

Highwood Primary School



*"Preparing today's children
for tomorrow's world"*

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

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Purpose

The policy for teaching, learning and assessment is the core policy of the school. It informs classroom practice and underpins the drive to ensure consistently good or outstanding practice across the school. It will enable all children to make progress in every lesson taught and will ultimately secure high standards. It is continually reviewed as a result of developments in school practice, and is driven by statutory expectations and guidance outlined by the DfE and Ofsted. It is for use by the teaching teams across the school. Members of all teaching teams are expected to follow this policy at all times to ensure the very best provision for our pupils and a consistent approach to teaching, learning and assessment across the school.

Aims

- Provide clear guidance of outstanding practice in teaching, learning and assessment across the school
- Raise pupil achievement so that outcomes are securely good or better for all learners
- Set out our expectations of best practice in order to enable teaching teams to work as a professional learning community.
- Use the successful practice evident within our school, and neighbouring schools, to support our commitment to continual improvement
- For the policy to be a tool to focus monitoring, provide evidence for robust evaluation, determine and drive school improvement and secure accountability
- For the policy to outline our commitment to equal opportunities
- Ensure high quality teaching that enables pupils to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding which will be of use to all future learning
- Promote, facilitate and enable the inclusion of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that provides opportunity for all pupils to learn through variation and differentiation

The school vision and aims are at the heart of all our teaching and learning activities. This policy reflects our mission and aims. It should be read in conjunction with the 'Behaviour' and 'Appraisal and Capability' policies.

Principles

The principles that we have agreed are fundamental to children's learning and underpin the work that we do. We aim to help our pupils become flexible thinkers, confident, resilient learners who recognise mistakes as opportunities for learning and understand that learning is a continuum. We encourage our pupils to be reflective learners and recognise that they are most likely to learn effectively when they are emotionally engaged in their learning. Teachers therefore aim to ensure pupils are at the heart of all teaching, to build positive relationships with them and strive to be as creative as possible in seeking ways of making learning interesting, accessible and successful. Our aim is to maximise every learning opportunity to enable pupils to learn the best they can at any moment in time.

Definition of Learning

At Highwood Primary School we have defined learning as:

Engaging and inspiring pupils, resulting in a continuous growth of knowledge and the development of transferable skills

We believe that children learn best when learning is:

- Stimulating, challenging, creative, fun, varied, practical, supported, progressive, reflective, interactive, enjoyable, purposeful, relevant and built on prior experience. It relies upon our good knowledge of our learners and our secure assessment of their current aptitudes. We should have relentlessly high expectations of learning outcomes.
- Owned by the children. Where possible they should have a prime role in planning learning opportunities within a topic, choosing the degree of challenge in a learning activity, selecting

from a choice of resources, deciding a format for their learning (in science, topic and mathematics most specifically), reflecting and self-assessing, and, following a cold task, determining their next steps and shaping this into a short term target.

This policy will improve teaching, learning and assessment because:

- ✓ The Highwood community is committed to achieving the highest standard of teaching across the school and understands the need for consistent, successful pedagogical approaches in order to achieve this
- ✓ Expectations are clearly communicated to all practitioners and learners
- ✓ Children have ownership of their own learning and development.

Effective Teaching

In lessons teachers should:

- Convey knowledge, model strategies and provide opportunities for children to apply transferable skills
- Make meaningful links in learning to children's experiences of the real world and previous learning across the curriculum
- Provide challenging, open ended, developmental questions to stimulate thinking
- Provide rich, varied opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning
- Guide children in their learning journey and next steps in learning
- Model the learning and improvement process
- Make use of guided groups and support from Teaching Assistants to provide personalised, differentiated learning opportunities
- Provide daily opportunities for self and/or peer assessment
- Value marking and feedback as an aid to securing children's progression in learning
- From Year Two upwards ensure daily 'Read and Respond' time is allocated to children for reflection on their next steps in learning and provide opportunities for them to apply these improvements.

Effective Learning

Effective learning happens when children:

- Value learning, the development of learning skills and the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding
- Are encouraged to develop enquiring minds
- Understand the learning objective of the lesson
- Understand what they are expected to achieve by the end of the session
- Are actively involved in their own learning
- Are challenged by open-ended, thought provoking, challenging questions
- Are given time to think before answering questions
- Are given opportunities to review and reflect on their learning
- Are led to understand what they need to do to improve and how to improve
- Are emotionally ready to learn (see Inclusion Policy for guidelines and strategies – currently under review)

Teaching teams

Our teaching teams will evaluate regularly how well they:

- Secure good or better learning outcomes for all pupils and groups of pupils - both in terms of progress and attainment
- Believe, and instil that positive belief in their pupils, that all can achieve
- Support pupils in using and applying their knowledge and skills to secure new learning
- Shape the learning environment
- Support and guide each other in their own professional development
- Communicate effectively with children, parents, carers and other professionals regarding children's learning and welfare

- Recognise that children's emotional well-being has a direct impact on their readiness to learn (see Inclusion Policy for guidelines and strategies- currently under review)

Leadership team

The school's leaders will:

- Be positive, accessible role models to the teaching teams
- Provide professional support to the teams and an entitlement for continuous professional development through bespoke training and targeted mentoring and coaching
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching on learning - in partnership with the governors, the Local Authority, partnership schools and all stakeholders
- Devise a robust Monitoring and Evaluation schedule making use of a broad evidence base, including data analysis, work and planning scrutiny, discussions with pupils and parents, learning walks and lesson observations
- Appraise the effectiveness of teaching teams and use these evaluations to determine school improvement priorities and secure accountability
- Be held to account for the overall effectiveness of the school

The role of Governors

The fundamental role of governors is to hold the school's leaders to account for overall effectiveness.

Governors co-determine, support, monitor and review all school policies. In particular they:

- Facilitate the effectiveness of provision through monitoring the allocation of resources
- Ensure that the school buildings, premises and resources are best used to support successful teaching, learning and assessment
- Monitor provision in the light of health and safety regulations
- Monitor how effective teaching is in terms of raising pupils' achievement
- Ensure that staff development, appraisal and capability policies promote and secure high quality teaching;
- Monitor the effectiveness of this 'Teaching, Learning and Assessment' policy through the school self-review processes. These include the termly head teacher's report to governors as well as a review of the in-service training sessions attended by our staff.

Learners

Pupils may be referred to as children, pupils and learners. We encourage our learners to:

- Enjoy and value learning
- Have the confidence to 'have a go', understanding that making mistakes is part of the learning process
- Be resilient, persistent, reflective and resourceful
- Be supportive of others they are learning with
- Be willing to share learning and collaborate with their peers

Parents and Carers

We nurture partnership through:

- Understanding the role of the parent in educating their child
- Encouraging an open dialogue with the class teacher and teaching assistants who are visible and approachable to all parents and carers daily to discuss any immediate needs or on-going concerns
- Promoting attendance at parent information/workshop/Open Day/Parent Consultation evening/Book Look occasions
- Seeking support for the school policies (e.g. Home Learning, Behaviour)
- Providing Home Learning for children to practise, extend and share their learning at home, and valuing the contribution of learning experiences outside school
- Collaborating with targeted, additional support for learners (e.g. Personal Plans, provided tuition, booster classes, intervention programmes, Team Around the Child/Family (TAC/F) meetings, etc.)
- Communicating our rich learning opportunities through newsletters, 'Round Up', open sharing assemblies etc.

Assessment

We are a data rich school. We understand the crucial role of robust, accurate data which informs teaching and ensures progression in learning. To this end:

- The school makes use of Hertfordshire's electronic data management tool (AM7) to track achievement in the Early years and then from Year 1-6 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. It is used to determine pupil and cohort baselines on entry into each class and key stage, set targets for the end of each year group and key stage and track progress towards attaining these targets. It is updated at least termly following both on-going formative assessment and summative outcomes from formal assessments, during which teachers use a range of assessment tasks and tests to assess the achievement of all pupils
- Assessment data is used to evaluate school performance, shape provision, target resources, determine interventions, drive the school improvement agenda, strengthen the appraisal of teaching staff and school leaders, measure impact through evaluating pupil achievement, determine the school's effectiveness in closing the gap for any underperforming pupils or groups of pupils
- Teachers make use of assessment data to determine the pitch and expectation when planning their teaching and provide appropriate levels of challenge for all learners within all lessons. This information is used to inform planning and determine guided groups and interventions. The outcomes from lessons are evaluated and used to inform next day/future planning
- Pupils are clear about their progression in learning and their targets for improvement
- Parents are informed of their child's current achievement and progress, know their child's targets and are advised how they may support their child to achieve these
- Governors are informed of the current achievement across the school and attend all Local Authority monitoring visits – assessment evaluations are included in termly Headteacher report to governors.

Assessment without Levels

In response to the Government decision to remove levels as an assessment tool in September 2015 the leadership team introduced the Herts for Learning (HfL) assessment system in the summer term 2015. This system is linked to the National Curriculum (2013) and assesses children as 'working towards', 'working within' and 'working beyond' age related expectations for each year group. Pupils are assessed in the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) against the HfL criteria as part of ongoing formative assessment and as a summative assessment at the end of each term. Attainment and progress are measured as a series of 'steps'.

In the foundation subjects, children are assumed to be working within age related expectations; exceptions to this are recorded on the foundation subject report and passed to senior leaders termly (starting summer 2016).

In order to supplement and enrich the summative assessments provided by the HfL system, a more robust system of formative assessment has been adopted. Units of learning are introduced through a 'cold task' where pupils are asked to demonstrate what they already know in response to a stimulus. This exercise is then used to identify gaps in learning and generate short term learning targets. The unit of learning is completed following a 'hot task' where children work independently to show progress against their targets and learning from the unit. Any further gaps in learning should be addressed before a new unit begins. This system of formative assessment has led to the books (Writing Journal, Mathematics Journal and Learning Journal) becoming a rich source of evidence for progress and achievement.

Statutory Reporting and Assessment

Pupils are more formally assessed at different stages in their primary school career.

Early Years

Best practice decrees that children should be assessed at the beginning of both Nursery and Reception classes through a Baseline assessment. This is presently non statutory. During the year they are

continually assessed using the Early Years Outcomes. At the end of Nursery children have a final assessment against the Early Years outcomes. At the end of Reception they have a statutory assessment using the Foundation Stage Profile. This creates a baseline for entry into Key Stage 1.

Key Stage 1

Children are formally assessed using the statutory Phonics Screening Check at the end of Year 1. In the event they do not pass this, they are re assessed at the end of Year 2.

At the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2) the children have a statutory assessment, which is a Teacher Assessment supported by standard assessment tasks (SATS). The areas assessed are reading, speaking and listening, writing, grammar/punctuation/spelling, mathematics and science.

Key Stage 2

At the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6) the children have a final statutory assessment, which is a set of standard assessment tasks (SATS). The areas assessed are reading, grammar/punctuation/spelling and mathematics. These assessments are externally marked and bench marked. Writing, speaking and listening and science are teacher assessed.

All statutory assessments are published by the DfE as part of a report known as Raiseonline and by Ofsted as part of their Dashboard.

All assessments are shared with parents termly – as part of Parent Consultations or within the Annual Pupil Report.

Planning

The policy for planning in the Early Years is included in the Early Years Teaching and Learning Policy (currently under review).

Quality planning is key to ensuring quality teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers:

- Ensure a balanced timetable of subjects to be taught across a term/year with daily literacy and mathematics sessions and application of these basic skills and IT across the curriculum
- Create a long term plan (Curriculum Map) for the year outlining learning themes, establishing cross curricular links where appropriate. This plan is shared with senior leaders and parents at the start of every academic year, is updated termly and is placed on the school website
- Use assessment data to inform short term plans - planning units of work in the core areas of literacy, mathematics and science that outline progression in learning and are used to determine the body of content in lessons. The outcomes of each lesson need to be evaluated daily and used to inform the next teaching session.
- Determine half termly or unit plans for the teaching of foundation subjects, using National Curriculum expectations to devise a schemes of work or a series of lessons. These remain flexible and take account of pupils' interests, building upon existing pupil knowledge and prior learning

Short and medium term planning of core subjects (literacy and mathematics) need to start with a cold task, the outcomes of which should inform the planning for that unit.

Short and medium term planning of foundation subjects, science and IT need to start with the child, finding out what they know and would like to know about a class topic in order to inform the plan. Cold and hot tasks are optional in foundation subjects. In some year groups a 'topic' plan groups together some of the foundation subjects in one planning document.

Short and medium term planning for all subjects needs to:

- Provide a clear structure for progression in learning, outlining explicitly the key learning both in terms of the knowledge to be conveyed and skills to be taught. These will be contained within the learning objective and success criteria. Plans need to detail how skills and knowledge will

build and how these may be applied within each session and/or over the course of a unit of work

- Ensure the pitch of learning relates to assessment data and that differing abilities are considered at the planning stage.
- Ensure differentiation explicitly details how provision will be adapted to support access and how challenge is evident for all abilities of learners and groups of learners. This needs to be for all curriculum areas. Pupils can be involved in determining the level of challenge they choose within a lesson
- Outline key questioning and relevant vocabulary
- Detail the role of class teachers, teaching assistants and supporting adults in both the whole class guided session and guided group work

Planning documents need to be shared with senior leaders and teaching assistants and should be available both on the school server and copied to Line Managers. Placing hard copies in a class planning file is optional. Planning must be available each week in readiness for each teaching week. Annotation should detail how next day planning needs to be adapted in light of lesson evaluations.

All planning documents should be copied to Cathy Cox, Curriculum leader.

Organisation and grouping

Guidelines on groupings in the Early Years are outlined in the Early Years Teaching and Learning Policy (currently under review).

Whole class teaching sessions

The purpose of every lesson needs to be explicitly shared within the whole class teaching session. This session is crucial for outlining learning intentions and modelling appropriate strategies using appropriate resources to support success in learning. Teachers plan to ensure active learning strategies support high levels of pupil participation and that pupils are provided ample opportunity for engagement and interaction. They are encouraged to formulate questions and engage in purposeful discussion with peers. On-going assessment supports understanding – pupils are encouraged to seek clarity when they do not understand. Teachers make use of both open and targeted questions. Pupils have opportunities to work independently, in pairs and collaboratively in groups with or without adult support and guidance.

Guided teaching groups

Guided teaching groups should remain flexible in their composition. They should be influenced by outcomes from previous lessons and are best when used to pre teach, re-visit an aspect of learning, address gaps in learning or misconceptions, provide a greater level of access or challenge to targeted pupils or be a vehicle for informing teacher assessment.

The role of teaching assistants in supporting learning

Teaching Assistants are a valued resource for supporting teaching, learning and assessment. They are managed by class teachers who ensure copies of Personal Plans and daily/weekly planning are provided. Teaching Assistants need to be involved in discussions about pupil's targets and understand their role in facilitating pupil achievement. Planning should be shared in a timely way enabling TAs to have time to think through their role in guiding and facilitating learners. Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) will cover classes during teacher release time – in doing so the planning for these sessions is the responsibility of the class teacher, with the exception of PE, IT, French and Music. TAs leading interventions should provide regular feed back to class teachers so they can build upon learning in daily lessons. TAs will have access to confidential pupil progress data. They may be required to carry out administrative tasks, as directed by class teachers and school leaders. They are subject to an annual appraisal to support their professional development.

TAs may work 1:1, 1:2 etc, but should not lead groups comprising more than 6 pupils.

Independent learning

All pupils need to have very regular opportunities to work independently. This may be individually, in pairs or groups. It is vital therefore that work is pitched appropriately, scaffolds and supports are in place, choice and challenge is evident, resources are readily available and pupils have opportunities to self and peer assess. All pupils should have opportunities to use and apply their basic skills in their learning across the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to select resources to support them in their learning as required. Pupils have a choice in their level of challenge within many literacy and mathematics lessons.

Expectations regarding presentation in books

Guidelines on marking and presentation in the Early Years are outlined in the Early Years Marking and Feedback Policy (currently under review).

All teachers will:

- Ensure the date and precise learning objectives are stuck into pupils' books daily (not 'write a story'). Where appropriate this will also include success criteria and on occasion context.
- Model neat hand writing at all times and particularly when providing written feedback using the agreed school handwriting style.

Presentation of work (See Marking and Feedback Policy)

The following rules for presentation will be shared with children at the start of each academic year, they are revisited at least termly. A reminder is stuck in all books:

- A sticker containing the date and learning objective will be stuck in books for all pieces of work and these must be reviewed within every lesson.
- In mathematics journals; numbers need to be written placing one digit per square
- In Key Stage 2 mathematics work should have a margin depending on the area of learning
- Lines should be drawn with a ruler
- Pictures or diagrams should be drawn in pencil
- Mistakes should be crossed out using a single ruled line or a wiggle line
- Use a sharp pencil or black pen
- At the end of every lesson, a small coloured traffic light, or RAG rating or smiley/straight/sad face must be placed next to the learning objective to show how well you think you have met the learning objective.
- Next to the learning objective, children should place a T or TA if they have had an adult working with them, an 'I' if they have worked independently, a P if they have worked with a partner.
- Within the lesson, a VP will be written on the child's work if they have received verbal prompt from an adult at any time during the lesson. This should ideally be placed at the point the prompt was given.
- The expectation is children will use a neat, cursive joined up script.
- In Key Stage 1 children will mostly write in pencil aiming to use pen in Year 3 (no later than start of the Summer term) Some children may be ready to use pen towards the end of Year 2.
- All children must use a pen for writing no later than the start of Year 4.

Marking and Feedback (See Marking, presentation and Feedback Policy)

Pupils' work is marked to evaluate achievement and support future learning. Written comments need to communicate the success of the child in meeting the learning objective and support children in understanding how they can improve their work further and what their next steps in learning might be. Children should self-assess their work against the learning objective. This is indicated by writing either R, A or G (KS2) in the circle on the learning objective sticker or by using a small coloured dot (Key Stage 1) or by using a smiley face, neutral face or unhappy face (Key Stage 1).

At the end of a piece of work, children should indicate the following on the learning objective sticker:

I – independent work

TA – work supported by a teaching assistant

T – Participation in a guided teaching group

VP – a verbal prompt was given during the lesson – indicate where in the margin if appropriate

P – Paired work (Key Stage 2)

Rewarding good learning

Teachers should distinguish between work of a high overall standard and work which shows significant improvement. Teachers should have high expectations of all pupils and need to be careful not to devalue the notion of quality by using indiscriminate praise or reward. Rewards may include:

- positive comments, either verbal or written in the child's book
- marks achieved for a piece of work
- merits – as indicated by classroom based stickers or stamps
- sharing work with the class or another teacher/phase leader
- inclusion in displays around the school
- house points may be granted if the good learning was as part of a team effort or benefited others

The Learning Environment

Classrooms are well organised, valued and purposeful learning environments. They reflect current learning, are literacy and mathematics rich and are of high quality. All children have the opportunity to celebrate and display their best work at some time during the year. We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning and promotes independent use of resources securing high-quality outcomes by pupils.

All areas and resources in the school are clearly labelled and children are aware of resource areas within each classroom. Children are encouraged to be independent in their use and selection of them. The learning environment is organised to enable opportunities to learn in different ways. These include opportunities for:

- Investigating and problem solving
- Independent and joint research and finding out
- Independent, paired or collaborative group work
- Whole-class and guided group work
- Purposeful discussion including asking and answering questions, debates, role-play and oral presentations
- Using IT;
- On-site fieldwork and off-site visits to places of educational interest;
- Creative activities including designing and making things
- Participation in athletic or physical activity.

Learning takes place in an environment which:

- Is safe
- Provides challenge and a stimulating working atmosphere
- Scaffolds children's learning
- Is peaceful and calm, happy and organised
- Well-resourced and clearly defined
- Makes learning accessible and encourages independence
- Is appreciative and welcoming
- Provides equal opportunities

Pupils are encouraged to recognise and calculate risk in order that they are able to identify health and safety hazards in the classroom and to work safely.

Learning behaviours

We wish to instil in our pupils a love of lifelong learning. We expect pupils to apply themselves to their tasks and remain on task, to engage in discussions about their learning and to take a pride in their accomplishments. They need to be open to feedback and understand 'next step' advice supports on-going improvement and development. They need to be able to act as critical partners to their peers. Routines and rules in the classroom are conducive to a healthy learning environment. To be effective they must be:

- Clearly understood by pupils
- Fair and consistent
- Realistic and positive

- Kept to a minimum and adhered to consistently.

All rules should result in pupils understanding and accepting the boundaries of behaviour and should be set within the terms of the Behaviour policy.

All adults are expected to be professional role models, modelling appropriate learning behaviours at all times. They need to ensure they use subject specific vocabulary, use appropriate forms of language when modelling speech and convey they value the contributions of their pupils through the use of high quality listening skills. They need to ensure appropriate forms of dress, display patience and good manners at all times.

Monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment

The school's leaders, in partnership with governors, ensure robust monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment using a broad evidence base that includes lesson observations, data analysis, work and planning scrutiny, learning walks, discussions with parents and pupils. Outcomes are used to secure an accurate evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the school, drive the school's improvement agenda and support individual professional development.

All teachers receive clear feedback about their performance and tailored professional guidance following any monitoring activity.

Pupil Progress meetings take place at least termly to determine the impact teaching is having on pupil achievement. These meetings are tailored to review the performance of any underperforming individuals, groups or cohorts.

Appendix 1 Teachers' Checklist

Do I ...

- Use VAK (Visual Auditory and Kinaesthetic) learning opportunities
- Establish links to previous learning/prior knowledge
- Share the Learning Objective and learning context
- Clarify the Success Criteria against which pupils can evaluate their progress and outcomes
- Ensure plenaries have a learning focus and are used to evaluate learning and/or look ahead to next steps.
- Teach subject content using subject specific language and appropriate terminology
- Convey instructions clearly
- Provide opportunities for pupils to transfer skills across the curriculum and life
- Use targeted, differentiated questions to challenge differing abilities and extend thinking and learning
- Ensure lessons start and end promptly with no time wasted?

Do my pupils...

- Remain on task and use their time diligently
- Focus on learning and take pride in achieving
- Understand and respect the ground rules established for behaviour for learning
- Provide mutual respect to their peers and all adults
- Organise themselves and their resources to facilitate their learning?

As a consequence, do...

- All pupils and groups of pupils make continuously good progress
- All teachers have a sound knowledge of the standard children must achieve by the end of each year
- All children know their targets and use them to evaluate their work
- Teachers provide clear feedback and 'next steps' to their pupils and provide opportunities for pupils to reflect and act on this guidance
- Use assessment daily to plan for the next stage in all pupils' learning
- Deploy Teaching Assistants and support staff effectively to target groups of children to facilitate them in their learning
- Pupils have a love of learning and a desire to achieve high standards
- Pupils find tasks interesting, engaging and challenging
- All pupils reach their potential
- Pupils have secure subject knowledge and use and understand subject specific vocabulary
- Pupils know what is expected of them in terms of learning and behaviour
- Teachers provide effective strategies to help their pupils to think creatively
- Teachers rapidly identify any pupils requiring targeted intervention?
- Guided sessions are in place for reading, writing and maths to target next steps in learning.