



Willow Tree Academy



Policy on Teaching and Learning

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1 Introduction

1.1 At WILLOW TREE ACADEMY, we believe in the concept of lifelong learning, and in 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 in short, it should be fun. 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 lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

2 Aims and objectives

2.1 We believe that people learn best in different ways. At our school, we provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows all children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.

2.2 Through our teaching, we aim to:

- enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners
- foster children's self-esteem and help them to build positive relationships with other people
- develop children's self-respect, encourage them to understand the ideas, attitudes and values of others and teach them to respect other people's feelings
- show respect for a diverse range of cultures and in so doing promote positive attitudes towards other people
- enable children to understand their community and help them feel valued as part of it
- help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.

3 Effective learning

3.1 Research tells us that people learn in many different ways and respond best to different types of input. We must therefore deliver teaching in different ways to address the needs of all our learners. We take into account the different forms of intelligence (e.g. mathematical/logical, visual/spatial, interpersonal, musical) when planning our teaching.

3.2 We ensure the best possible environment for learning by developing a positive atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and feel they belong, in which they enjoy being challenged but in which they enjoy learning, and know that they will succeed (because they know the challenge will have been set at the right level). We therefore play music to accompany learning, provide 'brain breaks' at various points in the lesson to refocus children's attention and make sure that the children have access to drinking water.

3.3 All teaching will be structured to maximise learning opportunities and lessons will be planned in accordance with the following principles:

- the teaching should build on previous learning
- it should give pupils the 'big picture' of the lesson
- the teacher should explain the learning objectives, and why the lesson is important
- the lesson should be presented in a range of styles and often away from the desk
- it should allow opportunities for the pupils to build up their own understanding through various activities
- it should allow opportunities for the children to review what has been learnt

- it should have built-in opportunities for feedback to the children, celebrating success and reviewing learning strategies
- the teaching should indicate what the next step in the learning will be.

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

- investigation and problem-solving
- research, discovery and enquiry
- group work
- pair work
- independent work
- whole-class work
- asking and answering questions
- use of ICT and hand held learning
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest
- creative activities
- visual literacy and responding to musical or tape-recorded material
- debates, role-plays and oral presentations
- designing and making things
- participation in athletic or physical activity.
- Use of the outdoor spaces within the school grounds.

3.5 We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way in which they learn, and to reflect on how they learn – what helps them learn and what makes it difficult for them to learn. We teach Learning Skills and encourage children to measure their progress against these.

4 Effective teaching and learning

4.1 When we are teaching, we focus on motivating all the children and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, so that they reach the highest level of personal achievement. *We use the Academy/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.*

4.2 Teachers make ongoing 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 develop further 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. When planning work for children with special educational needs, we give due regard to information and targets contained in the children's Individual Development Plans (IDPs). Teachers differentiate teaching and learning as appropriate in order to meet all children's needs. 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.

4.3 We set academic targets for the children in each year group and we share these targets with children and their parents. We formally assess the progress of each child in October, February and June and set revised targets. Progress is continuously reviewed throughout the year and children's levels and targets accordingly adjusted.

4.4 We plan our lessons with clear learning objectives. We take these objectives from the National Curriculum. Our lesson plans contain information about the tasks to be set, the resources needed, and the way in which we assess the children's work. We evaluate all lessons, so that we can modify and improve our future teaching.

4.5 Each of our teachers makes a special effort to establish good working relationships with all the children in the class. We treat the children with kindness and respect. We recognise that they are all individuals with different needs, but we treat them fairly, and give them equal opportunity to take part in class activities. All of our teachers follow the school policy with regard to discipline and classroom management. We have high expectations of behaviour and learning outcomes. We set and agree with children the class code of conduct and we expect all children to comply with the rules that we jointly devise to promote the best learning opportunities for all. We praise children for their efforts and by doing so, we help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general. We insist on good order and behaviour at all times because we recognise the link between good behaviour and good achievement. When children misbehave, we follow the guidelines for sanctions as outlined in our positive behaviour policy..

4.6 We try to ensure that all tasks and activities that the children perform are safe. When we plan to take children out of school, we follow a strict set of procedures to ensure safety: the venue is visited, risk assessments are completed, and various permissions are obtained. We inform parents, and obtain their permission, before the visit takes place.

4.7 We deploy learning support assistants and other adult helpers as effectively as possible. Sometimes, they work with individual children and sometimes they work with small groups. Our adult helpers also assist with the preparation of resources and storage of classroom equipment.

4.8 Our classrooms are attractive learning environments. We change displays at least once a term, so that the classroom reflects the topics studied by the children. We ensure that all children have the opportunity to display their best work at some time during the year. All classrooms have a range of dictionaries and of both fiction and non-fiction books, as well as displays relating to literacy and numeracy. We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning and that an exciting classroom promotes independent use of resources, which results in high-quality work by the children.

4.9 All of our teachers reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and plan their professional development accordingly. We do all we can to support our teachers in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice.

4.10 We conduct all our teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all.

5 The role of governors

5.1 Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school's approach to teaching and learning. In particular, they:

- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively
- ensure that the school buildings and premises are used optimally to support teaching and learning

- check teaching methods in the light of health and safety regulations
- seek to ensure that our staff development and our performance management both promote good-quality teaching
- monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning approaches through the school's self-review processes, which include reports from subject leaders, the annual Head teacher's report to governors and a review of the in-service training sessions attended by staff.

6 The role of parents

6.1 We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform parents about what and how their children are learning:

- by holding parents' evenings, 3 times a year, to explain our school strategies for literacy, numeracy and health education
- by sending information to parents, at the start of each term, which outlines the topics that the children will be studying during that term at school
- by using a Home Learning Diary
- by using Class Dojo
- by sending parents an annual report in which we explain the progress made by each child, and indicate how the child can improve further
- by sending home an interim attitude and behaviour report completed by the child and teacher 3 times a year, between Parents' Evenings.
- by explaining to parents how they can support their children with home learning, and suggesting, for example, regular shared reading with very young children, and support for older children with their projects and investigative work.

6.2 We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We would therefore like parents:

- to ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible
- to ensure that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and PE kit
- to do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school
- to inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour
- to promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general
- to fulfil the requirements set out in the home-school agreement.

7 Monitoring and review

7.1 We are aware of the need to monitor the school's teaching and learning policy and to review it regularly, so that we can take account of new initiatives and research, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. We will therefore review this policy every two years, or earlier if necessary.

Signed: J K Fearnley

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