

Teaching and Learning Policy



The Valley Community School

Reviewed: Autumn 2016

Reviewed by: P. Sewell

To be reviewed: Autumn 2017

Attached committee: Curriculum

The Valley Community School

Our Vision Statement

“A world class centre of outstanding learning”

To achieve this we:

- are embracing the principles of lifelong learning, best use of new technology and “visible learning”
- are developing an international understanding of our place in the world
- are developing leaders and critical thinkers of tomorrow
- are meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum 2014

School Mission Statement

“Together we’re better”

Our guiding principles are:

- we work closely with our community
- we broaden our pupils’ perspectives
- we teach understanding and respect for others
- we value everyone’s abilities and support each other

Meeting requirements:

Since September 2014 the school has been meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum 2014 in core specific year groups. All other years have been meeting the requirements of National Curriculum 2014 since September 2015.

Assessment:

Within the assessment will be twofold based on key learning milestones, as set out within the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) and also the mastery of expectations specific to each year group, as exemplified within the National Curriculum and its subsidiary guidance.

The school feels strongly that there is a need to develop both global citizenship and, where possible, teach the fundamental principles of British Citizenship.

This encompasses;

a sense of fair play

tolerance

duty and remembrance

respect

values

ethics

belonging

contributing to and supporting all our local communities

perseverance.

In upper keystage 2, a sense of “Britishness” is embodied in the strong links between the school and the Pre-Duke of Edinburgh-Adventure Service Challenge (ASC) projects, which help pupils to see their role in the community, where the curriculum overlaps in these areas opportunities, are seized.

Teaching and Learning Policy

This teaching and learning policy outlines how we work and organise ourselves to ensure that provision in our school provides the children with high quality learning experiences that lead to a consistently high level of pupil achievement and good progress.

Learning aims

Our primary aim is to ensure we reward, and facilitate, achievement at all levels, create enquiring minds and in doing so develop well rounded, respectful and understanding young citizens of the world.

- We always try and make learning; fun, appropriate, rewarding and stimulating.
- We understand that many of our learners will have English as an Additional language but try to ensure there is always a cognitive challenge in activities.
- If a lesson doesn't go well we are not afraid to abandon it and try a new approach.
- We value first hand learning and know that we have to plan opportunities to support those children with few life experiences.
- We value talking and need for our children to be supported through planned talk for learning, discussion, use of high visual prompts and understanding key vocabulary
- We never blame the children if a lesson doesn't go well, but instead question our approach.
- We are continually seeking new and better ways to develop learning.
- Where possible, we always try and link learning to the outside world.
- We know that learning takes place throughout the school day and beyond.
- We try to work with all whole community to help support effective learning.
- We value constructive support and advice which we both give and receive.
- We accept that there are many ways to promote learning and although many lessons follow a similar structure we do not discourage teachers from trying different approaches to learning.
- We believe high quality Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies supports, promotes and accelerates learning
- We value progress above all else, when we evaluate learning, and realise progress is best achieved via consistent high quality programmes and sequences of lessons, not single events.

Appendix 1

Our whole school approach: consistency and high expectations

We believe that children learn best when there is consistency and continuity in our approach. We hold common expectations of our practice and through mutual challenge and support we ensure that it is of a consistently high quality.

We expect each teacher to take a full and determined responsibility for the progress of all of the pupils in their class. We expect teachers to have consistently high expectations of all pupils in all areas of their learning and school-life. We have a three tier approach to planning learning the core curriculum, how we change it to suit need (WAVE1), how we change it to support group learning (WAVE 2) and how we change it to support individuals (WAVE3)

The purpose of our teaching and learning: pupil progress

We teach for progress. This means that we work to ensure that all pupils are improving skills, knowledge and understanding across all lessons and activities.

We recognise the need for consolidation and practice, but we are vigilant in our avoidance of tasks that involve unnecessary repetition or low levels of challenge.

1. Subject knowledge

We believe that children learn best when teachers are well-informed, knowledgeable and confident about what they are teaching. Our curriculum planning; our use of subject leaders; our CPD programme and our staffing patterns ensure that all learning is led by staff with good subject knowledge.

2. Planning

Our planning is based on systematic and accurate assessment of our pupils' prior learning. We plan teaching strategies carefully, creatively and imaginatively, based on our knowledge of our pupils' needs. We choose, design and adapt tasks that will challenge all pupils, whatever the level at which they are working.

3. Interventions

We plan interventions that will support pupils and will move them on in their learning. These are determined by our accurate knowledge of pupils' previous learning and by our high expectations of their progress. We know the impact that we expect these interventions to have and we evaluate them with regard to the difference they have made to pupils' learning.

4. Homework

We recognize the importance of pupils learning at home. We believe it helps them to consolidate and extend school learning as well as helping to involve families.

Our homework policy outlines the arrangements that we make to plan regular and appropriate homework at each stage of our school

5. Assessment for Learning

We use a range of techniques to systematically check our pupils' understanding throughout each stage of the lesson. We anticipate the most likely areas of misunderstanding and we prepare planned interventions and support that will address these. However, we are also ready to adapt our approach spontaneously when we meet unexpected misconceptions or difficulties.

6. Marking and feedback

We have agreements about our approach to marking: its frequency; content and depth. We plan regular routines for pupils to respond to marking, so that it improves their learning.

We give ongoing oral feedback to individuals and to groups of pupils throughout lessons. Our feedback is more often positive than negative. It is sharply focused on the learning and aptitudes that we want to improve.

The purpose of all our feedback, in marking, in target-setting and orally, is to give pupils precise and motivating information about how well they are doing and what they should do next to improve.

7. Personalising the Curriculum

We believe that teachers should create a highly personalised curriculum for each cohort they teach. We refer to the use of assessment foci to guide and scaffold our wave 1 planning. The school encourages individuality and creativity within lessons, but also recognises the need for a default 3-4 part structured lesson that builds heavily on assessed needs.

Outcomes: basic skills, classroom climate, pupil attitudes

Basic skills

We recognize the centrality to learning of the core basic skills. We have organised our teaching programmes for reading, writing, communication and maths so that there are clear lines of progression; consistent teaching approaches; high expectations of pupils at every stage and a rigorous assessment of pupils' learning and progress.

We design our whole curriculum to afford every opportunity for pupils to apply and so consolidate these core basic skills. Our expectations of their cross-curricular work are as high as those we hold in subject-specific lessons.

We use time very carefully, minimising waste and taking every opportunity to practise and reinforce core basic skills.

Classroom climate

Through careful and imaginative planning; our high-quality teaching; good relationships and our high levels of teacher responsibility, we generate high levels of enthusiasm from our pupils. We expect pupils to be active participants in their learning and we structure routines and rewards to support them. We want our pupils to show commitment to their learning. We give positive feedback when we see examples of this and we take measured and thoughtful action when it is absent.

Pupil attitudes

We are developing the aptitudes of resilience, confidence and independence. We ensure that the tasks we choose give regular opportunities for pupils to develop these aptitudes. We explain their importance to learning. We notice and comment positively when pupils demonstrate these aptitudes and we model them in our own actions. We work with individual pupils to build these aptitudes where they are lacking

Appendix 2

The Learning Environment

The learning environments is organised to ensure that children have the opportunity to:

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

We believe that learning takes place in an environment which:

- is challenging and stimulating;
- is peaceful and calm;
- is happy and caring;
- is organised;
- is well resourced;
- makes learning accessible;
- is encouraging and appreciative;
- is welcoming;
- provides equal opportunities;
- provides a working atmosphere.
- ensures inclusion for all.

Children are encouraged to develop organisational skills and independence through:

- appropriate tasks;
- confidence building;
- example;
- co-operation;
- provision of suitable opportunities;
- responsibilities.

Appendix 3

Routines and Rules

Routines and rules in the classroom contribute to a healthy learning environment and are:

- agreed by the children and clearly understood;
- fair and consistent;
- realistic and positive;
- kept to a minimum but enforced.

All children know the boundaries of behaviour set within the terms of The Behaviour Policy.

Achievement

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

- verbal or written praise by teachers, peers, Head Teacher, parents and partners of the school;
- displays of work;
- opportunities to perform or share;
- encouraging self-esteem;
- the awarding of stickers, praise cards, certificates and scrolls;
- sharing success with the community.

Supply Teachers

To ensure continuity, teachers leave written guidance and suggested activities for all planned absences from the classroom. The teacher's planning file will always be available showing lesson plans, timetables and curriculum documents.

School Policies

School policies are set out in the school policy file. It is the duty of each teacher to be familiar with school policies and to apply them.

Equal Opportunities

All children at the Valley School have the right to equal opportunities. Teachers' expectations of behaviour and performance by all children should be the same. Groups, lines and activities are mixed where possible. Particular care is taken to ensure that the same children do not dominate in group work. All activities, including extracurricular activities at The Valley Community School are open to all children, numbers permitting. (see Extra Curricular Book for details).

Appendix 4 Your classroom must contain:

	Changed half termly	Changed termly	Standing Displays
WAGOL Maths/ Writing	x		
Creative Curriculum display. Key skills exemplified	x		
Behaviour reminder and class rules			x
Working numeracy wall , learning journey exemplified	x		
Examples of all children's writing		x	
3D displays of children's work		x	
Small bookshelf or library- high focus quality free reading		x	
Key vocabulary on working maths wall	X (per block)		
Clearly labelled resources accessible for independent work			x
Fire register, Emergency Crisis packs, Physical register, PEEPs and risk assessment	X (% attendance changed weekly)	x	
School motto sign			x
Individual learning targets		x	
Simple PSHCE device so children can record feelings			x
Governor photograph and date of last visit			x

Appendix 5: Evaluating the success of learning

Subsidiary Guidance to Teaching and Learning Policy

Challenge and Progress

What makes Outstanding – Outstanding

Observers should look at challenge and progress on four distinct levels:

Challenge and progress over time:

This will be quickly be shown by what the children could do on entry to the class and what they are capable of now-books should be immaculate and show rapid and sustained progress and an emphasis on the highest standards, assessment on the front of books will show points progress above the expected levels for R/W/M. Marking will have been used highly constructively to move pupils along and there will be no toleration of messy and unfinished, poorly presented work. Display will be used to broaden understanding, challenge thinking and display higher standards that pupils can aspire to.

In short books will show progress **above** that expected normally in almost all cases.

Pupils, in response, will know targets and systems used by the class teacher and be able to clearly articulate what they need to next to improve in the lesson, and increasingly as pupils are older and over a period of time. Pupils will be able to explain the feedback and marking systems and have a keen understanding of what their teachers expect and show how they have responded to marking.

Challenge and progress within independent group work and challenges:

Pupils will settle down to work quickly because they know exactly what is expected of them. Pupils, when asked, will be able to explain how this work may build on previous work and understand what they need to do, to be successful learners in this session (high quality AFL). Pupils of HA/LA/SEND, may have started earlier to avoid unnecessary repetition or whole class input which is beyond them.

Pupils may have been carefully scaffolded/supported through tasks, with an increasing or decreasing level of support, either by staff or guiding workbooks/sheets, depending on what they are doing. Differentiation will be evident and clear because the teacher will know their pupil's needs. Individuals will feel challenged yet supported. There will be well rehearsed structures in place so that if pupils, who do have difficulty, know what to do and have encouraged to be increasingly independent. Because of this there will be no excessive periods (more than 3 minutes) of wandering, chatting or waiting for support.

The work completed should build on previous learning but must not be overly repetitive.

Challenge and progress within taught input group/whole class:

Periods of teacher input will be proportionate to the task-children's seating and length of ability to lesson attentively will have been carefully considered. Periods of taught input will be broken up with short mini tasks and lots of healthy and precise discussion for learning-this may involve Kagan structures and partner work. Teachers will be acutely aware of energy levels and will reinvigorate delivery where they feel these dip. Teachers may use innovative techniques to get their key learning concept across-this may involve quizzes, challenges games and healthy competition. Pupils will feel involved because the teachers and assistants will target specific questions at pupils to probe their learning. Depending on the concept, teachers will not always give the answer, but through careful coaching methods, allow the pupils to reflect on their next steps. Overly negative comments or teachers in some ways blaming pupils for their lack of understanding or perceived effort will be indicative of lessons that haven't been well conceived, organised or pitched correctly. Teaching assistants throughout will be used to their maximum effect.

Due to the fact that teachers can feel energy levels dipping, they will have systems in place to see tables as they work and be able to intervene in a timely manner-lessons will be changed quickly to move beyond or below expectations where teachers see groups or individuals exceeding, or falling below expectations.

Any groups leaving the classroom to work in groups will have well worked communication methods-such as planning evaluations or post its so that teaching assistants routinely feedback how well pupils have achieved in real time, allowing groups and lessons to be changed accordingly for the next day. This will also apply to those working 1:1 with additional support.

No groups or individuals will fail to make progress in this lesson.

APPENDIX 6: Differentiation-Theory into practice

Prepared by K Naughton

- is a method of organising learning activities
- is the match of what is offered to what is needed
- considers the stage of learning that the learner has reached
- considers their own skills and abilities

The National Curriculum Council (NCC) defined it as:

"the process by which curriculum objectives, teaching methods assessment methods, resources and learning activities are planned to cater for the needs of individual pupils"

The following aspects of differentiation were discussed and considered to be valuable starting points for work with trainee teachers.

Outcome

Learners are given the same task and resources, tackle it at their own level and produce outcomes that reflect their understanding of the task and ability to carry it out. An acceptable method for activities in art perhaps, but it is not helpful for learners who need a more structured approach.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Easy to plan.	Some pupils may be restricted in what they can do without support.
Useful Summative assessment shows different levels within group.	Not much diagnostic assessment is possible.
Pupils can be allowed to work cooperatively.	Failure is inevitable for some as pupils measure their performance against their friends and some realise they fall below class average.
Teacher assumes success for all as no criteria for failure is set.	Perceived failure may lead to behavioural problems.

Product

The same task is given, for example to prepare some writing to persuade an audience, but different learners are asked to present it in different ways e.g. in the style of a poster, handbill, pamphlet (these require different amounts of text and different relationships between the illustrations and the text). This allows for more demanding features to be introduced for some.

Advantages	Disadvantages
A highly differentiated form of teaching.	Makes heavy demands on the teacher.
Excellent vehicle for using Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, Bruner's scaffolding and Woods five levels.	Difficult to provide for whole class.
Useful for helping pupils to work on their own weak areas.	Time-consuming way of covering the curriculum.
Excellent as a method of working with one part of the class at a time.	Requires detailed record keeping.
Makes full use of pupils creativity.	

Resource

Although the task may be similar, different resources are made available for different learners. This will be more successful in helping learners to access the task (the use

of counters in early number work) and can be used as a way of challenging the more able through, for example, the use of advanced written material.

Response

Most frequently used form.

(Question from pupil / answer by teacher)

Each answer reflects a differentiated response to that pupil's needs

Advantages	Disadvantages
Provides opportunities for the teacher to give structure and advice which is specific to that pupil's needs.	Very demanding on the teacher's time.

Intervention

This may take the form of: different levels of supervision, additional requirements for some learners, different levels of teacher questioning, selective use of technical language, and modification of the task when possible failure is identified. It is important that this is planned and not simply reactive to the immediate problems. Good differentiation by intervention ensures that one group or set of pupils receives attention one lesson and another during the next lesson.

Progressive Questioning

This technique is adopted during core lesson, introductory sessions or plenaries. The teacher explores the children's understanding and introduces new concepts through interactive dialogue. The earlier questions relating to the simpler aspects of the work are directed towards the lower attaining pupils. As the concepts become more complex the questioning is directed to the higher attaining pupils.

The technique can also be adopted when writing activity sheets. Easier question/concepts introduced at the start...

Grouping

The grouping of pupils is an important aspect of classroom management. Pupils can be grouped according to:

- prior attainment
- gender
- social preference
- preferred learning style

Task

Different tasks are given to different pupils to reflect their needs. These can focus upon the same topic/theme or may be entirely different work (but ensuring entitlement, pupil tracking and equal opportunity issues arise).

Advantages	Disadvantages
Work can be chosen which is suitable for each pupil.	Pupils may slow down to avoid finishing an allotted task.
An efficient way of covering the curriculum.	Labour intensive for teacher as much organisation is needed.
Failure is unlikely, behavioural problems may be reduced.	Work schemes for individuals may impede social learning and highlight differences.
Can be related to the National Curriculum levels.	Summative assessment is difficult, needs to be carried out separately.
Useful for formative assessment.	

Planning Activities

Consider having **A**, **B** and **C** type activities. When you have focussed upon the theme/topic of the lesson list a number of activities that you know ALL pupils will be able to do. These activities ensure that the lowest attaining pupils will have succeeded at some tasks during the lesson. These are the **A** activities. Then design some activities that will extend the most able - these may enrich the topic or they may be the same topic but of a more difficult nature. These are the **C** activities. The **B** activities are what you consider to be the purpose of the lesson.

Another way to consider this form of differentiation is to divide the work into the categories:

all must

most should

some could

Key Questions Teachers must ask themselves:

- Are the objectives for the curriculum/software designed to ensure that the work provides an appropriate challenge for all learners?
- Does the work offered build on prior learning?
- Does the work offered allow for learners to succeed at their own level?
- Are activities planned to remove any barriers to learner participation?
- Are a range and variety of quality resources available?
- Do the activities reflect attention span and pace of work?
- Are all learners participating in the activity?
- Is the activity(s) the most effective way of achieving the outcome?

- Are the resources matched to the needs of the learners?
- Can all learners access and use the resources they need?
- Can the learner work without continual reference to the teacher?
- Are learners helped to access resources and work at their best pace?
- Is the available adult time used differentially according to the needs of individuals or groups?
- Is the process of assessment an integral part of the learning?
- Are learning outcomes used to plan future work?
- Is the learner involved in an assessment of their learning and progress?
- Does the process result in the learner gaining a greater understanding of their future needs?

Differentiation is the recognition of and commitment to plan for student differences. A differentiated classroom provides different avenues to acquire content, to process or make sense of information and ideas, and to develop products. The goals of a differentiated classroom are to maximize student growth and to promote individual student success.

Differentiated lessons allow the struggling learner, advanced learner and on the on-grade-level learner to experience appropriate levels of challenge as they work to master essential information, ideas, and skills. Teachers target instruction at the readiness level of students and lead them to learn new ideas and gain greater understanding by building on a sound framework of knowledge. The students begin their learning experience at an appropriate level for them and chart their individual growth. Since differentiation assumes that students have different levels of knowledge and experience with different curricular goals, students may need to experience the curriculum from varying entry points. Differentiation not only recognizes that students are at different levels of readiness, but it also recognizes that students vary in their interests and learning profiles or preferred ways of learning. Differentiation aims to make appropriate accommodations to ensure that the curriculum is engaging and appropriate for all learners

In a Differentiated Classroom...

- Learning experiences are based on diagnosis of student readiness, interest, and/or learning profile
- Content, activities, and products or other assessments are developed in response to differing needs of varied learners
- Teaching and learning are focused on key concepts, understandings and skills
- All students participate in "respectful" work
- Teacher and students work together to ensure continual engagement and challenge for each learner
- The teacher coordinates use of time, space, and activities
- Flexible grouping ensures consistently fluid working arrangements, including whole class learning, pairs, triads, and quads, student-selected groups, teacher-selected groups, and random groups
- Time use is flexible in response to student needs A variety of management strategies such as learning centres, interest centres, compacting, contracts,

independent study, collegial partnerships, tiered assignments, and learning buddies are used to help target instruction to student needs

- Clearly established individual and group criteria provide guidance toward success
- Students are assessed in a variety of ways appropriate to demonstrate their own thought and growth

