

Garswood Primary School



Teaching and Learning Policy

The policy for teaching and learning is the core policy of the school and informs the best classroom practice. It will enable all children to make progress in every lesson taught and will ultimately raise standards.

Recent changes to the curriculum have been adopted by the school and all staff are skilled in the delivery of both the Challenge Curriculum and new programs of study for English, Mathematics and Science.

English lessons are planned using a book theme 'approach' which mirrors best practice and is focussed on grammatical understanding of the text as well as themes and content. The new Maths Curriculum has been adopted and is integrated into the whole school approach to problems solving and reasoning. Core skills are embedded and pupils are encouraged to find practical solutions to problems as well as being skilled in reasoning and pencil and paper strategies. Fluency, Reasoning and Problem Solving will be clearly evidenced within all lessons with pupils being encouraged to use concrete resources to support their learning.

The policy was developed as part of a strategic plan to improve standards of teaching and learning. It will be reviewed annually in order to ensure that any new research or changes to the curriculum can be built in and reflected in the policy.

Aims of the policy

- Raise the quality of learning and as a result improve standards across the school
- Provide clear guidance for teaching and learning ensuring consistency, rigour and a systematic approach across the school
- Support the systems in place for monitoring, evaluation, school improvement and accountability
- Reflect our commitment to equal opportunities and the Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural ethos.
- Set out our minimum expectations of best practice

The school has developed a shared vision and constructed aims to reflect this. These are fundamental to all teaching and learning activities. This policy reflects our mission and aims with a particular focus on Dedication, Thoughtfulness, Ambition, Courage and Respect.

Principles

We want our children to become:

- 🌳 successful learners, who enjoy learning and achieve well;
- 🌳 confident individuals, able to live a safe, healthy and fulfilling life;

- 🌳 active and responsible citizens who will make a positive contribution to the well-being of present and future generations.

We want to encourage the community of Garswood to see learning as a way of life and inspire our children to delight in learning; encouraging both independence of mind and spirit and the recognition of individual and collective responsibility. We give pride of place to respect for oneself and respect for others. We will together empower our children to be determined, successful and uphold a belief that they can change things for the better. We want to maximise every opportunity and every minute the children spend with us should be worthwhile and impact on their life outside of school.

We are committed to working with children and parents as partners, to foster an enjoyment of learning, to motivate and teach our children to become effective communicators, thinkers, problem solvers, mathematicians, scientists. To support our children in becoming creative, developing enquiring and open minds and giving them the skills to explore the world without being afraid to take risks. We recognise the need to emotionally engage children in their learning and provide stimulating and interesting activities catering for a range of learning styles.

We provide a supportive environment which promotes both independent and collaborative learning. We encourage children to form positive relationships with others and through a growing self-belief and self worth each child will learn to resist negative pressures, become resilient and make informed choices.

We will celebrate talents and ambitions, promote healthy lifestyles and help children understand that respect for the beliefs, needs and rights of every single person is an essential part of a civilised, inclusive and multicultural society.

Looking at Learning

We recognise that effective learning will not always look the same. We acknowledge that everyone learns differently, be it Visually, Auditory or Kinaesthetically. At Garswood we ensure that the needs of all learners are planned for and that teaching is engaging, interesting, builds on prior learning is purposeful and relevant. Children should have ownership over the learning and contribute to the process of the planning, assessing and reviewing cycle.

There should always be high expectations. Though everyone should experience success they should also be challenged and be given opportunities to demonstrate 'Mastery' across the curriculum. The balance should be carefully considered to ensure consolidation and develop confidence but capitalise on moving learning forwards and challenging misconceptions.

Learning Environment

The conditions for learning can be reflected in a tangible sense in the learning environment. Children should be given opportunities to experience a range of environments, both inside and outside. Learning should not be bound by the classroom and the table but should encourage seeking out answers, learning from a variety of sources and environments such as 'Forest School', enhanced by ICT.

The whole school environment should remain safe and risks managed. Children should be given the opportunities to engage in risk assessment processes.

Children should be taught to respect their environment and abide by the school Golden rules. Timings are strictly adhered to and routines ensure every minute in school is utilised well.

The environment should reflect and support learning, celebrate achievements, and act as aide memoire. The children should engage with their environment via the use of interactive displays and working walls with practical, concrete enhancements used as further support for learning. Enhancements should be used to add interest to the environment and allow for hands on exploration. Classrooms should be organised with clear labels and easily accessible resources to promote independent learning. The environment checklist provided as an appended document will support in the evaluation and improvement of the classroom environment. Learning environments should support learners in their decision making, giving them the confidence to approach problems independently and the tools with which to succeed.

Effective learning

We recognise at Garswood that not all lessons will necessarily have the same formula. We acknowledge the importance of routine but also celebrate that lessons can begin and develop differently, for instance; the children walking in to discover an artefact in their classroom would be a very different start to a lesson than children reviewing their target from the previous piece of work.

However, regardless of the approach to an individual lesson there are some fundamental aspects which need to be inherent and embedded into the learning process at Garswood in our drive to raise standards;

- Children's own reflection on prior learning and current target
- Shared lesson objectives which build on prior learning
- Open questions to challenge thinking
- Grounding – making learning relevant to the children
- Engagement of all learners through strategies such as think, pair share; wipe boards, maths note books, drafting books, thumbs up/down, fans.
- Development of or referral to a 'success criteria'
- WAGOLL – What a good one looks like – modelled work/ shared activity/ Air-server through iPads to demonstrate excellence
- Group or independent working time to practise and refine, make mistakes and learn.
- Culture of making mistakes to move forwards – allowing children to peer assess and suggest improvements (one to one or as a group or class) How could it be improved even further?
- Modelling, editing and improving work
- Provide challenge through targeted questioning or scaffolding to all children, mindful of targeted booster groups.
- Regular summaries with reference back to the key learning objective.
- Differentiated activities to enable children to achieve the expectations – occasionally the level of the task should be decided by the children themselves to encourage children to 'take a challenge'

Learning is at the heart of everything that we do and, along with the health and safety and wellbeing of the children, should take a priority.

The standards of teaching and learning will be monitored in accordance with the monitoring and evaluation policy.

Approved by Governors Autumn 2016
 Reviewed Autumn 2017
 By the Teaching & Learning Sub-Committee

Appendix

Principles for outstanding teaching adapted from Jackie Breer materials and based around staff training on Peter Greenhalgh, Mind Friendly Learning

Sharing the criteria for success is essential for any learning experience – if you (or your students) do not know what they are expected to strive for – how do you (or they) know that they have achieved success? So here are the Ofsted criteria for an outstanding lesson:

	Learning and progress	Teaching and assessment
Outstanding	<p>The quality of learning is exceptional. Students demonstrate excellent concentration and are rarely off task even for extended periods without adult direction</p> <p>They have developed a resilience when tackling challenging activities</p> <p>Their keenness and commitment to succeed in all aspects of school life and ability to grasp opportunities to extend and improve their learning are exceptional.</p> <p>Progress is at least good for different groups of students and exemplary for some students.</p>	<p>Teaching is at least good and often outstanding as students are making exceptional progress. Students are enthused which ensures they learn really well. Excellent subject knowledge is applied to challenge and inspire students. Resources, including new technology make a marked contribution to learning as does the targeted support from other adults</p> <p>Teachers are aware of students' capabilities and their prior learning and understanding and plan effectively to build on these. Marking and dialogue between teachers and other adults and students are of consistently high quality.</p>

Searching for the 'x' factor – what are the magic ingredients that will elevate your lesson to outstanding? The first sentences in each column above identify the key ingredients for success:

- 'The quality of the learning is exceptional'
- 'Teaching is at least good and often outstanding as students are making exceptional progress.'

In summary, the 'x' factor means demonstrating EXCEPTIONAL PROGRESS IN LEARNING in your lesson.

The following (in no particular order) are some of the other essential ingredients required for an outstanding lesson:

- Differentiating for various groups of learners
- Engaging and motivating students
- Developing independent and resilient learners
- Delivering skills and content essential for passing exams
- Assessment as part of developing progress in learning
- Challenging the most able learners
- Using technology and TAs to make an impact on learning
- Effective collaborative learning and peer review
- Effective classroom management
- Sharing the criteria for success

So how can you make sure you demonstrate the above when being observed?

Follow these 6 steps:

Step one – Be in control, right from the start

Set up the learning environment

E.g. The music-challenge-reward

Students should expect to start something as soon as they come into the classroom without you even directing them. This strategy should cover the time it takes for all the students to arrive. It neatly shows how you are completely and effortlessly in control. Get the students in the habit of doing this in every lesson by setting little challenges, questions or tasks to do on the board that they KNOW they are expected to get on with. These can be anagrams, puzzles, true or false statements, recaps of the previous lesson, unexpected questions for debate etc etc. Reward effort for these tasks by giving out points.

The tasks could also link explicitly to one of the Personal, Learning and Thinking skills and success could earn points that accumulate over time and earn rewards. Some examples of tasks involving the PLTs could be:

Personal, Learning and Thinking skill Task Self manager

Draw a face that depicts the different moods you have experienced today so far.

Effective participator Write down ten things you will do this lesson to help others learn

Creative thinker Design a logo and slogan for this subject/lesson

Reflective learner Create a mind map of what we did last lesson

Independent Enquirer Write three questions you need to ask about what we did last lesson

Team worker Think of three promises you will make to your team to help it work well.

Whilst the students are completing the tasks smile, greet them individually by name and make them feel welcome. You could get the students to assess each other's work if appropriate. Also it is a good idea to have music on as they come in and are getting on with the little tasks. Then, when you switch it off, the students know it is time to start the lesson proper. This will mean that you can start the lesson proper when YOU are ready and useful work is still taking place.

Step 2. The starter.

A starter should stimulate curiosity and open mindedness and prepare the brain for learning. These can be random or linked to the subject. A starter can be a thunk, a curiosity or a challenge.

A thunk This is a question that has no right or wrong answer but makes you think! This prepares a student to be open minded and consider various options.

For example:

- If you always got what you wished for would you always be happy?
- Where does the sky begin?
- What has the most freedom an ant or a school child?
- Is a person who has a face transplant still the same person?
- Which is heavier an inflated or deflated balloon?

(Thunks from 'The Little Book of Thunks' by Ian Gilbert (Crownhouse))

Students can think of the next question or make up their own thunks as part of the starter.

A curiosity

For example

- A box, which they have to guess the contents of
- A wig or hat that someone can try on and guess the character it belongs to
- A message in a bottle. Students have to guess the message and who sent it

A Creative Challenge in pairs (tuning up the connections in the brain)

- First pop song you ever heard and the one you heard most recently
- The 3 most popular babies' names in 1999 and the three that will be most popular in 2020
- Guess the most common and least common food that everyone in the class had for breakfast

Step 3. Set objectives or learning outcomes – engage them in the learning

Describe, simply and EXACTLY what you want the students to be able to do by the end of the lesson. Do this at two levels (at least) for differentiation.

This is the crucial moment when you engage the students in the exciting task ahead and explain that this will make a difference to them personally. To succeed you must communicate your expectation of success and your personal excitement about what they can achieve and why it is important.

How can you convince the students that learning is a journey and that they have an amazing capacity to progress during this lesson? There are three parts to doing this:

1. Explain (with passion!) what success in achieving the objectives will look and feel like. (The 'brilliant outcome.')

TOP TIP

Be energetic and enthusiastic. Channel any nerves into passion!

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1. Explain (with passion!) what success in achieving the objectives will look and feel like. (The 'brilliant outcome'.)
2. Showing them that achieving the objectives is part of a learning journey by using a continuum line.
3. By also setting one or more personal skills objective

Draw a continuum line that leads to the 'brilliant outcome' they are heading towards in their learning journey. (Shown below in the boxes) At the start of the activity students decide where along the line they are now. After the activity they then mark where they are now, to demonstrate what (if any) progress they have made in the lesson towards the outcome. The same is done for the PLT skill, helping the students towards self assessment regarding this skill. These are just as crucial for an outstanding lesson.

Step 4. The main lesson activity / activities

This is where the teacher's input really comes in. There needs to be:

- A challenging level of subject knowledge
- Active, collaborative learning – this is crucial as students should be able to work, on task, 'without adult supervision'
- Choice of activities or of approaches to them
- Lots of higher order questions (which you don't answer for them)
- Visual aids and practical activities

The first 3 points above, choice, collaboration and challenge need to be present in order to deliver an outstanding lesson for these reasons:

- Challenge. Because this is the way to ensure that expectations are high and learners are working to make progress in their learning
- Collaboration. Because students should be talking more than teaches and working together to achieve the 'brilliant outcomes.'
- Choice. Engages the learners and make them feel committed to the task
Good collaborative activities tap into the talents in the room and help connect the learning with the world at home.

Set up group work or team work that develops employability skills (-the PLTs).

Coach students about the stages in group work - forming, storming, norming and performing. Roles within groups and the skills needed for effective leadership also need to be taught.

3 useful beliefs which underpin outstanding teaching:

WE GET WHAT WE EXPECT – IF WE UNDERESTIMATE THE CAPABILITIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE –WE WILL NOT ALLOW CHILDREN TO ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL. EVERY CHILD WANTS TO SUCCEED

Collaborative project examples.

Note that these have some CHOICE in the tasks and an onus on completing the work as a group. The outcomes should be presented by the group and, as far as is possible, quality control should be given to the team. An element of competition can be added by allocating points to different tasks.

Step 5. Dish up the DIRT..... often!

DIRT = Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time through assessment AS learning. As the process of learning is a journey, it is essential to raise awareness about this process by reminding students frequently to check their learning process and progress. What have you learnt, how far have you travelled towards the learning outcome? There should be regular checkpoints which then become assessment AS part of the learning process.

Reviewing and reflecting.

As students know what the success criteria is and are aware of the need to continue to gauge their progress there is also a need to focus on the quality of the work produced.

This is the quality control moment when students work on their own or together to improve their work. A checklist that relates to success criteria could be helpful here.

You could use APP (assessment of pupil progress) student sheets to enable students to start to self or peer assess the work produced. Working to redraft, improve and amend following constructive criticism is a vital part of the learning journey. It also gives the students more control and responsibility for the outcomes. This prevents marking being a mysterious process that goes on in the teacher's head. Assessment becomes part of the learning process.

TOP TIP

Take a moment for a mini plenary at any time to gather evidence of the learning progress (Especially if you have an observer).

Step 6. Final Plenary/Review

Plenaries can take place throughout the lesson. Moments of reflection about how the learning is progressing are an important part of an outstanding lesson. At the end a memorable plenary will sum up the learning outcomes.

DONT BE AFRAID TO ACKNOWLEDGE WHEN THEY HAVEN'T ALL MADE PROGRESS. This gives you a chance to explain what your next steps will be to ensure ALL students have learnt what they need to know.

The moment of truth: How far did we get towards our objectives?

You could stick a huge learning progress arrow on the wall that you can use as a visual aid for students to pin their names on to show how far they have Progressed towards the learning outcome.

Some other useful plenary techniques:

Post-its for students to collect 3 things they have learnt. These can be placed on the door on the way out or shared in groups and prioritised.

Mini whiteboards and pens for writing key points from the lesson and holding up.

Showing 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 fingers to demonstrate success in learning progress. 5 fingers means 'I really got it', 4 means 'mostly got it' 3 'got some of it' etc Sit in a hotseat and make 3 points as

a key character that would be an expert in the lesson outcome, hand on to another class member who has to make 2 points, then down to 1.

Use a metaphor such as a rucksack or treasure chest to put all the key learning points from the lesson to open up next lesson. These can be written on paper and folded up to place in the bag or box. At the beginning of the next lesson they can be opened up and shared.

Write newspaper headlines – summarising your key learning in a headline. Useful to have some mock up newspapers made with blank headlines.

ALWAYS FINISH ON TIME SO THAT YOU DONT MISS OUT THE PLENARY IN YOUR LESSON PLAN. CUT SHORT OTHER ACTIVITIES BUT MAKE SURE YOU DEMONSTRATE THE LEARNING AT THE END AND MAKE YOUR OWN ASSESSMENT ABOUT WHETHER YOU HAVE SUCCEEDED IN ACHEIVING THE LEARNING OUTCOME.

It should be very clear to any observer that students have made progress in learning and can demonstrate it. Where insufficient progress has been made it should be clear what the plan of action will be to address this next lesson. One of the most common criticisms is that teachers don't use assessment outcomes to inform future planning. Make it clear that you can see what each and every student has learnt and what the next steps are to secure progress. Finish the lesson by setting the scene for the next exciting learning experience that will build on the lesson today.