Teaching and Learning Guidance

Everything we do is about learning. We understand the single most important factor in successful schools is the quality of learning. As teachers we must face up to the power and responsibility we have: what we do affects pupils' life chances.
At Polegate School we believe the concept of lifelong learning and the idea that both adults and children learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone. 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 future lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives and make a positive contribution to their community. We are also very aware that we are educating children for a future where the jobs they may find employment in do not even exist yet.

School Vision



'Only those that risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go.'

TS Elliot

We believe that people learn best in different ways. At our school we provide a rich and varied learning experiences that allow children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential. We recognise that we need to create the conditions in which learning can thrive. **Our aim is to make learning irresistible!** Personal, social and emotional skills impact directly on how we perceive ourselves and how we behave as learners. We recognise that children's difficulties in learning or any reluctance to learn may be caused by such things as demotivation, fear of failure, and the impact of managing feelings on behaviour rather than lack of ability.
We want our vision to be evident to everyone that enters our school.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners;
- foster children's self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people –both peers and adults;
- develop children's self-respect and encourage children to respect the ideas, attitudes values and feelings of others;
- show respect for all cultures and in so doing, to promote positive attitudes towards others;
- 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;
- Encourage pupils to take a pride in their work and the work of others;
- help children learn good manners and consideration for others.

At Polegate learning happens within three contexts: **lessons, routines and events**:
Lessons: planned experiences when the children work through a programmed scheme of work achieving the learning intentions. Each lesson will have a learning intention which is shared and explained to the children. The question 'why are we learning this?' is also explored so children can understand the relevance of their learning.
Routines: regular occurrences when children go about their school life whilst being influenced by the place in which they find themselves. These include assembly, the start of the day, play time, lunch time, moving around the school, clubs and intervention groups.
Events: such as educational visits, stunning starts, marvellous middles and fabulous finishes, residential trips, sporting events, performances, community activities, courses and social events. These create opportunities for pupils to learn both curriculum content and/ or develop qualities and personal characteristics.

Effective learning

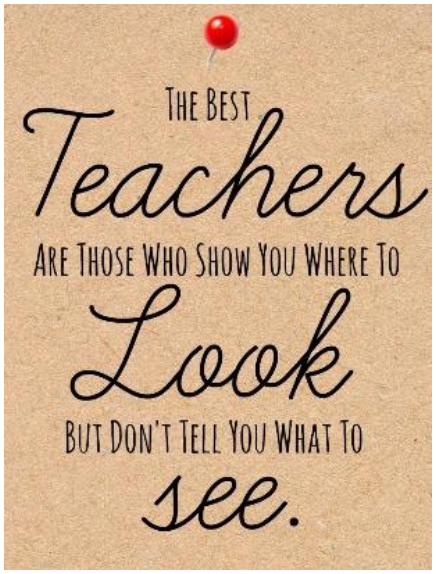
We offer opportunities for children to learn in many different ways. Teachers have a range of strategies and methods to actively engage children in their learning. Opportunities include:

- investigation and problem solving;
- Oracy across the curriculum
- research and finding out;
- group work;
- debate,
- role play,
- paired work;
- Forest School and use of our environment outside;
- independent work;
- whole-class work;
- asking and answering questions;
- use of ICT;
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- creative activities;
- watching media, responding to musical;
- designing and making things;
- participation in athletic or physical activity;
- after school clubs;
- guest visitors and performers.
- and allowing them to access relevant resources.

Effective teaching

When teaching we focus on motivating the children and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum so that they can reach the highest level of personal achievement. Achieve beyond their expectations.
We use the school curriculum plan to guide our teaching. This sets out the aims, objectives and values of the school and details what is to be taught to each year group. Planning for all subjects is saved on the school system in the staff drive.
The Learning and Teaching Guide has been formulated to provide a basis for staff to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching in their classroom and across the school.
Teachers make on-going assessments of each child's progress and they use this information when planning their lessons. It enables them to take into account the abilities of all their children. Our prime focus is to further develop the knowledge and skills of all our children. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability with challenge.
We do not believe in setting by ability- we have the highest expectations for all pupils we want pupils to share these expectations.
'Some people believe the practice is right because it keeps the high achievers away from low achievers. The irony is that high achievers do not do any better in high sets than in mixed-ability groups, and for some students, being in a high set is a source of considerable anxiety.
Comparisons of test performance in different countries always show that countries that set students the least and latest have the highest performance. The reasons for this are obvious: once students are told that they are low-achieving and given low-level work, their learning diminishes.' Jo Boaler Standford University.

As a result of research across the school and academic studies we plan for mixed ability groups for the majority of lessons. Pupils have 'buddies', 'talk partners' and these are changed weekly.
There are times when it is entirely appropriate to group by ability but these groups are not fixed and pupils will move fluidly depending on their strengths and successes. Assessment will be used skilfully to meet needs.
When planning work for children with special educational needs, we give due regard to information and targets contained in the children's SEND Passports, Assess Plan Do Review documents and EHCPs. Teachers modify learning and teaching as appropriate for children with disabilities. We value each child as a unique individual, and teachers are familiar with the relevant equal opportunities legislation covering race, gender and disability. We will strive to meet the needs of all our children, and to ensure that we meet all statutory requirements related to matters of inclusion.
The progress of all pupils is discussed in detail at Pupil Progress Meetings three times a year.



Inclusion

We believe that equality of opportunity must be a reality for our children. We do this through the attention we pay to different groups of children within our school: girls and boys, children with special educational needs and more able children, children with physical or mental disabilities,

children who are at risk of disaffection or exclusion, minority ethnic and faith groups, looked after children, children receiving free school meals or from low income families and children who need support to learn English as an additional language.

Consistency of practice at Polegate

1. The lesson begins with retrieval of existing curriculum knowledge which sets the scene for learning and engages pupils in their learning quickly. This sets the learning in a larger context. The 'primacy effect' suggests first impressions are so powerful; for our pupils this occurs in the first 6 seconds of our lessons. Getting brains engaged immediately pays massive dividends. **Engagement from the start of a lesson is vital.**
   Consider Hooks to lessons: novelty, humour, mystery, variety, intrigue, challenge, puzzle, music, video……..

2. Teacher explanations and instructions are clear, unambiguous and pitched at the right level.

3. Pupils are active learners, not passive. Teacher talk is kept to a minimum, the ratio we work to is 20:80.

4. The most able learners will not be held back. If the teacher's input is not relevant to them they will be able to begin their work. Challenge will evident or learners.

5. The main teaching activity involves paying attention to different abilities. A variety of activities should be evident. All pupils should be actively engaged. **AFL** is used throughout the lesson. Hinge questions are used at key points in lessons as a diagnostic assessment to gauge children's understanding and readiness to advance.

6. Teaching assistants are used effectively and guided by the teacher in their work with groups.

7. **Behaviour management** policies are consistently applied. (please refer to the Behaviour policy)

8. **Questioning (NO HANDS UP)** is used to promote learning and foster curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. Various strategies are used to build pupils' confidence: thinking time is built in, Talking Partners, phone a friend etc. Teachers use methods to engage all pupils such as random name generators, lollypop sticks, no hands up etc. Pupils are encouraged to construct their own questions. **Teachers do not use 'hands up' as a way of gathering responses.**



9. Core skills are a feature in **ALL** lessons. Core skills are modelled and any mistakes are corrected relentlessly. Core skills include: reading, speaking and listening, writing to include spelling and grammar, communication and mathematics.

10. Every opportunity is taken to connect classroom learning to the real world. Priorities is given to children's understanding of career opportunities in relation to their learning. This is enhanced through: skills builder focuses termly and professional plenaries.

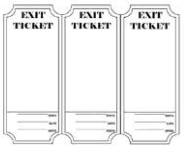
11. We have high expectations of individuals. We know this requires accurate assessment of potential barriers to learning, then having challenging targets that make the child aim higher.

12. We provide **high quality feedback.** Research has found that effective feedback is one of the most powerful ways to close the gap for underachievers (Higgins, Kokotsaki and Coe 2011) This includes oral and written feedback which is specific and positive. (please refer to the marking policy)

13. **Peer and self assessment** are built into lessons. Pupils are trained to give and receive constructive criticism from their peers to support each other's' progress. Every mistake is viewed as a learning opportunity.

14. The lesson ends with a short plenary, when learning is reviewed with the pupils, and they know where this will lead. Teachers will be creative in approaches to assess the learning that has taken place. They may use a range of approaches such as exit cards, 'what stuck with you today?' Professional plenaries can also be used to indicate how learning links to the world of careers.





15. Opportunities to extend learning at home are taken. For example, use of Accelerated Reader, Doodle Maths and Spell and TT Rockstar, are encouraged.

Environment

We recognise that the physical environment has a significant influence on learning and that children learn well when the environment in which they find themselves is well-ordered and well managed, where there is discipline and clarity about expectations. It

gives a clear message about how we value learning. We aim to immerse children in their learning and create displays that support all learners. Each and every environment has to be carefully and consistently planned to give the children the best learning potential.

At Polegate learning takes place in an environment which: is challenging and stimulating; is peaceful and calm; is safe and secure; is happy and caring; is organised and well resourced; makes learning accessible; is encouraging and appreciative; celebrates work; is welcoming with a feeling of belonging; provides equal opportunities; provides a working atmosphere.

Writing Journals



Teachers set a Termly independent writing task (Invention) – set by the literacy team or other subject leaders- see timetable. Children are allowed to write any style and genre in these and this should be encouraged. Writing journals allow for practise of writing invention. These are special books that the children should take real ownership of.

There should be a Writing Journal display in each year group – how this is organised is up to year group teachers however it should be current.

Best Writing display – promoting writing successes (not just in journals but from all writing)

Creating the ethos that Journals are a safe place to write. Writing may be shared but not marked and that the child drive the ideas.

What will success will look like:

As a result of the Learning Guide, the school will benefit from:

1. Well organised and well planned curriculum areas that make learning irresistible.

2. Consistent approach to teaching and learning evidence and documentation with a confidence in the teachers to be creative and take risks in order to improve learning.

3. Excellent progress that reveal that all pupils have at least met their potential

4. **Seeing engaged, resilient, ambitious learners working independently in the classroom on challenging activities making outstanding progress**.

Monitoring

We conduct all our teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all. This process is linked with the OFSTED criteria for Curriculum and Teaching 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 / environment.
- sampling pupils' work.
- sharing pupils' work with colleagues, agreement trialling and celebrating successes.
- displaying work throughout school and discussing quality.
- Internal and external moderation of pupils' work.
- discussion with pupils
- data

Staff development

We expect all staff at Polegate School to be on a learning journey: adults need to model learning behaviour by behaving as effective learners themselves. Weekly staff development sessions will focus on improving teaching and increasing our knowledge and understanding of the learning process.

Parents

We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. Parent consultation meetings with teachers are held to discuss progress. Parents are welcome to make further appointments as needed. Each class sends home information at the start of each topic. Parents receive two Interim reports which share pupil attainment and a further detailed report in July. This outlines the children's achievements and progress during the year, how they are achieving related to expected levels and how they can improve and develop in the future.

We would like parents to:

- ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible, above 95%
- Take up every opportunity offered to come in and discuss their child's progress
- ensure that their child is equipped for school so they can join in all activities
- 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
- Engage in Seesaw adding comments or uploading pupil work
- fulfil the requirements set out in the home/school agreement
- Engage in reading every evening, homework and other tasks such as Doodle maths or spell
- Attend Wonderful Work sessions with their children, celebrating success
- Attend parents' evenings that are designed specifically to provide information about the school curriculum

Many parents offer some of their time to help in school. These offers are always welcome. (Please refer to volunteer helpers in school document)

It is recognised that the implication of this guide spreads to all aspects of the school life and that other policies will be intrinsically linked with its contents.

Assessment attendance Code of Conduct Display

Marking Educational Visits Pupil Premium Strategy

Health and Safety School Innovation Plan Equalities Objectives