

# THORNBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL

## TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

### AIMS

We aim, throughout our practice, to continually improve the quality of education we provide and to constantly raise the educational standards achieved by our pupils. We aim to prepare children for the next stage of their education by developing motivated, independent learners.

At Thornbury, we aim to develop the whole child and value qualities such as respect, honesty, humour and confidence. We want our children to be self-motivated people who do not fear failure but tackle problems in a creative way. We value the importance of enabling children to develop effective relationships, communicate with others and see the world from a wider perspective.

Above all we aim, through our teaching, to produce happy and confident learners.

### THE TEACHING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK

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*Behaviour Management*

*The Young Citizen*

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### ETHOS

At Thornbury, the ethos of the school permeates all aspects of school life at every level.

### Values

We value:

- All the members of our school community.
- "The whole child"
- The emotional and physical development of the child as well as the academic potential.
- Respect for others.
- The importance of manners and honesty.
- Successes and achievements of pupils in and out of school.

- Children's hard work and effort.
- The individual strengths and interests of the child, academic and otherwise.
- A broad and balanced curriculum.
- A clean, bright and stimulating learning environment.

### **Inclusion**

The importance of inclusion is embedded firmly into our ethos.

- Where possible, we strive to support the needs of all children taking into account learning or behaviour difficulties.
- We are committed to providing the best learning opportunities for all children, including children with SEN and our more able children.
- Our Equal Opportunities Policy reflects our whole school approach to issues such as racism and disability.
- Our commitment to the inclusion and education of all pupils is supported by our assessment tracking system and the importance placed on communication between staff.
- Handover meetings also ensure continuity of provision for our pupils.
- Transition programmes at Year 2/3 and Year 6/7 enable pupils to make smooth transitions into the next Key Stage.
- A transition programme is also in place for reception children moving into Year 1
- Where necessary, outside agencies e.g. Behaviour Support Team, are used to support inclusion.
- We try to meet the needs of our emotionally immature children and develop the potential of those pupils who are emotionally able.

### **Relationships**

Everyone within the school is entitled to have their view heard. Decisions are then made based on democratic consensus.

The strength of the school lies in team work at all levels. The team is a combination of:

- Headteacher
- Assistant Headteacher
- Leadership team
- Teachers
- TA's
- Governors
- MTAs
- Admin staff
- Kitchen staff
- Caretaking and cleaning staff

The team operates in supportive, constructive, open and honest relationships based on mutual respect.

### **Behaviour Management**

All children should have the opportunity to benefit from a positive learning environment by:

- teachers following closely the school's Behaviour Management Policy and not allowing bad behaviour to get in the way of learning.
- the teaching and learning styles
- positive reinforcement
- strategies that do not rely on confrontation or humiliation
- a consistent system of rewards and sanctions
- teacher/child negotiated rules
- every adult being responsible for every child
- a hierarchical approach to consequences of behaviour as outlined in the Behaviour Management policy
- responding sensitively to the needs of the child at that time
- being fair and listening to the child's point of view, when appropriate
- encouraging independent approaches to behaviour management e.g. Peer Mediation
- use of outside agencies e.g. Behaviour Support Team

- providing opportunities to open up lines of communication with the child e.g. Circle Time, Worry Box.

**The teacher taking the class in lessons or assemblies is responsible for the management of the behaviour of that class. This includes rewards and sanctions, which must be in line with school policy.**

### **The Young Citizen**

We encourage children to be citizens within their school, within their community and at a global level by:

- development of concepts through Global Dimensions work
- encouraging respect of themselves, others and their environment
- by responding with them to current issues e.g. Tsunami, Make Poverty History
- allowing children to vote for School Council reps and House Captains
- being part of the decision making process through the School Council
- developing communication skills
- incorporating Health Education into the curriculum throughout the school
- exploring issues through Circle Time and the use of SEALS materials

### **Parents**

- There is a comprehensive induction programme for parents of children entering the Reception class
- We have an open-door policy for all our parents and encourage informal contact to share positive news and any concerns we may both have.
- We offer regular opportunities to meet with parents about individual children as well as general meetings.
- Letters are sent regularly to share information.
- Opportunities are given for parents to help in a range of ways and contribute to the life of the school
- Class assemblies are an important way of celebrating the children's work with parents.
- Opportunities are given for parent training and workshops on a range of topics, often in response to requests by parents e.g. Maths workshops.
- Parents and children sign home/school contracts on entry to the Infant, Lower Junior and Upper Junior departments.

### **Community**

Links are made with the wider community in a range of ways.

- Extra-curricular clubs run by volunteers from within the community e.g. Sports clubs.
- Fundraising and charity events, organised by staff, parents and pupils.
- Global dimensions work as part of the curriculum
- Inviting OAPs to work with the children e.g. knitting, World War 2 projects etc
- Community projects e.g. Heartswell Lodge
- Using facilities within the locality e.g. Marjons swimming programme, "The Soundhouse" at Estover Community College

This is a brief overview of our policy. A copy of the whole policy is in the pockets below the Parent Noticeboard in the Main Entrance Hall

Revised by Claire Hardisty February 2010

## LEARNING AND TEACHING

### Teacher's Role

Teachers need to have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject or area being taught.

Teachers need:-

- To create the physical and emotional learning environment
- To have a familiarity with the appropriate documentation for the stages of learning for the year group and those above and below that of the children being taught i.e. National Curriculum, Early Learning Goals, QCA documentation, National Literacy Strategy, National Numeracy Strategy and school policy.
- In Key Stage 1 to have a good understanding of the Foundation stage profile.
- To attend planning meetings in Year Teams on a weekly basis.
- To attend school based INSET for training and professional development, and also courses run by outside agencies e.g. LEA, where appropriate.
- To be willing to seek appropriate help and guidance from school curriculum co-ordinators if their expertise is less secure in a particular subject or seek advice from other sources.
- To share their own subject knowledge with both teaching and non-teaching staff to raise standards in their areas of responsibility. e.g. assisting with planning, monitoring and assessment, teaching alongside, demonstration lessons or observations.
- To involve themselves in appropriate training to deliver cross-curricular links and ICT.
- To facilitate learning, moving children's thinking on and making links with prior knowledge.
- To find stimulating and exciting ways in to children's learning.

### Support Staff

Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Mealtime Assistants (MTAs) should share the vision for the school and be empowered to fulfil their role. This is achieved in several ways:

- Job descriptions specify precise roles of TAs and MTAs
- The strengths of TAs are identified and valued and, where possible, this is reflected in their job descriptions.
- Training for TAs and MTAs is identified and provided as part of the Performance Management cycle. (TA's attend whole staff CPD sessions on a planned cycle.)
- TAs and parent helpers should be well supported with clear guidance on what to do and how to do it by receiving and discussing planning for the groups or individuals they will be teaching.
- MTAs should also be well supported with clear guidance on what to do and how to do it
- MTAs are encouraged to be proactive in relation to children's social skills and behaviour on the playground as well as in the classroom e.g. teaching children playground games.
  
- TAs work mainly within one department, and attend Department meetings as part of their team.
- TAs meet fortnightly with the HLTA
- MTAs regularly meet with the Head of KS2

### Assessment for Learning

- The assessment process is integral to learning and teaching at Thornbury Primary School. Assessment is at the heart of classroom practice and is an on-going process.
- Teachers use a range of day-to-day assessment strategies within their teaching to gather information on children's progress against learning objectives for the lesson or task. These strategies may involve open-ended questioning, observation of children carrying out an activity, outcomes of children's work, formal and informal tests and challenges.
- Insights gained from day-to-day strategies inform planning and teaching within a learning activity or lesson, for the next lesson and the next phase of learning.
- Planning is modified and annotated to reflect these changes. These changes may happen because the work was too challenging, groups or individuals needed further consolidation or practice, or pupils needed extending.

- As a part of this process, children are encouraged to be involved in their own assessment with opportunities for self-evaluation.
- Children are encouraged to evaluate and improve their own work during a learning activity, making effective use of success criteria presented as a unit of work overview.
- The learning objective is always made clear for the pupil at the outset of the lesson. This is written up as the "focus" for the lesson. The learning outcome is also shared with the children, enabling them to see the "big picture" i.e. what the expectations are.
- Through the use of unit of work overviews, children know what the teacher will be particularly focusing on in that learning activity and how it links to the learning journey, whether or not they have been successful in this and how the piece of work could be improved.
- The assessment and marking of pupils' work is in accordance with the school's assessment and marking policies.
- Pupils should understand what they need to do and how to do to improve their work and make progress.
- Layered targets are set in Literacy and Numeracy. Children are also given opportunities to evaluate their writing through the use of unit of work overview, except in the Foundation Stage.
- Assessments may not always be made using written evidence, but may come through observations and discussions.
- Children's exercise books are now used as a log of the learning journey and staff may post observation comments (APP) within them.

### **Planning**

- Planning is carried out in using agreed planning formats.
- Good planning means that the teaching in a lesson or sequence of lessons has clear learning objectives, which are shared with the children in the form of a unit of work overview and daily learning objectives.
- Learning outcomes should always be indicated on the planning, making sure that a range of types of outcome and audience are considered.
- Planning should take account of the differing needs and preferred learning styles of pupils and the need for continuity and progression in each subject.
- Teachers should provide a range of activities and they should show appropriate differentiation.
- Planning should be amended and annotated on a daily/weekly basis in the light of your assessment of children's work.
- Planning should also reflect the need to consolidate previous learning in a subject.
- Planning should allow for revision of concepts and reapplication of taught concepts in a different context.
- Learning wherever possible should be enhanced by links across the curriculum and opportunities for application of prior knowledge.
- Planning gives pupils a variety of opportunities for to them make independent choices.
- Whilst planning for meaningful links between subjects to enhance learning, tenuous links should always be avoided

### **Differentiation**

- Differentiation is made explicit on planning, clearly identifying whether the differentiation is through outcome, task or support given
- Differentiation is also supported by information on IEPs.
- Expectations and outcomes should be shared with the pupils.
- Differentiation must take into account the need for extension of able pupils.
- Where differentiation is by task, the task should be meaningful.
- Differentiation will not always be by task. It can be provided by level of scaffold, amount and level of input and the nature of questions being asked.
- Differentiation needs to be considered throughout the curriculum, not just in the core subjects.
- Guidance on levels of differentiation is provided in core subject target getting booklets or benchmarks for foundation subjects.

## Structure of lessons

- Use of appropriate methods and organisational strategies to facilitate the aims of the lesson and meet the needs of all pupils.
- Lesson structure should be flexible and adapt to the needs of the children and the subject being taught.
- Lessons should begin in different ways for the children and the teacher.
- Consider the balance of lesson structure across the day within the year group when planning. This will necessitate team planning to create balance within year teams.
- The choice of teaching methods and organisational strategies **should** be based on the learning objectives, accommodation of learning styles, number of pupils, their age, attainment and behaviour.
- Resources should be appropriate, readily available and encourage independence.
- All children should be given equal opportunities.
- Relevant risk assessments should be carried out and health and safety points made explicit to the children.
- The use of individual teacher specialisms and specialist, part-time teachers is a feature of the school and should, wherever possible, be used to advantage.
- Lesson structure should also incorporate a range of ways in and learning outcomes.
- Lessons should have pace and rigour, with points for review throughout and use of the plenary to reinforce teaching points.
- Points for review allow for assessments of misconceptions to be made and may need the teacher to deviate from planning
- The plenary offers opportunities to practice what has been taught e.g. in a problem solving context.
- Plenaries may also allow for misconceptions to be addressed or opportunities to extend learning.
- The plenary must always reiterate the main teaching point - explore or recap what they have learnt

## Learning Activities

Learning activities should enable children to be willing to try but able to fail. They should also expose children to a range of purposes and audiences, resulting in a variety of planned-for learning outcomes.

Teaching methods should include:

- Finding stimulating and creative starting points.
- Exposition and explanation, which is informative, lively and well structured. It should be interactive and appropriate to the needs of the children.
- Interactive approaches where more children are involved as active learners
- Use a range of learning skills e.g. hypothesizing, justifying etc
- Use of speaking and listening activities such as envoys, snowballing, rainbows
- Open ended questioning and discussion, which probes children's knowledge and understanding, challenges their thinking and gives them opportunities to share their thinking with others.
- Practical activities which are purposeful and which encourage pupils to reflect on what they are doing, what they have learned and how to improve their work.
- Investigation and problem solving activities across the curriculum which should help children to apply and extend their learning from one subject area to another.
- Effective modelling which gives children a structure on which to base their independent work.
- A secure understanding of "**effective modelling**" which may include:
  - The necessity to repeat the modelling, not just a "one off"
  - Talking through a process with the pupils, stage by stage
  - A model/practise, model/practise approach
  - Peer modelling where children re-teach a skill or concept to their peers
  - Model using existing pieces of work
- Understanding that the time invested in modelling effectively with children is invaluable in terms of the benefits to learning.

- Revision and consolidation, which gives children opportunities for quick recall, revision of learning and to apply known facts in new situations.
- Plenary sessions where the main teaching objectives are reiterated and children's understanding of the learning objectives are consolidated.
- Good use of appropriate resources and effective use of time.
- Making sure the children work harder than the teacher.

**The test of the effectiveness of these teaching methods is the extent to which they motivate children, extend or deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding and develop their skills and application.**

- The appropriate use of homework offers opportunities to consolidate learning and helps children to relate what they learn to everyday life.
- Allocation of homework for year groups is in accordance with the school's homework policy.
- It is important to identify if any children fail to do their homework and they may need opportunity to complete it in school.
- Homework may also be a preparation for future work e.g. research into famous seafarers as a precursor to a project on "Ships and Seafarers"

### **Organisation**

Teachers will decide whether the teaching objectives are best achieved by children working:

- Individually
- In pairs
- Collaboratively in groups (ability, mixed ability, friendship, self-selected, mixed gender, skills based)
- As a whole class
- Collaborative group work should result in one outcome e.g. a product or plan for an investigation.
- Research suggests that three is a good working number for collaborative group activities.
- Collaborative group work requires skills that will need to be taught and built upon.
- To work effectively with the whole class or in group work, teachers need to ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to participate.
- Groupings should be flexible. Learning Support Assistants and parent helpers should be well supported with clear guidance on what to do and how to do it. This should include key questions and specific vocabulary to use.
- Age appropriateness of some types of group work will need to be considered in terms of the social skills required and the maturity and experience of the children.

## **LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

### **Classroom Environment**

- The responsibility of the classroom belongs to all those who use it: teaching staff, TAs, MTAs, students and pupils.
- Classroom routines should be clear, consistent and frequently reinforced.
- Areas should be clearly defined to suit a range of purposes e.g. maths area, science area and reflect the vocabulary of the subject.
- The classroom environment should promote independence, with children trained throughout the school, to use and care for their classroom environment.
- The classroom environment should be valued and respected, therefore clean and tidy.
- The classroom environment needs to be flexible to suit the needs of the children and nature of the lesson.
- Use of interactive whiteboards should be in line with school policy to ensure health and safety needs are met (see school protocol for use of whiteboards).
- Children should be able to see the main teaching focal point, with adequate space to work and ease of access.

**Current research, and implications for classroom management and organisation makes us aware that some conditions are more favourable for learning.**

So teachers should:-

- Encourage children to take regular drinks of water from the available fountains.
- Encourage children to eat their fruit at break time.
- Offer varying activities and natural breaks to aid children's concentration.
- Give thinking time.
- Try to employ a range of activities
- Make sure there is fresh air in the classroom and opportunities for children to stand up at intervals to increase oxygen levels to the brain.
- Give children ownership of their learning by ensuring that they know what they are doing and why.
- Provide opportunities for interactive and collaborative learning.
- Empower children to take risks in their learning in a secure environment. Teach them to understand that making mistakes is acceptable.
- Take risks yourself - it makes teaching exciting.

### **Display**

Display is valued as an important part of the learning environment at Thornbury.

Display should:

- Be purposeful.
- Celebrate children's work and give them ownership of their environment.
- Be used and referred to by staff as a learning tool.
- Be vibrant, interactive and tactile.
- Reflect different subject areas.
- Extend children's thinking through questions and hands-on activities.
- Include children's writing
- Be changed regularly to maintain children's interest
- Be clearly labelled, including processes, at a height and size appropriate for children to read.

Further information and ideas relating to display can be found in the Art Policy.

### **Public Areas**

The shared, public areas of Thornbury Primary School should:

- Be warm and welcoming.
- Be the responsibility of all staff.
- Reflect the standards and philosophy of the school.
- Be celebratory of children's work and achievements.
- Be cared for and kept tidy.
- Be shared with and discussed with the children.
- Be child centred.
- Share aspects of school life beyond the academic curriculum e.g. School Council and Peer Mediation.
- Be the responsibility of all staff.

### **Resources**

Across the curriculum, children are given the opportunity to make independent choices. This is facilitated by classroom organisation, which allows children independent and progressive use of resources.

Resources should be:

- Appropriate and organised.
- Cleaned and culled regularly.
- Updated regularly.
- Well labelled appropriate to the year group e.g. with pictures at Key Stage 1, and colour coded in the same way across the school.

- Used to support different learning styles.
- Easily accessible for children or adult only access where appropriate.
- Adequate for group sizes.
- Promoted by curriculum co-ordinators for their subject.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

- The vision for the school should always be borne out of providing children with the skills, knowledge and attributes to become lifelong learners.
- It is the role of the Head and the management team to hold the vision for the school and take the staff on the journey there.
- The vision for the school is a shared vision based on the fact that a talking school is a living school. It is achieved in a range of ways:-

### **FORMALLY**

- Through regular meetings of the Senior Management Team and Departments
- Through the School Council and Circle Time
- Through the INSET programme
- Through CPD and sending staff on relevant training courses
- By identifying staff who will be key figures to lead an aspect of the vision
- Cross phase meetings where implementations in one Department of the school can be taken on to other Departments e.g. development of reading at Key Stage 1, moving on to development of reading at Lower Juniors

### **INFORMALLY**

- By constantly talking to each other, children, parent and governors
- Partnerships with other schools allow the school to participate in work where we can take the vision from other schools, or be the vision for others.

## **School Improvement Planning**

School improvement planning is a process informed by:

- The needs of the children
- SATs results
- Analysis of assessment information, including use of Raiseonline
- Co-ordinators' action plans and monitoring handbooks
- Performance Management
- The School budget
- Ongoing review cycles
- TA and MTA meetings
- Governors' committees for finance, personnel, buildings and curriculum
- Government initiatives
- Self-evaluation e.g. SEFs
- Feedback from parents

## **Communication**

Communication is crucially important and is at the heart of good teamwork. It is facilitated by:

- Weekly comments to the Head through the use of the "red books"
- Department meetings held each week
- Diary check for teachers on a Monday morning
- SLT meetings held weekly
- Heads of departments who liaise between departments and the SLT team
- TA and MTA meetings
- Staff notice board
- Informal communication
- Letters to parents

- Newsletters from HT and PSA
- Parents meetings
- Pupil interviews with subject leaders / governors
- PSA coffee mornings

### **Curriculum**

At Thornbury, we have always maintained a belief in a broad and balanced curriculum, which is real and relevant. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met whilst incorporating other aspects of the curriculum, including the "hidden curriculum" which the school values highly.

- The school improvement plan (including Teaching and Learning) is reviewed annually, with all staff evaluating its effectiveness at the end of the academic year.
- Modifications are then made where necessary and decisions made regarding organisation for the following year ready for the planning day in new year teams, usually held in July.
- Curriculum coordinators are responsible for monitoring their subject throughout the year and amending schemes of work where necessary.
- Curriculum coordinators are also responsible for monitoring assessment of their subject, including identifying and meeting the needs of able children.
- The needs of the curriculum will also be reflected in allocation of budgets and spending.
- Individual staff needs in relation to aspects of the curriculum will be met through school based CPD, courses and training run outside of school and the performance management cycle.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- The Headteacher oversees these two functions through a range of activities.
- It is the role of the SL to monitor and evaluate their subject.
- SL's update action plans as a record of their monitoring and evaluation.
- SL's oversee resources, sample work and observe teaching.
- Monitoring and evaluation of English and Maths is also carried out through the teacher assessment and pupil progress meetings.

### **Growing the Organisation**

The growth of the school as an organisation is influenced by many factors including:

- Pupil admissions and numbers on roll
- Staff changes
- Staff development
- Development of the buildings e.g. Early Years Play Area
- Bids for money
- Budgets
- LEA and Government initiatives
- Networks with other schools and organisations
- Fundraising
- The enthusiasm and commitment of the Head, Staff, Governors, children and parents

Reviewed by Claire Hardisty & Fiona Banks February 2010