

Teaching and Learning Policy



Reviewed September 2017

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Pay and Reward Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Marking and feedback Guidance
- Teacher's Standards (DFE 2012)
- Homework Policy
- Assessment Policy

The Stour Academy Trust believes in the concept of lifelong learning and the notion 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.

Aims and Objectives

This teaching and learning policy is intended to promote consistency and high standards and the achievement of each school's aims. It outlines the minimum professional standards expected from staff. The school aims to provide a caring, supportive and stimulating environment with high quality teaching through which to foster:

- A high level of literacy and numeracy and an enquiring mind which wants to learn more each day;
- Independent young people who are confident, flexible and able to cooperate with others;
- Imagination and creative expression through a wide range of media;
- Conscientious young citizens of our multi-cultural society who are tolerant and respect others' values;
- Pride in achievement and a desire to succeed;
- Effective links between the school, the child's home and the community which promote aspiration and high expectations;
- Equality of opportunity for all;

Pedagogy

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

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

- whole class work,
- group work,
- paired work,
- independent work,
- investigation and problem solving,
- debates, role plays and oral presentations,
- participation in physical activity,
- creative activities,
- use of ICT,
- designing and making things,
- practical activities using a range of resources,
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest,
- visitors to the school,
- research and finding out,
- questioning,
- reflecting on what has been learned.

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. Target setting, developmental marking, self-review and peer review strategies are used, as well as planned plenaries throughout the lesson to review the key learning objectives and to assess the level of understanding.

Effective Teaching:

We believe children learn effectively when the teacher provides:

- thorough preparation
- shared learning objectives which are understood by the pupils
- lessons where children's previous learning and interests are built upon, through purposeful application of knowledge to different situations
- consistent high expectations of what pupils are expected to achieve by the end of the session (success criteria)

- systematic and effective checking of pupils' understanding throughout the lesson, and anticipating where there may be a need to intervene resulting in a notable impact on the quality of learning
- consistent high quality marking and constructive feedback ensuring that pupils make rapid gains
- well-judged and inspirational teaching strategies, including setting appropriate homework, alongside sharply focused and timely support and intervention accurately matched to individual needs.
- lessons where children's understanding is developed through active, practical and first hand experiences, involving individual and collaborative talk, exploration, questioning, prediction and investigation, so that the lesson makes a difference
- a broad and balanced curriculum with an emphasis on ensuring pupils become literate and numerate
- a planned programme of educational visits to reinforce and stimulate learning
- appropriate pace to the lesson
- open-ended, thought provoking, challenging questions of the children
- an atmosphere where children are prepared to take risks
- opportunities to review and reflect on the learning
- incorporates pupil voice

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's individual levels of attainment so that all children have access to an education which enables them to reach their full potential. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability but are mindful that differentiation does not hinder progress. As a Trust we use a unique approach to self-differentiation, which allows all children, regardless of ability, opportunities for challenge and success.

When planning work for children with special educational needs (SEN) we give due regard to their particular special need and their individual SEN targets which are recorded in either an IEP/EHCP or on the whole class provision map. All targets are monitored and reviewed regularly.

We have high expectations of all children, and believe that all children should be included in the full range of educational opportunities and that their work should be of the highest possible standard. In order for pupils to make adequate progress, teaching needs to be consistently good or better, i.e., outstanding.

Expectations

- Teachers must have high expectations for all children every lesson.
- The teacher's expectations should ensure that each child fulfils their potential each lesson.
- Below standard work should never be accepted (see Behaviour Policy)

Monitoring:

The school expects all teaching to be of a 'good' standard, as described in the Ofsted framework for school inspection and Ofsted school inspection handbook, with all teaching aiming to be 'outstanding'. 'Good' is the minimum standard of teaching accepted. Therefore, robust action will be taken to address any teaching judged to 'require improvement' or judged 'inadequate'

The Trust do not grade/judge individual lessons.

All teachers are expected to meet the Teachers' Standards (DfE September 2012). Given support, NQTs are expected to be graded 'good' in their final observation of their induction year.

Classroom observations of teaching and learning will take place as part of the school's monitoring process, including the Performance Management cycle.

How the assessment of teaching will be gained:

-it will be based on observations and post lesson conversation about:

- The lesson itself
- Conversations with the children during the lesson
- planning (not necessarily a lesson plan – mainly through dialogue so the teacher can justify what they did)
 - Can you justify what you asked the pupils to do?
 - Do your objectives match the needs of the group?
 - Have they done it already?!
- Data
- Evidence of marking and next steps (is there clear response to marking)
- The children's progress – in the lesson but also from evidence that can be seen in their exercise books.

Those observing the lesson will focus on the pupils, rather than the teacher, with a clear focus on progress made during the lesson:

- Are they reactive?
- Are they responsive?
- Are they engaged (and not passively engaged!)?
- Is there a buzz about the lesson?
- Is the lesson dominated by the teacher?
- Are the children interested?
- Are they being challenged?
- Are they aware of the expectation on them?
- Can the children explain what they need to do to improve their own work? (next Steps)
- Is the expectation on them reasonable/appropriate/challenging?

The quality of teaching and learning will also be regularly monitored through:

- Scrutiny of data
- Scrutiny of planning
- Scrutiny of pupil work
- Environment checks and learning walks
- Discussion with pupils, parents and staff
- Triangulation of the quality of teaching, pupil work and assessment data.

The standard of teaching will be judged by the Trust's designated Performance Management reviewers, members of the Senior Leadership Team, Teaching and Learning Advisors and/or external observers e.g. OFSTED or trained Local Authority personnel.

Those involved in making assessments will regularly partake in joint observations to ensure consistency of judgments. Where such judgments are made, teachers will always be provided with a minimum of 5 working days' notice of the observation.

Drop in sessions may occur at any time to monitor the quality of learning, the learning environment or to monitor the implementation of policies etc. Judgments made on the quality of teaching would not be considered in cases of competency, but will be followed up when concerns are raised.

Where a teacher has been judged less than 'good', additional observations and discussions focused on support will take place within two weeks of the first judgment with the aim of securing rapid improvement. However, if judgments that fall below 'good' occur twice during the academic year, informal targets will be set

and the formal capability procedure used if no improvement is made within the timescale set. This procedure will be in line with the school's Pay and Reward Policy.

Professional Development

All teachers should reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and plan their professional development needs accordingly. Teachers are supported in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice.

All staff are responsible for their own professional development and should actively seek areas and opportunities for development. It is the individual's responsibility to seek out suitable professional development opportunities.

Professional development should be focused on the needs identified within the Academy's Development Plan and the teacher's own performance management targets.

It is expected that staff attend all relevant in-school training professional meetings. Staff are expected to arrive punctually, take an active role, participating fully and making positive contributions.

Where training is optional, it is important that teachers attend if the training identified addresses weaknesses within their own practice and/or is a target for performance management.

Assessment, Planning, Teaching and Marking (See separate policies)

TEACHERS' STANDARDS

Teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils.

PART ONE: TEACHING

A teacher must:

1 Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils

- establish a safe and stimulating environment for pupils, rooted in mutual respect
- set goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions
- demonstrate consistently the positive attitudes, values and behaviour which are expected of pupils.

2 Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils

- be accountable for pupils' attainment, progress and outcomes
- be aware of pupils' capabilities and their prior knowledge, and plan teaching to build on these
- guide pupils to reflect on the progress they have made and their emerging needs
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this impacts on teaching
- encourage pupils to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study.

3 Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge

- have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings
- demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas, and promote the value of scholarship
- demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject
- if teaching early reading, demonstrate a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics

- if teaching early mathematics, demonstrate a clear understanding of appropriate teaching strategies.

4 Plan and teach well structured lessons

- impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time
- promote a love of learning and children's intellectual curiosity
- set homework and plan other out-of-class activities to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding pupils have acquired
- reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching
- contribute to the design and provision of an engaging curriculum within the relevant subject area(s).

5 Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils

- know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively
- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these
- demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils' education at different stages of development
- have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.

6 Make accurate and productive use of assessment

- know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements
- make use of formative and summative assessment to secure pupils' progress
- use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons

- give pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback.

7 Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment

- have clear rules and routines for behaviour in classrooms, and take responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour both in classrooms and around the school, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy
- have high expectations of behaviour, and establish a framework for discipline with a range of strategies, using praise, sanctions and rewards consistently and fairly
- manage classes effectively, using approaches which are appropriate to pupils' needs in order to involve and motivate them
- maintain good relationships with pupils, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary.

8 Fulfil wider professional responsibilities

- make a positive contribution to the wider life and ethos of the school
- develop effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on advice and specialist support
- deploy support staff effectively
- take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues
- communicate effectively with parents with regard to pupils' achievements and well-being.

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