teaching and learning in a school. However this policy outlines some of the **key elements** which are key to raising standards in teaching and learning. It also sets out a **broad structure** for lessons, based on best practice and research linked to how we best learn.



Key elements and principles of teaching and learning across our school

All lessons have...*Clear Learning objectives*

- Learning intentions are shared orally and displayed.
- All learning objectives are written up and shared orally in child friendly language.
- Learning objectives are not muddled up with the context of the lesson.
- Children write the learning objective in their books.
- When marking children's work, the main focus is on meeting the learning objective.
- If work meets the learning objective work is marked with a stamp to show this.

All lessons have... *Well planned success criteria*

- All children are clear about how they will achieve the learning objective.
- Success criteria's are displayed for the children to follow during the lesson or drawn up with the children, e.g. Steps to success.
- Weekly planning includes success criteria for each learning objective.
- Children use the success criteria to self assess their own or their partner's work.
- Children are reminded of the success criteria during the lesson – often children's work is used to illustrate the success criteria in action.
- Children know work will be assessed and marked against the success criteria.

All lessons are ...*Clearly differentiated to enable all children to access learning*

- All learners are challenged appropriately.
- Planning shows clear differentiation.
- Good scaffolding of activities where appropriate, especially for SEND children.

All children are...*Actively engaged in learning*

- Children are actively engaged during all parts of the lesson – teachers take into account children's concentration span and ensure children are not sitting passively.
- Opportunities to *Think/Pair/Share* and discussions with a *Talk Partner* are regular features in all lessons. Children are trained to use appropriate body language when engaged in discussion with a partner.
- Children are selected to share ideas/answer questions by using named lollipop sticks.
- Mini whiteboards are used for short bursts of activity, to develop understanding and to ensure children are active and engaged during the lesson.
- Visuals, artefacts, auditory input are all used creatively as a way to enhance learning.

All children receive regular and clear ...*feedback which enhances learning*

- Assessment is embedded in everyday practice and is used to inform teaching and learning.
- Children have individual target for reading, writing, maths and science.
- All children are clear about how they need to improve through clear feedback from teachers eg. next step marking.
- Marking is linked to the learning objective, success criteria and identifies next steps.

- Children are given regular time to address issues raised in marking and respond with the purple edit pen.
- Children are encouraged to assess their own understanding of the learning and the progress they've made.

Learning is enhanced through ...*The use of ICT.*

- ICT is used to enhance learning where ever possible. Although ICT is nearly always used at the start of lessons to engage children and in the plenary to consolidate learning, it is also used during the lesson as an aid to learning.

Learning is enhanced through ...*Cooperative Learning*

- Cooperative learning refers to a set of instructional methods in which children work in pairs or small learning teams. The children in each team are responsible not only for learning the material themselves, but also for helping their team learn.
- Before cooperative learning can be implemented positive teamwork behaviours need to be explicitly taught and reinforced through our Learning Laws, SEAL, PSHE and work on values.

Learning is enhanced through the ...*Effective use of additional adults*

- Additional adults are clearly directed to support learning.
- Teaching assistants are fully engaged with children on the carpet and tables during lesson times.
- They are clear about who they are supporting and why.
- Planning is shared in advance with teaching assistants.
- They sit next to the child/children they are working with, quietly engaging the children, explaining the task or using other resources.
- They are involved in feeding back to teachers, assessing pupil's understanding and recording observations.



Lesson structure

All lessons in our school should follow a basic structure made up of four parts.

- Firstly set the scene, place learning in a wider context, link to prior learning; review previous lesson; provide the 'big picture', share learning intentions.
- Children receive new information; instruction/exposition; (teaching)
- Children make sense of information; processing; understanding;(learning)
- Plenary to review information.

Precise interpretation of the four part structure will inevitably be very different in different situations. Age, ability, timing of the lesson, subject area and the particular focus for the lesson will all have a significant impact.

Teachers may well scroll through the parts more than once during the lesson. For example, after a short period of exposition, children may be engaged in an activity designed to help them make sense of new material. This may be followed by another period of exposition and an appropriate exercise (mini plenaries).

The lesson parts are not always sequential. Review, for example, is not confined to the end of the lessons. Good teachers weave review through the entire lesson and know that success criteria are only successfully when repeated and referred to throughout the lesson. Teaching and learning is not the same thing. Encountering information is not the same as understanding it. While the stages are inextricably linked, they are separate processes. This must be reflected in the lesson



Lesson start – Overview

Although this is relatively short in duration it includes a number of key features. The emphasis on this part is on;

Creating an appropriate working atmosphere

Children will not learn if they are not in an appropriate state to learn. We use a range of strategies to establish a climate conducive to learning including:

- Creating a classroom environment that is stimulating, reassuring and organised,
- Agreeing a set of Learning Laws with our class to promote good learning,
- Being fully prepared for lessons,
- Ensuring resources are prepared and on tables in advance of lessons,
- Other adults to sensitively engage with a child who is not 'ready to learn'.
- Greeting children with a smile!

Linking the lesson to prior learning

Linking the lesson to prior knowledge, other subjects and contexts e.g. reviewing previous lesson;

- Think about the three most important things you learnt in the last lesson – now tell your partner.
- In two minutes, I am going to ask you what you learnt last lesson. You may talk to your partner if you wish.
- Today's lesson is about the water cycle. Jot down on your whiteboards what you already know. Work in pairs.

Providing an overview

The brain is more likely to absorb details when it can place them within a wider context. This is often referred to as '**providing the big picture first**'.

Learning walls in all classes enable children to see the 'bigger picture' and are used daily in Literacy and Maths lessons. Children can add their own questions and answers to the learning walls through pupil voice sessions; also they are encouraged to carry out their own independent research at home.

Sharing learning intentions with children

Children must know exactly what they are going to learn and what is expected of them by the end of the lesson.

For learning intentions to be shared effectively, teachers must:

- Move away from saying 'Today we are doing'... and instead say 'By the end of today's lesson you will all know/be able to/understand...'
- Make learning intentions specific through learning objectives and success criteria.
- Use child-friendly language – there is little point in sharing learning intentions if children don't understand what you mean.
- Write them down
- Refer to them: at the start of the lesson, during the lesson and during the plenary.

Part Two – Receiving New Information

The emphasis in this lesson part is on:

Providing children with new information or skills that enable them to make progress.

Excellent subject knowledge is applied consistently to challenge and inspire pupils. There needs to be well-judged and often inspirational teaching strategies that together with sharply focused and timely support and intervention, match individuals needs accurately. The teaching needs to be flexible and respond to the learning needs of the class, also misconceptions from previous work are addressed. Teachers and other adults need to generate high levels of enthusiasm for, participation in and commitment to learning. Questions tease out pupils' understanding so that the teacher is exceptionally aware of the degree to which pupils are secure.

This is the teaching. We want all children to understand the information as they are taught it, this information is delivered in many ways:

- Exposition
- Audio-visual aids – e.g. video clips
- Diagrams, pictures etc
- ICT – Internet
- Demonstration
- Modelling
- Books

More than one 'beginning' is created

Children tend to remember more from the beginning of an experience. When exposition is chunked into 10-15 minute slots, a number of 'beginnings' are created in the lesson. Make the new start obvious. Use phrases such as, 'Now we are moving on to ...' or 'The next activity we are going to be doing ...'. 'I want you to move back to the carpet for the next part of our lesson.' Throughout the lesson there should be mini plenary these are used as opportunities for children and the teacher to review progress and ensure learning is progressing well.

New information is presented in several different ways

The fact that people prefer to receive information in different ways demands that information is transmitted in more than one way. A verbal explanation may well be clear, concise and of high quality. However, two thirds of the class may be working outside of their preferred style or have English as an additional language and struggle to grasp what is being said.

We aim to make learning multi-sensory so that children have opportunities to learn from seeing, hearing and doing.



Part Three – processing the information

The emphasis here is on:

- developing understanding
- demonstrating understanding
- assessing understanding

This is the key phase.

It is the opportunity for children to make sense of information. We play a significant role during this crucial lesson part, encouraging and reassuring at an emotional and guiding level while prompting and challenging children towards understanding. The pace of learning is optimised throughout the lesson by the teacher being able to use the time to the best effect in supporting pupils at the time they need such support. Teaching promotes pupils' high levels of resilience, confidence and independence when they tackle challenging activities.

The extent to which children will understand information depends on three factors;

1. Quality of interactions

It is adults who help children make sense of information. The frequency and nature of interactions between teacher and children is highly significant. There are systematic and effective checks on pupils' understanding throughout lessons, anticipating where they may need to intervene and doing so with striking impact on the quality of learning. We develop understanding by

- Using open ended questions.
- Providing wait time- children need time to think through their answers before replying.
- Providing thinking time by giving an advance warning, such as '*In two minutes I am going to ask you....* '
- Allowing children to explore and articulate their thinking by giving them time to discuss their responses in pairs or groups. Children then respond with '*We think that...*'.
- Ensuring children fully understand the question by asking them to say it back or rephrase it.
- Extending and deepening understanding by asking follow-up questions such as '*What made you think that?*'
- Asking children to identify three possible answers and then select the best one (so they don't always give you the first answer that pops into their head).

Tasks that engage children and challenge them to think

Making personal sense of information involves re-creating and assimilating it into existing understanding. It is an active process and demands that the learner actually does something, not least at a cognitive level. Activities should;

- Require children to do something at a cognitive level
- Provide a degree of challenge
- Require children to re-create rather than re-produce information

- Develop understanding
- Allow children to demonstrate understanding
- Give the teacher an opportunity to assess understanding.
- Encourage children to work both independently and collaboratively
- Encourage children to work for a sustained period

Part Four – Plenary

The emphasis here is on:

- ***Reviewing what has been learned***
- ***Reflecting on how it has been learned.***

Review is a key to memory and certainly not confined to the end of the lesson. Good teachers weave review throughout the entire lesson and are constantly referring children back to the success criteria of the lesson, and reinforcing prior learning. Reviewing material is a highly significant part of the learning process, not least because large amounts of information can be forgotten very quickly. It's important that children know and understand where they are with their learning, what they have achieved and how to make further progress. Progress arrows are used within classes for children to grade their understanding of learning objectives; both at the beginning and end of sessions, so progress can be seen and reflected upon.

Key features of a plenary are:

Children are actively involved

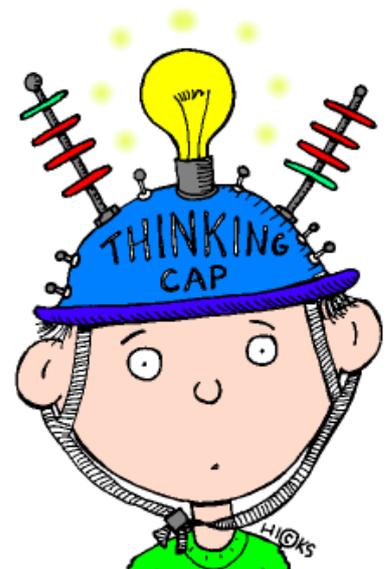
When teachers summarise what has been learned, the effect on children's memories is relatively insignificant. However when the children themselves identify what they have learned as the lesson draws to a close, their memories will be given a significant boost. Children are encouraged to self assess their work through traffic lights and thought bubbles. Peer assessment is also used to enable children to assess each other. Assessment information enables pupils to reflect on and critically appraisal their work so make rapid and secure progress.

Refer back to the learning intentions and success criteria.

Encourage children to reflect on what they have learned and what has helped them to learn.

Use prompts like:

- What did you do today that you found most helpful when you were learning?
- What did you do today that you found less helpful?
- If you had to do the task again, how would you do it?
- If you had to give one piece of advice to someone tackling the same task tomorrow, what would it be?



Another important element of a plenary is planning next steps with the children in response to the progress made in the lesson.