

# Blaby Stokes Church of England Primary School

## Teaching and Learning Policy



Signature ..... (Chair of Governors)

Print Name .....

This policy has been officially adopted by the Governing Body of Blaby Stokes C. of E. Primary School. The Governors and Head teacher, in conjunction with staff, will review it three yearly.

Date.....March 2015...



# Blaby Stokes CE Primary School

## Teaching and Learning Policy

### March 2015

#### **Rationale**

We live in a fast changing world and the skills that young people need to prepare them for life are changing just as quickly. We need to consider the best teaching and learning strategies in order to help our pupils to become lifelong learners. We need to help all children to develop positive attitudes towards learning and to help them build on existing knowledge, skills and concepts so that they experience success and achieve to the best of their potential. Our pupils need to believe that they can do things and should develop the confidence to take risks in their learning and grow in independence.

At Blaby Stokes Church of England Primary School we have agreed on a consistent set of values and a specific approach to teaching and learning. The school is committed to the continued professional development of staff so that we can grow together within a learning community. We will implement the best practice in teaching and learning for our children and share good practice with each other. Children learn in different ways and we will ensure that all children have a wide range of learning activities and options, which include using the latest technology, to best prepare them to be adaptable and creative learners. The following policy attempts to provide an effective framework for teaching and learning based on the most recent research on good practice.

#### **Aims and principles for effective teaching and learning**

- Focus on raising standards by combining excellence in teaching with enjoyment in learning. A culture of creativity pervades the whole school organisation and will be evident through relationships, learning and teaching.
- Make learning vivid and real by developing pupils' understanding of the key skills including enquiry, creativity, e-learning and group problem solving
- Learning is focussed on individual pupils' needs and abilities so that they can develop their potential
- Foster a love of learning and ensure that every child succeeds within a culture of high expectations
- Provide an attractive, safe and stimulating environment where learners feel secure
- Develop confident, disciplined, independent and enquiring learners able to make informed choices and to communicate effectively
- Raise levels of attainment through quality learning and teaching, allowing children to build on learning skills across the curriculum and to make good progress in relation to their age and ability

- Stimulate learning through matching teaching techniques and strategies to a range of learning styles
- Accurate quality assessment will help learners to build on what they already know and make connections in their learning experiences. It will also enable pupils to become partners in their own learning
- Engage children in their learning, ensuring that it stretches and excites their imagination
- Seek to work closely with parents, carers and the wider community
- Ensure that equal opportunities exist in relation to gender, race, class, belief, culture or ability
- Strive to improve the quality of teaching through training and the sharing of good practice
- Teaching and learning activities will teach children about ethical considerations and uphold our Christian ethos and underpin our British values. We will encourage children to challenge injustice, live Christian values and help them to see how they can influence the world.

## **Teaching**

- Teachers should be aware of children’s different learning styles and present them with teaching techniques and resources which enable them to achieve success.
- There should be a judicious balance between timely demonstration, instruction and explanation and pupils’ collaboration, discussion or independent work. Teacher’s talk should not dominate at the expense of their learning. Pupils should be allowed to work in a variety of ways as independent learners, in pairs or groups.
- The structure of the lesson should offer pace and progression. Independent parts of lessons need to have tasks which are well matched to pupils’ needs and should not involve worksheets from which pupils learn little. Teachers’ explanations that precede independent tasks need to be sufficiently clear to enable them to begin working quickly without the need for more help.
- Effective “mini” plenaries at critical points throughout a lesson to review progress, clarify misunderstandings and move the work forward are evident in successful lessons.
- Homework should be used effectively to extend or consolidate the skills learned in lessons or to offer opportunities for pupils to study something in more depth. Homework should also focus on key skills such as reading, spelling and multiplication tables.

## How our aims will be put into practice:

### Engagement

Successful curriculums are built on inspirational learning activities and high-quality teaching. At our school we strive to create a classroom environment that allows children to learn in a way that motivates and interest them. If children are to engage in learning they need to have experienced something in a variety of ways, coming back to and rehearsing it in different ways.

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

- gaining memorable first-hand experiences, such as going on visits or inviting special visitors into school
- researching and setting enquiry questions
- following new pathways of enquiry based on their interests
- taking part in sensory activities
- having fun to fully engage with new topic.
- composing, making, doing, building, investigating, exploring, writing for different purposes and reading across the curriculum
- completing homework activities that support their learning
- applying skills, knowledge and understanding in real-life contexts
- solving real or imagined problems using everything they've learnt
- becoming the performers, experts and informers
- sharing achievements with parents, classmates and the community
- evaluating finished products and processes
- linking what they have learnt to where they started
- celebrating their achievements
- participating in athletic or physical activity
- Wave 2 and 3 targeted intervention programmes

### Planning

High quality planning is essential to ensure that teachers and pupils are clear about what is to be taught, how it is to be taught, and what questions and resources will support the learning. This is essential to ensure that there is clear progression across learning.

Planning should include:

- **The learning objectives** for the lesson or series of lessons, including identifying what different groups of children will learn
- **Key questions to be asked** to assess pupils' learning during the lesson including the plenary/mini plenaries. Well planned questions will prompt and probe children's understanding.

- **Success criteria to be shared with children** making sure that children know how to achieve their learning outcome in small steps. Include opportunities for children to write their own success criteria.
- **The vocabulary** to be introduced or consolidated
- **Clear modelling and scaffolding** that supports the teaching sequence and builds up understanding. Key resources, models and images should be identified to support this.
- **How one lesson links with another**, how skills and understanding are built up gradually.
- **What the learning outcomes will be and how they are assessed.** It is vital that children understand what they can produce from their learning and how teachers can assess these outcomes to plan the next sequence of learning.

Planning should be reviewed or amended in the light of assessment of pupils' progress. This will ensure that there is a well structured, planned teaching sequence that reflects the development of pupils' learning needs.

Effective planning also provides a framework for support staff to adapt the work and modify approaches for individual pupils with SEN or disabilities. Planning should be shared and reviewed with all adults involved and made available in classrooms at all times.

### **Modelled and guided work**

Modelled and guided learning should be used as tools for ensuring progress as an integral part of Quality First Teaching.

#### **Modelled learning:**

Modelling is more than demonstrating. Through the teacher 'thinking aloud' it helps pupils to understand underlying structures, processes and conventions. Lessons are planned to appropriately challenge learning objectives and intended learning. Teachers skilfully plan appropriate modelling opportunities that break down learning intentions into skill based progression.

#### **Guided learning:**

Guided learning is used to provide a bridge between whole-class teaching and independent work. Guided learning enables teachers to support and challenge pupils by intervening in a sustained and proactive way at the point of learning. It helps to develop personalised learning since it:

- is a means of tailoring teaching and learning to the needs of individual pupils;
- groups pupils to provide structured support and challenge inside normal lessons to address aspects of progress and specific needs;
- encourages pupils to become active participants in discussions;
- develops independent learning and reduces pupil dependency on the teacher.

Teachers use ongoing assessments to plan flexible guided groups that meet the needs of all learners; securing high quality teaching from all adults. During guided group work, all pupils are involved in the learning, class work is extended, children's thinking is challenged and opportunities are given for enquiry and reflection. ***Regular guided learning should take place in lessons to ensure rapid and sustained progress.***

## **Questioning**

*'More effort has to be spent in framing questions that are worth asking: that is, questions which explore issues that are critical to the development of children's understanding.'* (Black et al. 2003)

### **Effective questioning is where:**

- Questions are structured so as to provoke thoughtful answers
- Answers provoke further questions
- Individual teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil exchanges are chained into coherent lines of enquiry
- Pupils ask questions and provide explanations
- Those who are not speaking at a given time participate no less actively by listening, looking, reflecting and evaluating, and the classroom is arranged so as to encourage this
- Children have the confidence to make mistakes, and understand that mistakes are viewed as something to learn from rather than to be embarrassed by

### **Pupil – Pupil interaction in which:**

- Children listen carefully to each other
- They encourage each other to participate and share ideas
- They build on their own and each other's contributions
- They strive to reach common understanding and agreed conclusions, yet they respect minority viewpoints

### **Teacher – Pupil interaction in which:**

- Lasts for long enough to make a difference
- Is instructional rather than merely supervisory
- Provides diagnostic feedback on which children can build

### **Questioning needs to:**

- Be anchored in the context and content of the lesson
- Build on previous knowledge
- Elicit evidence of children's understanding
- Probe understanding
- Prompt and challenge thinking and reasoning
- Balance open-endedness with guidance and structure in order to reduce the possibility of error or confusion
- Give children time to think

**Responses to questioning which:**

- Address the question in the depth it invites rather than worry about spotting the ‘correct’ answer
- Move beyond the yes/no or simple recall to extended answers involving reasoning, hypothesizing and ‘thinking aloud’
- Are, where appropriate, considered and discursive rather than brief and prematurely curtailed.

**Feedback on responses needs to:**

- Replace the simple positive, negative or non-committal judgment, or mere repetition of the respondent’s answer, by informative diagnostic feedback on which pupils can build
- Use praise discriminatingly and appropriately,
- Keep lines of enquiry open rather than closes them down
- Encourage children to articulate their ideas openly and confidently, without fear of embarrassment or retribution if they are wrong.

**Please refer to the appendix for an overview of Bloom's Taxonomy**

**Differentiation and Challenge**

- There is no ceiling set on what the children can achieve. Low threshold/high ceiling is a feature of outstanding learning
- Lessons should be differentiated according to task, ability, grouping\*, resources, support or outcome.
  - \*Ability groupings are not always necessary and can be detrimental to learning. You need to trust that children will choose appropriate levels of challenge. Children should be encouraged to choose their own challenge. This will enable teaching to move away from the notion of fixed ability to learning without limits.
- Lessons may have differentiated learning objectives or outcomes although the aim is for all children to work towards achieving the same objective.
- All pupils should be challenged whether they are SEN, working at age expectations, or higher attaining pupils.
- All pupils should be given the opportunity to develop higher order thinking skills and problem solving skills; all to be given the opportunity to complete investigative work.
- Pupils should be able to explain clearly what they are doing in their lessons and why
- Teachers should use targeted questioning to stretch and challenge all children
- Opportunities for reflection , evaluation and independent learning should be included
- Lessons may have staggered starts so that children can be effectively taught according to need

**In specific regard to higher attaining pupils, their needs are most effectively met through delivering quality first teaching and learning.**

The characteristics of such lessons include:

- Resources that are carefully chosen and designed
- High pace and momentum

- A range of opportunities for all pupils to participate
- The use of questions to develop thinking skills
- Opportunities for pupils to work independently
- Conditions that promote collaboration and openness and that build pupils confidence
- Opportunities for pupil choice
- Assessment opportunities that are appropriately challenging
- Opportunities for reflection, evaluation and independent learning
- Extension activities that offer real challenge
- Variety of teaching styles
- High teacher expectations
- Opportunities for taking responsibility
- Celebration of achievement
- Investigations – allowing breadth and depth of study

## **Learning**

### **The climate for learning which we wish to promote within our school**

- A culture of self-challenge should be the norm in classes. It needs to be ‘cool’ to challenge yourself and ask questions.
- A culture of creativity should pervade the whole school organisation and should be evident through relationships, learning and teaching.
- A climate should exist where teachers reflect on their teaching and pupils reflect on their learning
- There is a willingness to take risks by children and staff
- Innovation and imagination are celebrated
- Pupils have time to persevere with extended pieces of work
- The curriculum is planned carefully and is linked to effective assessment of pupils
- Importance is placed on the process of learning as well as the learning outcomes
- Good use is made of the knowledge and skills of visitors and members of the community
- Learning is enriched, wherever possible, by first hand experience within and beyond the school
- The school is warm and welcoming
- Children are asked to question and challenge injustice/exploitation and live Christian and British values through all that they do.
- Respect and trust extends across the whole school community
- The environment reflects the commitment to creative learning through careful and interactive displays of children’s work
- The physical environment is conducive to learning for every child. Children are positioned so that they can access the lesson comfortably and can work well with other pupils.

### Features of effective learning for pupils are where they:

- Enjoy and are interested in what they are doing and know what they are aiming to achieve
- Are part of the learning process through choice of activities/content and are encouraged to research their own questions
- Acquire new knowledge and skills in their work which they can transfer into other learning situations
- Develop ideas and increase their understanding
- Show engagement, application and concentration, are eager to make progress and are productive
- Develop the skills and capacity to work independently and collaboratively
- Respect others' views and opinions
- Are willing to ask questions and/or to report their findings to others
- Respond positively to opportunities to make choices
- Understand how well they are doing and how they can improve
- Progressively recognise and understand their individual learning styles
- Can use subject specific vocabulary when developing knowledge and understanding
- Can make effective decisions about the outcome of their work
- Can test and refine their ideas
- Take care/pride over the presentation of their work
- Abide by classroom rules/conventions of safety
- Demonstrate positive behaviour/courtesy
- Feel valued and have their successes celebrated

### Assessment

#### **Assessment for Learning covers:**

- **Clear Learning Objectives**  
Every lesson is based on clear, unmuddled learning objectives. Learning objectives are separated from their context so that children are able to make the link between the learning and a range of contexts. It empowers learners to apply their learning to different situations. The context is made explicit as is the link to other contexts and the big picture. We ensure that children understand what they are learning and how it can be applied to their lives and where the learning is going.
- **Questioning**  
Questioning is anchored in the context and content of the lesson. It builds on previous knowledge and elicits evidence of children's understanding.
- **Success Criteria**  
Success criteria are the stepping stones to achieving the learning intention. They break the learning down into a sequence of smaller steps that help the learner to reflect on their progress towards achieving the overall learning intention.

- **Oral feedback**  
We use oral feedback as part of a ‘closing the gap’ approach towards learning. The ‘closing the gap model’ uses feedback within the lesson so that children get the best opportunity to meet the learning intention. This would include using mini plenaries, peer/self assessment and marking within the lesson.
- **Written feedback (See Marking and Feedback policy for more detailed explanation)**  
Marking relates to the learning intention and one or more of the success criteria. It highlights aspects of improvement and success to ensure the child knows that they need to keep doing more of these types of things. It also highlights an aspect for improvement and provides an example of an improvement. In addition it provides a prompt for the child to act on to show that they have understood and had a chance to succeed again at the particular aspect of learning.
- **Self and peer assessment**  
Children have an opportunity to reflect and evaluate their progress towards the learning intention. We do this by providing time for them within the lesson to look back at their learning, finding evidence against the success criteria to show how closely they have come to meeting the success criteria.

## **Assessment of Learning**

### **At a whole-school level**

In Years 2 and 6 (for the current academic year only) National Curriculum levels gained from termly and end of year/key stage assessments are used to update the school’s pupil tracking system. These assessments are moderated as part of continuing professional development to ensure the data is accurate and reliable. For all other year groups

To track pupil attainment for all other year groups we use a system of steps. This performs the function of communicating progression and attainment in a simple format that may be aggregated to produce reports of overall and average progress.

Each year band is broken down into six steps:

- beginning (b)
- beginning + (b+)
- working within (w)
- working within + (w+)
- secure (s)
- secure + (s+)

The three broader sections may be thought of in these terms-

- Beginning – Pupil learning is chiefly focussed on the criteria for the band. There may be minimal elements of the previous band still to gain complete confidence in
- Working Within – Pupil learning is fully focussed on the criteria for the band. Up to 70% of the statements are confidently achieved

- Secure – Confidence in all of the criteria for the band. There may be pupil learning still focussed on gaining thorough confidence in some minimal elements but the broad expectations for the band have been met

Where the sections have been broken down into steps this is designed to allow teachers to represent and report progress for a pupil where they may not feel that the best fit is within the next section. For example, a pupil may be assessed as Band 2 Beginning in the Autumn term in year 2. The next time the teacher records a summative assessment they may not feel that the pupil has progressed to Working Within, but the pupil has made progress. An assessment of Beginning + allows that progress to be represented and will feed through to overall class and key stage reporting.

At termly intervals, class teacher select a step to show where each pupil is working. Lower and high achieving pupils may be working at a band outside of their current year, and can be recorded as such.

### **At a classroom level**

Class teachers use National Curriculum statements and target setting to support planning, teaching and learning, and AfL on a day-to-day (formative) basis.

### **At Pupil Level**

#### **Pupils:**

- Have high expectations of themselves
- Have the opportunity to receive additional support (where necessary)
- Understand the purpose and aims of the work
- Recognise their achievements and understand the steps they need to take in order to make further progress
- Are involved in whole-group shared marking
- Are engaged in creating success criteria for lesson objectives and targets
- Use success criteria to support self and peer assessment
- Are regularly given time to respond to written and verbal feedback in order to improve their work in accordance with the Marking and Feedback policy

#### **Highly Effective lessons show teachers making assessments during the lesson by:**

- Observing pupils and discussing their work with them
- Scanning pupils' responses on mini whiteboards
- Questioning pupils to assess their understanding and deal with misconceptions
- Using mini plenaries mid lesson to review progress.

Children need to understand the criteria for being successful in their work. For example they understand that they need to remember to begin each sentence with a capital letter and an imperative verb when giving particular instructions. Enabling children to remember the success criteria for their work is an important tool for its success.

## **Target setting**

Teachers and support staff should be clear about the next step targets for all children which will take them on to new areas of learning. They should be clear and explicit and easily understood by children who should be able to articulate what they are. Targets should represent the most important skills/concepts for the child to achieve and should be realistic, measurable/detectable and appropriately challenging. Children should be involved in reflecting on their work and in identifying how to improve. They should understand when they have achieved their targets and should receive appropriate praise and acknowledgement.

## **Inclusion for All**

The education and welfare of each pupil is at the core of our values and purpose. Planning will ensure effective differentiation and that learning activities will be appropriate for all children irrespective of gender, culture, social background or ability.

Teachers ensure that children;

- feel secure and know that their contributions are valued
- appreciate and value the difference they see in others
- take responsibility for their own actions
- participate safely in clothing that is appropriate to their religious beliefs
- use materials that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds, without stereotyping
- have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of learning styles
- have challenging targets that enable them to succeed
- are encouraged to participate fully, but having regard of disabilities or medical needs

The School's Teaching and Learning Policy clearly identifies good teaching and effective learning for educational inclusion.

## **Support Staff**

Support staff should be used to support pupils in the most efficient and effective ways. Their role is to provide support for individual or small groups of pupils as directed by the class teacher. They should complement the role of the teacher. If they are to help children effectively they will need to know what the purpose of the lesson is and to have access to the teacher's plans beforehand. They will also need to know what is expected of them and how they can best support and challenge the pupils in their care. There needs to be effective and efficient communication before, during and after the lesson with the teacher if the children are to be well supported.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

This policy will be monitored and evaluated in line with the school's policy for monitoring and evaluation. In respect of learning and teaching this will involve:

- No more than 3 hours of announced formal observations per year for class teachers by the head teacher, SLT member or subject leaders when written feedback will be given
- Drop-ins of no more than 10 minutes duration at a time. No written feedback
- Pre-arranged learning walks linked to school development focuses and specific curriculum areas. General, whole school feedback.

All formal observations will be followed by oral feedback and will be recorded on the school's evidence form for lesson observations. This evidence will then be used by the head teacher as part of the school's self evaluation process and reported to governors.

## **Review**

This policy was put together by Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team in March 2015

It was approved and adopted by the governing body on ..... and will be reviewed every three years or when curriculum change requires it.