

Swarland Primary School
"The Best That We Can Be"

Teaching and Learning Policy

Introduction

We believe that both adults and children learn new things every day.

We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun. Through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives.

We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

We believe that a consistent approach to teaching and learning will help to maintain high motivation for all involved in the process.

Aims and objectives

We believe that people learn best in different ways. At our school we provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners;
- raise the self-motivation to learning;
- foster children's self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people;
- develop children's self-respect and encourage children to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others;
- share our learning objectives and outcomes, so that each child is aware of what they are learning and has partnership in it;
- share success criteria and feedback with the children so that each child knows how well they are doing and what they need to do further to progress;
- show respect for all cultures and, in so doing, to promote positive attitudes towards other people;
- enable children to understand their community and help them feel valued as part of this community;
- help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.

Our school have incorporated the above aims into learning characteristics we promote in our children and staff. They are Attitude, Independence, Tolerance, Perseverance, Resilience and Readiness. We believe these characteristics and learning behaviours will provide children with a strong foundation for their learning journey through life.

Effective learning

We acknowledge that people learn in many different ways and we recognize the need to develop strategies that allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them.

We are aware of the Creative Thinking Skills approach to learning through Gardner's seven main areas of intelligence: (linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal/group working, and interpersonal/reflective), Philosophy For Children approach and Ron Berger's Ethics In Excellence principles.

We try to take into account these different approaches when planning teaching and learning.

We offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways. These include:

- investigation and problem solving;
- research and finding out;
- group work (using a variety of different groupings);
- pair work;
- the use of response partners;
- independent work;
- whole-class work;
- asking and answering questions;
- use of the computer;
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- creative activities;
- watching media and responding to musical or tape-recorded material;
- debates, role-plays and oral presentations;
- designing and making things;
- participation in athletic or physical activity.

We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way they learn and to reflect on how they learn - what helps them learn and what makes it difficult for them to learn.

Pupils' Learning Experiences should enable them to:

- gain a clear understanding of the purpose of the task being undertaken
- show willingness to learn from mistakes as well as successes
- benefit and develop by receiving regular feedback
- identify and engage in problem solving and investigative work
- learn through asking and answering questions
- establish positive attitudes towards learning
- work individually and as members of a co-operative group
- develop the confidence to communicate to others
- practise, apply and consolidate new skills;
- apply concepts in new situations
- use computing to aid their knowledge and understanding
- take increasing responsibility for selecting and using appropriate resources
- learn increasingly to meet the challenge of completing assignments under pressure of time

We believe that effective learning takes place when:

1. pupils feel valued as individuals and are actively involved in the learning process
2. classroom relationships are built on mutual tolerance and respect
3. pupils are encouraged by their teachers and are given opportunities to enjoy a genuine sense of achievement
4. there is a common awareness that high standards of self-discipline and order are expected
5. the environment in which pupils and teachers are learning is stimulating, comfortable and safe
6. lessons are well prepared with tasks and resources appropriate to pupils learning needs
7. teachers are respected.

Effective teaching

When teaching we focus on motivating the children and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. We use the school's long term curriculum plan to guide our teaching, with more detailed focus being given in the medium-term planning.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's level of achievement. Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge and skills of the children so they can use and apply them in a wide range of contexts. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability. When planning work for children with special educational needs we give due regard to information and targets contained in the children's Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or provision map. We have high expectations of all children, and we believe that their work here at Swarland School is of the highest possible standard.

We set academic targets with the children regularly through next steps on their learning journey given as feedback orally or through written comments. We share these next steps with parents at Parent Consultations and through reading records. We review the progress of each child regularly and adapt our provision for these children accordingly to ensure the best possible progress for the child.

We plan our lessons with clear learning objectives, which we share with the children. We take these objectives from the National Curriculum. We evaluate all lessons so that we can modify and improve our teaching in the future and encourage the children to evaluate their own work and progress.

Each teacher makes a special effort to establish good working relationships with all children in the class. We treat the children with kindness and respect. We treat them fairly and give them equal opportunity to take part in class activities. All our teachers follow the school policy with regard to discipline and have an agreed approach to classroom management. We set and agree with children the class code of conduct. We expect all children to comply with these rules that we jointly devise to promote the best learning opportunities for all. We praise children for their efforts helping to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general. We insist on good behaviour at all times.

We ensure that all tasks and activities that the children do are safe. When we plan to take children out of school, we first inform parents and obtain their permission.

We deploy learning assistants and other adult helpers as effectively as possible. Sometimes they work with individual children and sometimes they work with small groups.

Characteristics of an effective teacher include, in addition to the national teacher's standards:

- good knowledge and understanding, teachers maintaining an up to date knowledge of the curriculum they are delivering
- good time management
- developing and maintaining a positive relationship with pupils
- being enthusiastic and purposeful in their use of teaching styles
- being well organised and having a clarity of purpose
- effective organisation of other adults' time whilst working in the classroom
- good planning and lesson preparation to ensure pupils are adequately challenged (explaining the objectives of the lesson at the outset, and referring to these throughout the lesson)
- communicating the high standards expected
- appropriate use of organisational strategies: high quality, whole class interactive teaching
- small group or individual teaching

- identifying opportunities for positive reinforcement
- effective and sensitive use of direct and indirect questioning techniques
- effective use of open and closed questioning
- the use of regular monitoring and assessing of pupil performance to inform planning
- giving pupils opportunities to review and reflect upon their progress and, where possible, to involve them in planning the next steps in their learning
- effective use of resources including ICT
- establishing links with the local community and other schools to prepare pupils for the next steps in their education
- communicating with parents and keeping them informed of children's progress, topics to be studied and curriculum developments.

We aim to make our classrooms attractive learning environments. We change displays often, to ensure that the classroom reflects the topics studied by the children and their work in progress. We ensure that all children have the opportunity to display their work at some time during the year. All classrooms have a range of dictionaries and fiction and non-fiction books, as well as displays relating to the curriculum. We believe that a stimulating literate environment sets the climate for learning, and an exciting classroom promotes independent use of resources and high-quality work by the children.

The learning environment should be organised:

- to enable pupils to have easy access to a range of clearly labelled learning resources
- to facilitate maximum learning opportunities

- so that the available accommodation provides a safe and orderly yet stimulating and exciting environment
- to facilitate opportunities for independent and cooperative work
- to provide high standards of presentation and display reflecting current work
- so that pupils take increasing responsibility for classroom display and care of their learning environment
- to enable children to enter the classroom with a purposeful and positive attitude to learning.

All our teachers reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and plan their professional development needs accordingly, using our appraisal system. We have a regular monitoring and evaluating programme and opportunities for staff to observe good practice. We support our teachers in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice.

We conduct all our teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all.

The role of governors

Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school policies on teaching and learning. In particular they:

- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
- ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning;
- monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations;
- monitor and hold the school to account on how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil achievement;
- ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching;
- monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning policies through the school self-review processes.

The role of parents

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:

- holding parents' evenings to explain our school strategies for teaching;
- sending information to parents at the start of each term in which we outline the topics that the children will be studying during that term at school;
- sending regular reports to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can improve further;
- explaining to parents how they can support their children with homework. We suggest, for example, regular shared reading with very young children, and support for older children with their projects and investigative work.
- communication via our school website.

We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We would like parents to:

- ensure that their child has the best attendance and punctuality record possible;
- ensure that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and PE kit;
- do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
- inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour at school;
- promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general;
- fulfil the requirements set out in the home/school agreement.

Monitoring and review

We are aware of the need to review the school teaching and learning policy regularly so that we can take account of new initiatives, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. We will review our policy each year.

The Teaching and Learning Policy has been formulated to provide a basis for staff to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their classroom and across the school.

This process is linked with the OFSTED criteria for teaching and learning in order to provide a clear picture of the quality and consistency of practice across school. When evaluating teaching and learning in school, we have agreed to consider:

- classroom observation
- sampling pupils' work
- sharing pupils' work with colleagues and celebrating successes
- displaying work throughout school and discussing quality
- internal and external moderation of pupils' work
- discussion with pupils
- interviewing and surveying pupils
- teacher's planning and records
- overall standards of achievement

Revision Record of Issued Versions			
Author	Creation Date	Version	Status
Louise Fletcher	26.3.13	1.0	Pending Governor consultation
Changed by	Revision Date		
School	17.11.15	2.0	Revisions to include different teaching approaches ready for consultation with staff.
School	24.2.16	3.0	Final version for publication