



# Teaching & Learning Policy

**This policy has been formally adopted by the Governing Body of  
Grace Mary Primary School on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

**Chair of Governors Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date signed:**

**Head Teacher Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date signed:**

### **Rationale:**

At Grace Mary Primary School we consider the raising of standards of achievement, social, moral, spiritual and cultural development to be the foundation of good teaching. We believe that each individual child should be given the opportunity to achieve their full potential. This can be achieved through good teaching practice and planned learning, targeted at the children's needs.

### **Roles and responsibilities:**

It is the responsibility of all staff to facilitate the provision of the highest quality teaching and learning in order to enable all children to achieve the highest standards possible in basic key skills and all other areas of the curriculum.

This policy influences all other school policies, but should be read in conjunction with the Assessment and Marking Policies.

### **Aims:**

As a school, we aim:

- To ensure that we inspire in all pupils, a love of learning and the desire to continue to learn;
- To equip all pupils with the tools and self-confidence necessary to constructively influence their own lives;
- To ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to take part in the life and work of the school;
- To be a place every child remembers with affection.

The following describes how we work together as a school in pursuit of these aims. These are our 10 principles for effective teaching and learning.

### ***Knowledge is at the heart of teaching and learning***

As a school, we recognise recent scientific research by educational specialists such as Daniel Willingham and guidance from the DfE and Ofsted that a knowledge rich primary school system will help ensure that every child is helped to reach their potential from when they start school. Without receiving knowledge, pupils have learned nothing and no progress has been made - whatever the measures might indicate.

As a school, we are aware of current research into the working and long term memory and how children remember stuff. These two essential ideas underpin our whole practice:

- Memory is the residue of thought
- Practice makes permanent

Children remember what they think about. Therefore, lessons are carefully designed to ensure that children are thinking hard about what needs to be learned. Teachers are fully aware of research on cognitive load and how children can generally learn 4-7 new things in a lesson. Lessons and sequences of lessons are therefore carefully designed to impart knowledge using explicit instruction. Teachers use dual coding theory to ensure that knowledge is effectively imparted through use of images and verbal instruction as this has shown to be highly effective.

We undertake regular low stakes quizzes as a way of strengthening memories. These quizzes take place at various points after the learning has taken place. Teachers should not tell the children the answers as it is the recall process which strengthens memories.

*Examples of how this principle looks in practice:*

- Knowledge organisers are written by the teachers and act a guide for what they want children to know.
- Children use knowledge organisers to shape ideas and understanding.
- Regular opportunities to retrieve knowledge through low stakes quizzes- 'Knowledge is Power'.
- Time is given to teachers to carefully consider sequences of lessons.
- Agreed structures for different subjects are followed to ensure consistency across the school.
- End of topic 'School Quiz' to assess understanding.
- Opportunities at end of topics/unit of works to allow children to apply knowledge independently.

*The acquisition of knowledge leads to development of skills.*

We believe that children who have a vast knowledge of content taught can use this to develop and acquire further skills. Once children have knowledge stored in their long term memory, it gives them opportunities to solve problems and critically think and analyse the information. Children are more likely to discover things for themselves, to be open to new ideas and to be motivated to work beyond lesson time to pursue topics of interest.

Allowing children to think and work creatively armed with essential knowledge develops self-confidence and builds up key learning skills e.g. how to manage their own behaviour, their understanding of the learning process, their preferred learning style, their ability to think systematically, to manage information and to learn from others.

*Examples of how this principle looks in practice:*

- Each class has an over-arching topic each term (occasionally half term);
- There is no requirement to stick within the structures of any particular schemes of work. Working from the National Curriculum, teachers are free to create the context for learning that they feel most inspires them and will inspire the children, whilst covering all statutory requirements;
- Teacher's personal enthusiasms and passions are positively encouraged and backed;
- Teachers use each other's expertise and work alongside colleagues sharing particular skills and understanding;
- We value children's individual responses and independence of thought;
- Artefacts that support topic work will be displayed clearly in the classroom;
- Every class participates in a structured forest school programme led by our expert leader. Teachers also make use of the forest to give topics a context

*Talking the talk is pivotal to learning*

Effective language acquisition in early childhood and the primary years is pivotal to learning across the curriculum and in all aspects of life. Providing opportunities in all subjects for children to talk about their learning through dialogue through Kagan Structures is key to developing conceptual understanding. High quality talk is crucial for effective learning and

teachers integrate the Speaking and Listening objectives in teaching and learning across the curriculum.

*Examples of how the principle looks in practice:*

- Wellcomm data is used by practitioners to inform provision.
- Role play is used daily to develop speaking and listening skills.
- The Green Screen is used as a tool for children to share and shape knowledge and understanding

*Inclusion and success make for success*

Grace Mary is an educationally inclusive school. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of every person in the school matters. This is made evident in our ethos and golden values. All staff instinctively attempt to overcome children's barriers to learning.

We regard pupils equally in relation to their individual needs. As a staff, we constantly consider teaching style, environment, rules and expectations of behaviour to ensure that every child is feeling confident happy and secure. Regular in house and external training opportunities are provided to staff with up to date educational initiatives. We implement structures from Kagan and NCETM to ensure that all children have the opportunity to achieve their best.

There is excellent provision in place for children with SEN including our focus provision for children with autism and nurture groups for children struggling with social needs.

*Examples of how this principle looks in practice:*

- There is an expectation that every children is expected to achieve the expected standard. There is no ceiling on the learning. Teachers will support children in reaching ARE by providing scaffolds, prompts, additional support and resources.
- As part of our commitment to being a Kagan school, groupings are flexible. Children will regularly work in mixed ability groups, with expert groups being used when needed. All children should find work that requires them to think deeply and apply learnt skills. No child should experience repeated failure;
- We have an experienced team of HLTAs and learning support assistants who work closely with class teachers to offer additional support;
- We have good relationships with a range of other professionals and value their support and advice in meeting children's needs;
- Pupil Voice is very important at Grace Mary. We have three councils, one representing each core team- SOC, PIPS, CABS. They meet regularly to discuss issues identified on our SDP and other relevant issues that are arising.
- Our school is filled with high quality work on display that celebrates achievement for all;
- Children receive postcards for high academic achievement or being resilient learners.
- Children's opinions are regularly sought through questionnaires and informal discussions.

*Children should experience excellence*

We recognise and value high achievement and create opportunities for those children who excel, where relevant, to compete beyond the school.

We positively encourage teachers to seek out subject specialists to enhance topic work and so that the children have the experience of working alongside experts. Each teacher has personal strengths too and they are encouraged to share these with their class or by leading a club.

### Examples of how this principle looks in practice:

- Each Friday the children choose to participate in skills sessions run and funded by the school. The school uses its own staffs' expertise/areas of interest to give children excellent input.
- Children are given time to complete work and to achieve something of quality.

### Teaching matches learning needs

We believe in matching teaching and strategy to learning need and objectives- fitness for purpose - and as such, a week's lessons may include: whole class direct teaching and modelling, expert group work, Kagan group work, practical tasks, paired work and individual work. There should be a balance between teacher/pupil talk and well-structured pupil/pupil talk opportunities. This will depend on the stage of learning. If teaching new content, the teacher's voice will be heard more; they are the expert in the room. If children are consolidating understanding, pupil voice will be heard more. The biggest indication that a child has understood a concept is if they can teach that concept to another child.

### Examples of how this principle looks in practice are:

- Kagan groups are used to ensure children make accelerated progress by using strategies such as 'RallyCoach' and 'AllWriteRoundRobin';
- All teachers have set pupil places relevant to context and need;
- Clear defined space for whole class teaching, and tables arranged to facilitate group and individual teaching;
- We regularly share 'tips' for teaching techniques at staff and teacher meetings;
- We make good use of visual resources in our teaching, drawing on principles of dual coding.

### Asking questions is central to learning

We place great emphasis on using BAD (Basic, Advanced, Deeper) questioning techniques in our teaching and in our work as a staff. Teachers' questions are well planned to both prompt ('What was the name of...') and probe ('What if'...) the children's thinking.

### Examples of how this policy looks in practice are:

- We start each topic using a picture prompt which encourages children to ask and answer questions.
- We use regular short quizzes 'Knowledge is Power' to strengthen memory and recall.
- We start all science lessons by asking a range of questions before coming back to them at the end of the lesson to check progress.
- Children are regularly challenged in maths to think more deeply through reasoning and problem solving activities.
- Mini plenaries may be used to further extend children's thinking and to test possibilities for next steps;
- Intervention marking gives children immediate feedback and written/verbal questions develop thinking;
- Children's questions are always responded to and valued.

### We want to develop resilient learners

We believe that one of the best things to do is to teach children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning. We want our children to recognise that effort, persistence and resilience are what helps them improve. We teach our children to see mistakes and failure as positive. This makes for a very energetic and inclusive culture. It also has a really positive effect on our ethos and on how children approach learning and support each other.

Examples of how this policy looks in practice are:

- We mark giving 'prompts for improvement' in writing and 'next steps' in maths so that all learning for all children, even the very brightest, is seen as a way to grow.
- We don't have set ability groups that are fixed for the year;
- Children strive to improve their personal best in quizzes rather than seeing coming top as the goal.
- Our display boards not only reflect academic achievement but also resilient learning behaviours.

**This is a learning community**

At Grace Mary, there is a common purpose and shared responsibility amongst children, parents, staff and governors. All are actively committed to the life, growth and development of this school. There is intellectual challenge for everyone and a culture of learning and questioning practice.

Teachers share a common understanding achieved through discussion, consideration of practice, the sharing of information and whole school planning of important issues.

Teachers are thoughtful and self-critical. Teachers' individuality is valued but some autonomy must be sacrificed for coherence, consistency and shared standards in school life.

Examples of how this policy looks in practice are:

- We expect teachers to be motivated individuals who are open to new ideas and enquiry;
- Staff fully participate at meetings;
- The performance management cycle is well established for all staff;
- Attendance at courses and further study is positively encouraged and supported;
- We actively seek to build partnerships with local organisations/schools to enrich learning.

**Effective monitoring leads to improved provision**

Monitoring of teaching and learning by SLT and phase leaders is an excellent way to improve provision. This is done alongside staff and teachers have opportunities to discuss what the provision they are providing.

What this looks like in practice:

- Monitoring weeks take place in the autumn term to give a bigger picture of the year group.
- Book monitoring takes place by subject leaders at the end of term or when appropriate.

- Monitoring focus is linked to SDP and regular drop-ins are encouraged.
- The SDP informs performance management targets and this cycle informs the monitoring process.

This policy is reviewed annually or when necessary. It is approved by the governing body of Grace Mary Primary School.

Review date: Autumn 2019