



Guiding us
step by step
into the future

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

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Governor responsible	Chair
Sub-Committee responsible	Curriculum
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Document Version Control

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1.0	July 14	New policy superseding previous
2.0		

Teaching is, above all, about helping children to learn. We believe therefore that the act of teaching should be child focused. Teaching can be seen to be about directing what we do towards certain specific, clearly-stated desirable outcomes. These outcomes are no longer the preserve of teachers or indeed schools. They are defined in the National Curriculum. However, this can lead to more effective teaching. Most learning theories accept that we learn better if we know beforehand what it is we are supposed to be learning and, if we are clear about what we want the children to do, it helps to focus our work. Planning therefore is a key skill for teachers. At Warden Hill this takes place at three levels:

whole school planning
block planning for half terms in each year group
weekly and daily planning by individual teachers.

Whole school planning

A whole school curriculum map has been developed by subject leadership groups and year group teachers. This lays out an outline for the delivery of the requirements of the National Curriculum. This curriculum map is refined and developed each year by negotiation across the school.

A key aspect of the outline is to ensure progression of skills as a child moves through their years at Warden Hill school.

Block planning

We believe that this represents the heart of the planning process. We therefore consider 5 key questions when we are formulating these plans.

1. What should the children know, be able to do or have developed an understanding of at the end of this block of work?
2. What will happen to enable the children to achieve these outcomes?
3. What resources are needed to deliver these activities?
4. What will be the evidence of children's work?
5. How will the outcomes be assessed?

At Warden Hill these plans are subject based and have been updated and refined over the past few years. They have distinct advantages:

- ◆ they enable staff to have an overview of a period of time before it begins
- ◆ they avoid teachers having to do too much detailed planning during a term
- ◆ they provide a reasonable guarantee that children will make progress
- ◆ they provide evidence for senior staff, inspectors and parents
- ◆ they will provide detailed help - and continuity for children - if someone else has to take your class
- ◆ they help focus resource needs

- ◆ they enable year group teachers to work closely together
- ◆ they provide subject co-ordinators with a collection of plans which will formulate the basis of a scheme of work and enable monitoring and evaluation to take place more effectively.

Weekly Planning

Teachers meet weekly/fortnightly with Year group partners to jointly plan activities already identified in the Block Planning. These plans are submitted for monitoring purposes to the Head of Infant or Junior Departments weekly.

FACTORS WHICH LEAD TO EFFECTIVE TEACHING

KEY KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge of the subject being taught has been found to be an increasingly important factor in effective teaching. Good teachers usually understand the "essence" of a subject. This involves knowing:

- * the principles behind the subject
- * the key skills for any subject
- * what sort of activities best develop these skills
- * what types of thinking are to be encouraged
- * what are the key questions are that we need to ask children to prompt this sort of thinking

At Warden Hill we recognise that it is very difficult to become an expert in every subject. Teachers are therefore encouraged to make use of Subject Co-ordinators to help them, as well as endeavouring to improve their own subject knowledge through attendance at INSET courses. We also make use of specialist teaching skills in maths, music and P.E.

TEACHING STYLES

We believe in adopting a teaching style that is the best for achieving the aims of each lesson. We recognise three main approaches: individual, group and whole class teaching.

Individual

This works well when:

- ☺ particular children require some extended help or input
- ☺ focused intervention is needed
- ☺ children are operating at a distinctly different level to the rest of the class

- ☺ it suits a child's learning style

Group Teaching

This works well when

- ☺ we need to emphasise differentiation in a manageable way
- ☺ we want children to work together
- ☺ we want children to support each other's learning
- ☺ we want to question children and ensure most take part in thinking and responding
- ☺ resources are limited and need to be shared

Whole Class Teaching

This works well when

- ☺ a class can take part in the same activity, e.g., storytime, circletime
- ☺ key information needs to be imparted to everyone
- ☺ the teacher needs to demonstrate something or show examples of good work
- ☺ the teacher's skills are sufficiently developed to be able to "hold" a class.

Teachers decide which form of teaching to adopt in their classrooms by choosing the most appropriate method for the learning outcomes they want to achieve and the activities which support them. There is no best choice, only a more or less appropriate one. If anything, the best choice is the one teachers can justify, having thought about the strengths and weaknesses of each, and the particular circumstances in which you find yourself. The staff at Warden Hill are also keen to try out new approaches to teaching particular subjects or topics, usually when they have been proven to be successful elsewhere.

KEY LESSON SKILLS

We recognise a number of important skills which help to make teaching more effective. Lessons will of course vary in length, with shorter periods being more usual in KS1. As children get older they will be taught in a more subject based way.

LESSON ORGANISATION

Setting of learning objects and summarising progress

1. A lesson will include a section where the teacher which sets out the task, points out what is important about the task and explains clearly how the class will have to work to enable the task to be done well. Similarly the lesson should include regular summaries of what is being learned and how well the targets are being achieved.

Pace

2. Some lessons can be very effectively one-paced. We have all seen children absorbed in writing a story, draw from close observation etc. much longer than we might think possible. However, many lessons are helped by a variety of pace. Why, how and for how long the pace is changed will depend upon a number of factors - the age group of the children, their past experience of working with you, their current level of interest in the subject, how windy it was at breaktime and so on.

Variety of Style

3. Different styles are not only appropriate over a day, week or month. They can also be appropriate within the same lesson

Focus

4. Evidence suggests that most lessons work best when they have a limited focus. We believe therefore that:

- ✓ children should not be asked to take on too much learning in any one session

Demand

5. We believe that children should know that there is an expectation of high standards in the work that they do

QUESTIONING

Questioning has long been seen as a key lesson skill. We all know the effect of asking closed questions or those which seek the answer we think is correct.

The following suggestions will help

- ? open questions allow for different responses
- ? closed questions do have a place
- ? children should be allowed sufficient response time to reply (evidence suggests many teachers do not do this - but still think they do!)
- ? children should have to opportunity to discuss answers before they give them
- ? questions asked should be clear and unambiguous.
- ? children may lack confidence
- ? inappropriate responses should be used to refocus thinking, rather than confirm inability
- ? avoid the temptation to focus questions on "favourites" or those known to have the answer

OBSERVING

Like much else, good observation is based on knowing what matters in your teaching, your classroom and for your child's learning. It is about filtering out what is less important and focusing on what counts.

MANAGING BEHAVIOUR

Control - a sense of order, purposefulness and discipline (preferably self-discipline, but occasionally imposed) - is one of the main contributors to the conditions we need to teach effectively.

We believe the following are factors are essential to maintaining good behaviour in the classroom:

The Importance of Routine.

Routine implies dullness, but also familiarity, security and ease. Classrooms work best when the basic rules and regulations are made clear and adhered to most of the time. Routines take time to establish and each child should be aware of what is expected of them.

Managing Pupil's Time

Let children know how long they are expected to work on a given task. It provides children with the opportunity to focus their work for the given period of time and encourages them to maintain attention and interest.

Giving Supportive Feedback

Feedback provides help in identifying children's problems and sorting out what they need to do next. But, given supportively, it also conveys a sense that you are interested in their work and are bothering to monitor it. The tone of your voice is also very important.

Supporting Good Behaviour

This idea is very much part of the school's behaviour policy. There is no doubt that good behaviour which is continually reinforced has a better effect on classroom control than negative behaviour which is constantly identified and/or punished. We very much believe in the use of rewards, especially house points, stickers and merit marks.

Nipping inappropriate behaviour in the bud!

The following techniques can be used to ensure that flashpoints do not occur

- ◆ scanning the classroom regularly
- ◆ circulating
- ◆ making eye contact

- ◆ targeting questions
- ◆ moving closer to the scene of potential misbehaviour
- ◆ changing the activity or pace
- ◆ moving children to another part of the room