



MARSH SCHOOL TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

Fulfilling
Uplifting
Nurturing

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Our Mission

It is our mission to provide the best quality early education for the whole child so that they develop a love of learning and can flourish in all aspects of their lives within a safe, healthy atmosphere of mutual support and trust. It is also our mission to be a caring, family school at the heart of the community. We always have high expectations of ourselves and the children and we are deeply committed to raising achievement. Creativity, fun and the broadening of horizons are central to our work. Every child is known personally and is special to us.

1. Introduction

This teaching and learning policy has been approved by the staff and Governors of Marsh School and will be reviewed annually. It aims to ensure that the children at our school are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to a consistently high level of pupil achievement.

Children learn through their total experience. This policy guides what children do, what teachers do, how time is managed, the organisation of the classroom and what the school as an organisation does to create an effective and well-managed learning environment in which the individual needs of each child can be met.

2. Aims

- To make the learning environment as positive, stimulating, homely and inviting as possible so that the children feel happy, safe, comfortable and ready to learn.
- To develop the strength and talents of all the children and to acknowledge and reward achievement and success
- To cater for the needs of all children taking into account their levels of ability, cultural backgrounds, and the languages they speak
- To identify children who are experiencing difficulties at an early stage so that they can be helped successfully
- To allow children to be children. Structured play activities are planned throughout the school that help them to interact, express themselves and to develop their all round learning
- To offer a curriculum that is relevant, practical, fun, hands on and broad above and beyond the statutory requirements.
- To start from where each child is academically, emotionally, morally, socially and spiritually
- To encourage team work, co-operation, excellent behaviour and independence
- To develop an understanding of the child's place in the world and to deepen their knowledge of how they can contribute as a citizen
- To facilitate good continuity and progression between the year groups and with their junior schools

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- To listen to the views of all those concerned with the development of the school and to act upon their opinions where appropriate
- To actively communicate with parents and carers so that there is a strong, open partnership.
- To be as well resourced as we can so that we can cater for the different learning styles and needs of the children.

3. Equal Opportunities

Marsh School has been praised for its unstinting belief in inclusion and we have had many successes particularly in catering for pupils with specific needs so that they can fully access the curriculum and the life of the school. We recognise and use the diversity that exists within our school community to ensure that all have the opportunity to respond to the high expectations, challenges and excitement of the curriculum and every day life of the school. We have excellent systems in place for children with special needs and a developing policy for the teaching of children with EAL and Gifted and Talented. Our full range of special events and growing provision for after school activities ensure that children with different talents and abilities can be stretched outside the normal curriculum and our excellent parent/teacher relationship ensures that we can meet the needs of individual parents where ever necessary.

4. What Is High Quality Teaching And Learning?

TEACHING AND LEARNING

We believe that children learn best when they:

- are happy
- are interested and motivated
- achieve success and gain approval
- are given tasks which match their ability;
- clearly understand the task
- are confident, feel secure and are aware of boundaries
- are challenged and stimulated
- listened to
- when we have taken into account the most up to date theories about how children learn.

THEORY ABOUT HOW CHILDREN LEARN

We need to make sure that we;

1. Exercise the neo- cortex

- Connecting learning
- Using novel materials and unusual artefacts
- Ensuring that children knows why they are learning anything
- Providing input to all senses
- Using open ended tasks
- Making children concentrate in short bursts suitable for their age

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- Making use of activities that make use of the unconscious
- Building in peer and self assessment
- Include humour

2. Have thought about the child's Limbic System (their emotional side)

- Making sure that the children know that they are capable of being learners
- We celebrate success and value work and achievements
- Every opportunity to acknowledge and identify progress is made the most of
- We have made sure that the children know the learning purpose and are sure about how far this has been accomplished
- The raising of self esteem and the encouragement of self evaluation is central

3. Have thought about how we can keep the child's reptilian (survival, need for security) brain happy

- Our expectations are clear to the children
- We praise five times more than we criticise
- We criticise the behaviour not the child
- We are fair and consistent
- We avoid sarcasm and derogatory remarks
- We provide opportunities to talk about feelings and how we manage them
- We teach skills in dealing with peer disputes
- If there is a threat to the children, they will not learn

DEVELOPING LEARNING POWER

This year we are going to be integrating the ideas of Guy Claxton into our Teaching and Learning Policy.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

This should be organised to ensure that children have the opportunity to:

- work individually, in groups and as a class
- make decisions
- work co-operatively
- solve problems
- be creative
- discuss their ideas
- develop social skills
- develop independence
- use initiative
- receive support
- achieve academically.

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LEARNING TAKES PLACE IN AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH:

- is challenging and stimulating
- is peaceful and calm
- thought has been given to the physical needs (water available, not too hot or sunny)
- there is a sense of fun and adults around them have a good sense of humour
- is happy and caring
- is organised
- is well resourced
- makes learning accessible
- there is a high degree of visual reminders for the child to cue into
- speaking and listening is central
- is encouraging and appreciative
- is welcoming
- provides equal opportunities
- provides a working atmosphere
- children should be encouraged to develop organisational skills and independence through appropriate tasks, confidence building, the encouragement of co-operation
- provision of suitable opportunities for children to undertake responsibilities

5. School Policies

Some school policies are set out in the staff handbook, in the school policy file kept in the classes and on the school network. It is the duty of each teacher and teaching assistant to be familiar with school policies and to apply them.

6. Display

Display in the school should be used to create an attractive and stimulating environment. The work displayed should be of a high standard and use both 2D and 3D in a variety of media and be changed frequently. It should include work on different aspects of the curriculum and reflect the individual child's efforts as well as ability. Ideally, all displays should stimulate discussion and be accompanied by children's questions and answers. Displays should be 'interactive' where ever possible.

7. Routines and Rules

There are school rules that are displayed around the school but each class should have their own stable routines and "Golden Rules" in the classroom that contribute to a healthy learning environment. These should be discussed with the children at the beginning of the school year and prominently displayed in the class room. The "Golden Rules" should be returned to each half term and every time there is a problem that needs to be discussed in the class.

To be effective they should be:

- agreed by the children and clearly understood;
- fair and consistent;
- realistic and positive;
- kept to a minimum but enforced;
- daily activities with which the children are familiar.

All rules should result in the children knowing the boundaries of behaviour and should be set within the terms of The Behaviour Policy.

Children who do not follow the rules will be dealt with in line with the behaviour policy.

8. Achievement

Social, physical, creative and academic achievements are celebrated in many ways as an on going process in all aspects of school life, by:

- verbal or written praise by teachers and Teaching Assistants, peers, Head Teacher and parents/carers
- displays of work
- opportunities to perform or share
- encouraging self esteem
- the awarding of stickers, house points and certificates
- taking home either the class or school mascot
- sharing success with the community e.g. through mentioning the children on the newsletter.

Teachers need to arrange time to observe, assess, reflect and review achievements with each child on a regular basis. The child should be involved in this process by the encouragement of self appraisal and target setting. Assessment both for learning and of learning are an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

9. Classroom Management

APPROACHES TO TEACHING

There must be a good balance of individual, group and whole-class teaching. There must also be a mixture of visual, aural and kinaesthetic teaching. It is essential that work is planned to be practical and creative. Careful differentiation is crucial. Teachers must choose carefully the style of teaching which is the most effective and groups will differ in composition and size for different activities. There may be several different activities in progress and at these times the teacher will be helping mainly one group or individual whilst the remainder will be involved in planned activities that do not require teacher input or working with a teaching assistant on a directed task. It is important that while this is in progress children stay on task. Children should not be withdrawn from carpet sessions at the start of sessions at quality first teaching is the essential for the children to make progress. Teaching Assistants should assist the teacher at these times with named children.

This can be helped by:

- having well organised and labelled resources
- taking time to train children in procedures
- making sure that children are aware of what they must do when they have completed an activity
- having plentiful visual reminders
- making children aware that the teacher does not always have to be first in the line of contact. Other children, student teachers and parent helpers can be used

TIME MANAGEMENT

It is important that activities are planned so that each child is working at their correct level, that they begin promptly and that the initial pace is maintained. All children should know what to do as soon as they enter the classroom and after they have completed an activity. A reminder list of tasks for individuals who have completed work ahead of the group is often helpful. Efficient planning and classroom organisation will significantly reduce time-wasting activities. Each class should also have a visual timetable to assist children.

WORKING WITH OTHER ADULTS

It is vital that the class teacher communicates effectively with teaching assistants and learning support assistants so that they feel fully part of the management of the class. They are a valuable resource in ensuring that the children learn successfully. Plans should be shared with them both weekly and daily. They should work with individuals and groups within the class. Their assessment of the children's learning is a valuable tool in moving the children forward. They should not always be working with the lower level children but rotate around groups so that the teacher has direct teaching time with all the groups. Teaching Assistants can be used for administrative work, displays and general classroom duties although they must not be used as general classroom assistants.

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SUPPLY TEACHERS

To ensure continuity, teachers should leave written guidance and suggested activities for all planned absences from the classroom. In the event of an unplanned absence it is essential that the class planning and timetable is in place on the wall of the class room so that the Key Stage co-ordinator can assist the supply teacher in planning the children's work for the day.

VOLUNTARY HELPERS AND STUDENTS

Voluntary helpers and students are a valuable resource and we should welcome their involvement in the classroom. They can help in many ways across the whole curriculum. Help can be on a regular basis or a specific event. In all cases it is very important that the teacher should take the time to ensure that the volunteer or student fully understands and is well prepared for the activity in which he or she is.

Volunteers should be made to feel welcome in the school and be offered refreshment from the staff room at break times. Parents should not be in the staff room at lunch time.

RECORD KEEPING

All teachers should keep detailed records of their work with the class and of individual children's activities and progress. The school has a policy for planning, assessment, recording and reporting of National Curriculum subjects that must be adhered to. Other records are left to the teacher's professional discretion.

PHYSICAL ORGANISATION

Clutter needs to be avoided as much as possible. All furniture and other materials need to be clean, bright, safe and suitable for their purpose.

Furniture

All classrooms should have:-

Tables arranged for:

- ease of working
- flexibility
- purposeful discussion
- provision of quiet corners
- large working surfaces

Chairs should normally be sufficient in number for the activities in the classroom and leave enough room for children to move easily around the room.

Storage units arranged to:

- support different areas of the curriculum;
- support a project or activity;
- give character to a room;
- house children's personal belongings.

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An annual inventory of furniture and a planned programme of renewal and decoration will be done in consultation with staff and governors.

No furniture is to be moved from classrooms without the permission of the Head Teacher.

Resources

Materials in all areas should be well organised, be of good quality, be clean, tidy, attractive, accessible and well labelled with pictures. As far as possible materials, should be near the appropriate working area. Stocks should be checked and replenished regularly. Children should be taught and shown by example that resources are finite and that we all have a duty to care for equipment and not misuse, damage or waste it. Books and other equipment represent a considerable investment of money.

Relevant textbooks should be available in each classroom. Some sets of books, e.g. dictionaries, thesauri and atlases are purchased for specific classes and should not be removed.

The effective implementation of National Curriculum subjects calls for a wide range of equipment to be used. These do not necessarily have to be stored in the classroom. The school library and classroom libraries have a selection of books covering all curriculum subjects. There are also many outside sources for the loan of books, artefacts and equipment. It is important that equipment borrowed from outside sources and other classrooms is returned promptly and in good condition. Each classroom has supplies and an inventory of appropriate equipment, including computers, Maths apparatus, calculators, headphones, cassette players, television and video, etc. Teachers should be able to account for the use and location of this equipment.

All missing, damaged or dangerous items should be reported to the Head Teacher.

Resource Finance

Curriculum areas are allocated money according to the needs identified in the School Development Plan and the accompanying School Budget Plan. The Head Teacher, Finance Officer and staff will discuss resource needs each half term and report back to the Governors. Requests for all equipment should be made to the Head Teacher.

Art and Craft Area

In each classroom there is a designated 'wet' area. This area has linoleum on the floor and a sink at the appropriate height. It should be clean, tidy and purposeful.

This area should have:

- flat surfaces large enough for the activity;
- storage for completed work;
- utensils placed in suitable containers;
- water containers;
- brushes of different sizes stored in containers;
- round ended, left and right-handed, and speciality scissors;
- a variety of paints and dyes;
- sponges, combs, etc. to give a variety of paint effects;

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- chalk, charcoal and crayons;
- glue;
- collage material;
- speciality paper;
- modelling materials.

Carpet Area

This area should be:

- Attractive, comfortable and inviting
- Carpeted
- Well lit
- Not used as a thoroughfare
- Near the white board
- Have visuals that are used daily near by
- A stand for big books
- Near the visual timetable
- Have reminders about good listening skills

Writing Table

- Writing prompts
- A wide variety of papers and envelopes
- Key word lists
- Alphabets
- A variety of writing implements

Book corner

- A wide range of both fiction and non-fiction books neatly arranged and accessible to the children
- Books which reflect a diversity of culture and gender;
- Books made by other children;
- Cassette player and headphones
- Books on cassette and CD-ROM
- Cushions for the children to sit on

Maths Table

This should have an interactive display linked to the objective being studied.

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Achievement Table

This should have the star of the week, attendance certificates, class mascot diary and team points pots on it. Classes should also have a chart showing class awards e.g. if they receive 40 class awards from the teacher, then the class would get a small treat.

Home Corner/Role Play corner

The role play corner provides a safe area where young children can creatively interact within a variety of settings, e.g. home, office, shop, cafe, museum etc to develop their speaking and listening skills as well as other aspects of literacy and numeracy.

The role play corner should be:

- adaptable;
- imaginative;
- attractive and inviting;
- carpeted;
- well lit;
- not used as a thoroughfare;
- private but safe.

It should have:

- furniture which can be adapted for a variety of uses;
- facilities for writing;
- costumes;
- a clear notice of its' current use.
- It is very important that this area be kept tidy after each activity.

Mathematics, Topic, Science and Technology

Mathematics, Science and Technology have accessible and well-labelled areas for the storage of equipment. We are developing topic storage for Key Stage One in a similar way to the Foundation Stage. Teachers should check that the resources are appropriate for their groups and that consumable resources are renewed regularly. Teachers should also be aware of the safety aspects of all technology equipment. A safety handbook is available from the Headteacher.

Cleaning

Cleaning is carried out by a professional cleaner and our caretaker. Nevertheless everyone should be encouraged to take responsibility for their environment both within and around the school. The class teacher is responsible for ensuring that the class is tidy at the end of the day and mess above and beyond the normal every day level is cleared so that both the cleaner and caretaker can do their jobs properly. Everywhere should be kept tidy and litter free at all times. The school should be checked daily and any lost property should be given to the Head Teacher. Nothing should be left on the cloakroom floor, all equipment must be returned to its appropriate place and all kit bags hung on pegs.

