



HIGHFIELD SOUTH FARNHAM

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for teaching and learning. It lays the foundations for the whole curriculum, both formal and informal and forms the context in which all other policy statements should be read. This policy was developed through a process of consultation with teaching staff and governors.

What is teaching and learning?

Teaching and learning is the purpose of our school. It is the sum of the processes through which we offer a curriculum which is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the Education Reform Act relating to the National Curriculum and Religious Education and Collective Worship.

Principles of Teaching and Learning

We see Teaching and Learning is a process of co-operative team work, and welcome and encourage the involvement of parents/carers and others in the community.

All members of the school community (teaching and support staff, parents, carers, pupils and governors) work towards the school's aims by:

- Recognising children as individuals and respecting their rights, values and benefits
- Fostering and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community
- Providing a well ordered environment in which all are fully aware of behavioural expectations
- Offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life and recognising the importance of different cultures
- Encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviour and work
- Working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another

Teachers work towards the school's aims by:

- Providing a challenging and stimulating programme of study designed to enable all children to reach the highest standards of personal achievement
- Recognising and being constantly aware of the needs of each individual child according to ability and aptitude
- Ensuring that learning is progressive, continuous and enjoyable
- Being good role-models – punctual, well prepared and organised
- Maintaining an up-to-date knowledge of the National Curriculum
- Having a positive attitude to change and the development of their own expertise through INSET, appraisal, mentoring processes and evaluation
- Establishing links with the local community, including industry, to prepare pupils for the opportunities

- Working collaboratively with a shared philosophy

Pupils work towards the school's aims by:

- Attending school in good health, maintained by adequate diet, exercise and sleep
- Attending school regularly
- Being punctual and ready to begin lessons on time
- Being organised – bringing necessary kit, taking letters home promptly, returning reading books regularly
- Conducting themselves in an orderly manner, in line with the expected code of discipline
- Taking growing responsibility for their own learning

Subject Leaders have a variety of roles to:

- Take the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in their subject throughout the school
- Support colleagues in their development of detailed work plans and implementation of the scheme of work, and in assessment and record keeping activities
- Monitor progress in their subjects and advise the Head Teacher on action needed
- Take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for their subjects
- Support colleagues in the classroom
- Keep up-to-date through research and attending relevant courses

Feedback to pupils about their own progress is achieved through the marking of work. Effective marking:

- Aims to help children learn and comments aim to be specific, positive and constructive
- Is often done while a task is being carried out through discussion between child and teacher
- Of written work is used sensitively and with discretion so that a child can assimilate a limited number of corrections at one time – this will vary according to age and ability and will include a 'next steps' target

Formative Assessment is used to guide the progress of individual pupils. It involves identifying each child's progress in each area of the curriculum determining what each child has learned and what, therefore, should be the next stage in his/her learning. Formative assessment is mostly carried out informally by teachers in the course of their teaching. Suitable tasks for assessment include:

- Small group discussions, perhaps in the context of a practical task
- Short tests in which the teacher gives questions orally and pupils write answers
- Specific assignments for individual pupils
- Individual discussions in which children are encouraged to appraise their own work and progress

Cross Phase Continuity is ensured by:

- Regular liaison meetings between teachers of Year 6 and those from prospective secondary schools
- Visits to secondary schools by Year 6 pupils
- Transfer of pupil records of progress and summative assessment results
- Close links between EYFS – KS1, and KS1 – KS2
- Secondary phase teachers participating in school/work activities

STRATEGIES FOR RECORDING AND REPORTING

Summative records of progress are kept for each child and are:

- Examined by class teachers at the start of each academic year as they prepare for a new class
- Retained throughout the child's time at the school and passed on to secondary school when pupils leave

Reporting to Parents is done on a termly basis through interviews and annually through a written report.

Formal Summative Assessment is carried out at the end of each National Curriculum Key Stage, and includes teacher assessment.

Each child is assessed annually in Mathematics, Reading and Spelling using standardised tests.

STRATEGIES FOR THE USE OF RESOURCES

Classroom resources are the responsibility of classroom teachers, supported by subject co-ordinators who ensure that:

- There is a range of appropriate, accessible and labelled resources available from which pupils can select materials suitable to the task in hand
- All children know where resources are kept and the rules about their access and use
- All children know what they must not touch for reasons of safety and privacy
- Children are encouraged to act independently in choosing, collecting and returning resources where appropriate
- Children and teachers act together to establish an attractive, welcoming and well-organised environment engendering respect, care and value for all resources

Central Resources are generally the responsibility of subject leaders. Stationery is ordered by the School Secretary and stored centrally with free access for all staff.

IT is a major resource which is used across the whole curriculum (see IT Policy and Individual subject policies for details).

Library Resources provide opportunities for extending and supporting learning.

Health and Safety issues are the responsibility of all who work in the school and the School Governors. The School Business Manager is nominated as Health and Safety representative.

TEACHING AND LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

How do we organise the children?

Pupils are organised into teaching groups according to the following criteria:

- Mixed ability
- Mixed gender
- Children who should or should not be together

Parents' views are taken into consideration when selecting teaching groups. We strongly advise parents to discuss this matter with their child's current Head Teacher, who will be able to put this information into the broader context of the whole learning situation and advise us accordingly. Each child will usually stay with the same class for 7 years, changing class teacher each year.

What is our philosophy of education?

We believe children learn best when they are taught in an atmosphere of high expectation and total respect. High expectation is characterised by the belief that each child's contribution is valued and accepted when it is the product of their very best endeavours. High expectation covers not only all aspects of the National Curriculum subjects, but also includes behaviour, respect for themselves and others and the children's contribution to the common good.

Children will learn best when there is a genuine respect between the teacher and the child. The child must '**know**' that the teacher will do anything and everything to help him/her learn and that all things within the school are there to help them grow and develop physically, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually. The child will not necessarily be able to articulate this notion of total support, however it is our belief that a child growing up within this totally 'loving' and supportive environment will feel a strong sense of worth and well-being which will enable him/her to be 'high achievers' at whatever level they are able to operate.

Risk Taking

Children who are supported as outlined above will have the strength and confidence to take 'risks' in their learning and it is only by taking 'risks' that the child will break new ground and develop fresh ideas. In a classroom environment that positively encourages 'having a go' children will quickly recognise that learning is an adventure for everyone and not restricted to those who get the 'right' answer first time. Teachers who only accept 'right' answers will restrict learning to the children who know already and run the risk of alienating the child who wishes at that stage to make a guess – a guess that with skilful teaching can become the right answer next time.

We believe that true education is an interactive activity between the teacher and the child. Skilled teaching is characterised by engaging the child in the pursuit of knowledge and can take time. We should always encourage children to talk to us and explain their understanding at a particular stage in order that we may consolidate and extend their learning.

You only take risks with those you trust!

How do we organise the Curriculum?

The curriculum consists of all the planned activities that take place within the school. Each distinct curriculum area is covered by a detailed Policy Statement that has been developed by the subject leaders and approved by the Governing Body.

A curriculum map has been devised, which establishes the overall breadth and scope of the curriculum allotting time allocations to each aspect of the curriculum. Each teacher is a member of at least one Curriculum Team led by a senior teacher within each year group being represented. The Curriculum Team is responsible for monitoring their subject, including resources and curriculum development issues. The Team will act as promoters of their curriculum area offering advice, support and future developments. The Curriculum Team will take a leading role in curriculum reviewing procedures.

Long/Medium/Short Term Plans

Each year group will develop the medium-term plan for their year based upon the school long-term plans. Long and medium-term planning is monitored by the Senior Management Team led by the Head Teacher. Short-term planning is undertaken within the Year Group and by each teacher who will plan with the detailed knowledge of their own class.

Resources

Resources within the school and classroom are an important part in any child's education. Poor resourcing can hinder and frustrate the teacher whilst good resourcing can liberate and extend the range of opportunities for the children. Not all resourcing is simply a matter of money, although an adequate level of funding is vital. As important as money is the targeting of funds and this is achieved through clear and unambiguous curriculum planning, by listening to teachers and children and making a sustained contribution to ensuring the teacher is not inhibited by lack of books, art equipment etc.

We believe that each teacher, year group and curriculum area should be given a generous level of resources that free the teacher from having to inhibit their plans for the children. The difference in financial terms between meagre and generous resources is often very little. The difference in terms of educational opportunity is enormous.

The Learning Environment

Our buildings and grounds play a vital role in our work with the children. We believe that an environment which supports and enhances the learning process will not only help the teachers in their task, but will also give the children a sense of pride and worth.

When children grow within a positive environment, which has been carefully designed to support their work, where cleanliness and order are valued and where they have clear responsibilities and duties, they will develop into adults who understand these values for themselves.

Teaching Assistants

The school's commitment to parental involvement has led naturally, over the years, to a more formal recognition of their assistance within the classroom. Teaching Assistants, as part of the classroom resource, have proved to be an invaluable addition to support the teacher.

Teaching Assistants are given 'in house' training in working with children, including how to support children with reading and working with groups. Some assistants have particular skills in art or music, perhaps, which can be of particular use to a teacher. In addition, the Teaching Assistant can support the teacher by helping with display work, photocopying and playground supervision. All activities undertaken by the Teaching Assistants are under the overall control of the class teacher who plans, monitors and assesses the work. The assistants can make a valuable contribution to the class teacher's role within the classroom.

Parents are welcomed into the school to share our life with the children. They help within the classroom, on school trips, with sport and a host of other activities which they can enrich and support with their own skills and expertise.

Whilst parents can enrich the children at school, we believe that they should never be given responsibility for important aspects of the curriculum which are rightly and legally the responsibility of the class teacher. In practice, this means that all activities are planned, controlled and assessed by the class teacher with parents sometimes assisting with groups or individuals within the activity. Each teacher has to monitor the support of parents, carefully matching expertise to task. Teachers have more detailed guidelines within the Staff Handbook.

Our philosophy in relating to parents is based upon the total belief that parents matter. If parents have concerns or questions about how, what or why, then we have a duty to answer that question to their satisfaction. Sometimes their concerns can seem trivial, however a parent's genuine worry, no matter how small, must be addressed.

Most questions can be answered quickly and misunderstanding avoided. Occasionally the school will have to stand firm on an issue which may not be

immediately satisfying to a parent; however if a genuine attempt is made to explain and understand each other's point of view, then parents will nearly always feel reassured.

It is important to explain to parents that we want what is best for their child. Parents who get to know the teacher will understand the care and commitment we have for the child, and feel reassured, even if they do not always fully understand the method.

HOMEWORK

We recognise the enormous value that a systematic approach to homework can add to a child's overall progress at school and each child from Year 3 is encouraged to work at home beyond the school day.

An essential element is the sustained support of the parents. If parents encourage and welcome homework then the child will gain maximum benefit. Parents are asked to help the child if necessary and monitor carefully the child's work. If they feel that the breadth and range of the homework is inappropriate, then discussion with the class teacher will enable adjustments to be made.

Information about homework for each year group can be found in detail in the Year Group Plans.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

We recognise the value of working with children beyond the normal school day. Activities such as sport, drama, clubs, art and poetry are just the tip of an enormous iceberg of enthusiasms and interests, which capture the children's imaginations and can be used as vehicles for furthering and deepening the teacher/child relationship. It enables teachers to work with different groups of children in a slightly more relaxed atmosphere than normal classroom life. Parents and other responsible adults can often be encouraged to share their skills and expertise to develop a community approach to the educative process.

INSET

The need for teachers and other staff to grow and develop professionally is self-evident. Each member of staff is valued for the contribution that they make and is professionally cherished to help them develop new skills and extend the range and scope of their work. This is organised through a detailed Staff Development Plan developed with each teacher by the INSET Co-ordinator.

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