Townley School and Pre-School Teaching and Learning Policy

AIMS OF THE POLICY

At Townley School and Pre-School we are committed to high quality teaching and learning to raise standards of achievement for all children. All teachers and governors have been consulted in developing this policy. It reflects what has been agreed in terms of approach and consistency and makes explicit the best practice to which the school aspires. It also reflects the aims and objectives of the school and supports our vision. This policy replaces individual subject policies.

PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Quality First Teaching is essential for all children to learn and make progress. We expect all teachers to adhere to the Teacher Standards, with high aspirations for all children. Successful teaching takes account of children's prior learning and must ensure continuity and progression. Learning is the purpose of the whole school and is a shared commitment. At Townley School and Pre-School we recognise that education involves children, parents, staff, governors, the community and the local authority, and that for optimum benefit all should work collaboratively to support the process of learning. Working in partnership, we aim to:

- Develop lifelong, ambitious learners realising their aspirations.
- Provide an inspirational environment to nurture a safe, mindful, healthy and active lifestyle.
- Promote confidence, self-esteem and independence so that children can flourish as individuals.
- Encourage learners to respect the environment and the diverse, cosmopolitan world in which we live.
- Engage with a curriculum which enables access to all areas of learning and development, with the skills necessary for success in an ever changing world.
- Work together with each other and the wider community.

Roles and Responsibilities

Learning and teaching is a shared responsibility and all members of the school community have an important part to play. (See Home-School Agreement)

Teachers at Townley feel that pupils learn best when:

- they are happy, healthy and alert – receptive and positive
- they are interested and involved – learning is relevant and stimulating
- the purpose of a task is understood – they understand why they are doing it
- they feel secure – in terms of environment, relationships and learning
- they feel valued – teachers and other adults care about their development as learners
- they have opportunities to explore and take risks
- they are actively involved, making choices and taking responsibility in their learning
- they have an element of control and can work with independence

- they receive positive feedback and praise for achievements
- the learning environment is well-organised and resources are easily accessed
- tasks are differentiated, matched to the child
- learning is built on existing knowledge and experience – clearly defined small steps
- they have opportunities to talk about their work, reflecting, discussing and sharing ideas
- the teacher is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and motivated
- they have clearly defined next steps which they can successfully achieve eg appropriate time scale.

All members of the school community should support the school's aims by:

- valuing children as individuals and respecting their rights, values and beliefs;
- fostering an inclusive attitude and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community;
- providing a well ordered, safe environment in which all are fully aware of behavioural expectations;
- offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life and recognising the importance of different cultures;
- encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviours and work;
- working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another.

School Staff should support the school's aims by:

- Providing a secure, stimulating environment where all children are supported in responding to the challenges involved in moving towards their full potential;
- provide a challenging and engaging curriculum which is appropriately differentiated according to the needs of the children, to encourage all children to reach the highest standard of progress.
- providing the skills which encourage children to become confident, independent learners.
- promoting positive relationships between all members of the School community including; children, staff, parents/carers and governors;
- recognise and be aware of the needs of each individual child according to ability and aptitude;
- ensure that learning is progressive and continuous;
- be good role models, punctual, well prepared and organised;
- keep up-to-date with educational issues;
- provide clear information on school procedures and pupil progress;
- have a positive attitude to change and the development of their own expertise;
- establish links with the local community to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life;
- work collaboratively with all involved in education to develop a shared philosophy and commonality of practice.

Governors should support the school's aims by:

- promoting positive relationships between the Governing Body and all other members of the School community;
- appointing a designated link governor who will meet with the school staff at least once a year to find out about the school's systems for planning work, supporting staff and monitoring progress; the allocation, use and appropriateness of resources; how the standards of achievement are changing over time.
- visiting school and talking to children about their learning experiences;
- promoting and supporting the positive involvement of parents and carers within the school;
- attending training and other related events;
- reporting to the governing body with recommendations, if appropriate.
- working with school leaders to review the School's Policies.

The community is invited to support the school by:

- contributing to activities, such as assemblies, specialist outings, clubs, etc;
- presenting themselves as positive role models to be emulated;
- organising activities and events throughout the year to extend and deepen pupils' knowledge and skills;
- supporting school events;
- volunteering in the school.

Planning

At Townley School and Pre-School we are committed to following the programmes of study as required by the National Curriculum (NC) and The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). A cycle of NC/EYFS Programmes of Study is drawn up by staff and is carefully balanced to ensure full coverage of the NC/EYFS, PSHCE and RE. In EYFS we use the 'Planning in the Moment' approach. In KS 1 and 2 we use a cross curricular approach to learning where some subjects are taught through a topic and some are covered as discrete subjects. Regular staff meetings are used to discuss various aspects of the curriculum and ensure consistency of approach and standards.

In KS1 and 2 Medium Term Planning takes place termly with reference to the NC and the wider curriculum. Long term planning takes into consideration a two-year rolling programme of curriculum coverage due to two-year mixed age classes.

Weekly planning is based upon previous assessment data, pupil need and subject expectation. At Townley School and Pre-School we are committed to raising standards of basic skills. By basic skills, we mean the ability to read, write and speak in English and to use mathematics at a proficient level to facilitate learning across the curriculum. There is no set Proforma for planning, it is for individual teachers to decide how best works for them. Teachers will need to ensure they plan in a way that support staff know what their role is in supporting learning so all children can make progress. Staff who job share will need to ensure they communicate with their job share partner to enable a seamless transition between staff for the benefit of the children.

Subject leaders have a variety of roles. These include:

- taking the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in their subject throughout the school;
- supporting colleagues in their development and implementation of the scheme of work, and in assessment and record-keeping activities;
- monitoring progress in their subjects and advising the Headteacher on action needed; taking responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for their subjects;
- keeping up-to-date through reading and attending relevant courses.

Organisation

The learning environment will be managed in such a way as to facilitate different styles of learning.

Opportunities will be made for:

- whole class teaching;
- group work, organised according to appropriate criteria (i.e. ability, mixed ability, friendship, etc);
- one to one teaching;
- collaborative learning in pairs or groups;
- peer work;
- independent learning.

All areas of the learning environment will be planned for, including, where appropriate, the outside areas, in order to ensure opportunities for a range of practical activities, which will develop appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding.

The classroom will be organised to facilitate learning and the development of independence. For example:

- resources in each area will be grouped according to curriculum subject;
- book corners will be comfortable and attractive;
- labels and posters should be used wherever possible/appropriate to reflect the language and cultural diversity or our society;
- areas for imaginative play will change regularly, in order to give opportunities for a range of play and role-play which will contribute to learning in a purposeful manner;
- pupils will be involved in the maintenance and care of all equipment and resources.

Classrooms provide a stimulating and purposeful learning environment, including thought provoking and stimulating displays.

Classroom support is available in the form of both teaching assistants and volunteers. These are used at the discretion of the class teacher. Volunteer helpers assist with the many aspects of school life, including

supporting reading and providing assistance with school visits. Students are welcomed into school and certain standards of dress and conduct are expected.

Excellence is celebrated in display and performance. Sustained effort, including drafting and reworking, is encouraged to enhance standards. School events such as performances and assemblies are seen as opportunities for all pupils to demonstrate their own best performance. Pupils are encouraged to believe that any exhibited work (performance or display) should represent their highest standards of personal achievement.

Differentiation

So that we always have the highest possible expectations of individual learners and so they can demonstrate what they can do, understand and achieve, teachers will differentiate the curriculum according to individual needs by:

- pace;
- content;
- task;
- relevance;
- resources;
- extension;
- independence;
- outcome;
- teacher/adult/peer support.

Pupils with special educational needs (including gifted and talented children) receive support provided by a teacher, 1:1 Tuition or teaching assistants. Additionally, advice is sought from relevant external support agencies when and where the need demands it. (See Special Educational Needs Policy)

Homework

Homework is considered to be a valuable element of the learning process; however, it is up to each class the format homework will take. In EYFS children should take home a library book weekly to share. Across KS1 and 2 reading books should be changed regularly and children should be encouraged to read daily at home. Spellings, times tables and other work considered age appropriate can be sent home weekly. Homework should support learning, children should be encouraged to return homework through praise. Sanctions should not be put in place for children who do not return homework without consultation with the parents and headteacher as we recognise not all children have the facilities at home to support homework.

We believe that homework should be set:

- to involve parents in their children's learning;

- to help parents keep abreast of what their child can and cannot do;
- to take advantage of the home context to apply learning;
- to encourage children to talk about their work to their parents and explain what they are doing and how;
- to extend the time for learning, thus enabling children to practise and consolidate their skills and knowledge and strategies;
- to prepare children for secondary school experiences of homework;
- to view learning as a lifelong process and not just restricted to school hours.

The agreed practice for homework is that:

- homework is set weekly, and is returned the following week.
- homework will generally follow on from work which has taken place in class but may take many different forms, including reading, learning multiplication facts and spellings. It should not entail new ideas that require explanation from a teacher;
- homework may sometimes consist of preparation for work yet to be done;
- children should understand exactly what they are expected to do, how to do it, and how long it should take;
- homework should sometimes involve the participation of the parents;
- children who have made insufficient effort during class time may occasionally be asked to complete work at home.

Handwriting

At Townley all children are taught to use a continuous cursive style of handwriting, (this font is available in Word) to ensure they have the best possible start with writing. Children developing early handwriting skills are taught the skills they need to develop a comfortable and effective pencil grip. The continuous cursive style must be modelled and used by all staff working with children, particular care must be taken when marking children's work. Children who join the school with a different style of handwriting will be taught and encouraged to use this style, however if their style is appropriate for the curriculum they may continue to use their preferred style.

When children are consistently producing a neat continuous cursive script, or their personal best handwriting then they should be allowed to use a handwriting pen, through the awarding of a pen license. All children in year 5 and 6 should use a handwriting pen.

Work in Books

Work in books is our main way of demonstrating children's achievements and progress. Children should be encouraged take pride in the work in their books. However, it is recognised that if we want children to practice and experiment with vocabulary and grammar children may make jottings which will not always be neat as they may cross out (using a single strikethrough line) to experiment, edit and redraft work. It is

expected that all work in books is dated and has a clear Learning Objective (LO), which identifies the intended learning of the lesson, in the form of an 'I can…' statement. The date and LO must be at the **top** If a piece of work. If work is to be an assessed piece of work, without an LO then this must be clearly identified as an assessment piece. The LO can be handwritten or printed as appropriate for the individual child's development.

Effective feedback and marking help children understand how to improve and this is detailed in the Marking policy.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Regular assessments are made of pupils' work in order to establish the level of attainment and to inform future planning. Formative assessment is used to guide the progress of individual pupils. It involves identifying each child's progress in each area of the curriculum, determining what each child has learned and what therefore should be the next stage in his/her learning.

Formal summative assessment is carried out at the end of each NC Key Stage (i.e. in EYFS, Years 2 and 6) through the use of SATs and teacher assessment. Phonics are tested in Year 1 and re-tested where necessary in Year 2. PIRA and PUMA assessments are taken termly in Years 1,2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Initial assessment is used in EYFS within six weeks of starting school/Pre-School. Other tests such as past SATs papers, times tables, spelling and mental maths are used across the school as appropriate to ensure all children make progress across the curriculum.

Suitable tasks for assessment include:

- group discussions;
- short tests in which pupils write answers;
- specific assignments for individual pupils;
- discussions in which children are encouraged to appraise their own work and progress;
- pupil observations;
- SATs.

Assessment carries with it the expectation that, when properly motivated and appropriately taught, all learners can reach a level of achievement which may currently appear beyond them. It provides a breadth of proven life-long learning skills based on an understanding of how we learn rather than what we ought to be learning. All results from assessments are analysed and used to inform future planning. Assessments are recorded termly by class teachers for reading, writing and maths as part of Pupil Progress Meetings. EYFS assessments are recorded by key workers using Development Matters.

Reporting to parents takes place twice yearly through consultations and once through a written report. Results of individual pupils' statutory assessments are made available to the parents concerned in the annual written report.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Pupils' work will be monitored and moderated regularly in each of the core curriculum areas by the subject leaders and/or Headteacher. A termly review of monitoring procedures is held with all members of the teaching staff in the form of Pupil Progress Meetings which includes discussions around our whole school Provision Map and the impact of the interventions that are used. Subject leaders will regularly monitor children's books. The Headteacher will observe each class teacher in a specified curriculum area on a regular basis. The Performance Management cycle informs learning and teaching. (See Performance Management Policy).

Teaching Strategies

In order to ensure equality of access and effective matching of tasks to needs, teachers will employ a variety of teaching strategies in any one session. This may include:

- provision of an integrated curriculum;
- teacher observation;
- discussion and questioning (open and closed as appropriate);
- previewing and reviewing work;
- didactic teaching;
- interactive teaching;
- conferencing;
- listening;
- brainstorming;
- providing opportunities for reflection by pupils;
- demonstrating high expectations;
- providing opportunities for repetition/reinforcement;
- providing encouragement, positive reinforcement and praise;
- making judgements and responding to individual need;
- intervening, as appropriate, in the learning process in order to encourage development;
- providing all children with opportunities for success;
- using a range of communication strategies – verbal and non-verbal.

Activities should show a balance in terms of individual, group and whole class work. Specialist teaching is available from subject leaders when they can be released from class and also in the form of visitors.

At Townley School and Pre-School we recognise the importance of key skills. Opportunities will be made available across the curriculum to develop:

- application of number;
- communication;
- computing skills
- problem solving;
- working with others;
- improving own learning and performance.

Learning Processes

Children enter school at different stages of development. Children learn in different ways and at different rates of progress. In the course of learning, children develop their skills through a variety of processes and learning styles. These include:

- investigation;
- experimentation;
- listening;
- observation;
- talking and discussion;
- asking questions;
- child-initiated play;
- practical exploration and role play;
- retrieving information;
- imagining;
- repetition;
- problem-solving;
- making choices and decision-making.

At Townley School and Pre-School opportunities are organised to allow pupils access to these processes, and for them to develop their own strategies to gain knowledge and skills. We aim to provide opportunities to develop a wide range of learning styles. We recognise that each child has a unique way of learning and that learning preference is affected by previous experience, competence, confidence, beliefs and values. We shall ensure that learning is accessed by as many means as possible.

Linked to the above, successful teaching is:

- confident – teachers have a clear understanding of subject knowledge and setting objectives
- high expectation – there is optimism about, and high expectation of success
- well planned – there is differentiation with methods and organisation strategies which match curricular objectives and needs of all pupils
- interactive – pupil's contributions are encouraged, expected, extended
- characterised by high quality oral work
- well paced – there is a sense of urgency, driven by the need to make progress and succeed

- informed – by assessment outcomes

Resources

Classroom and central resources are the responsibility of classroom teachers who ensure that:

- there is a range of appropriate, accessible and labelled resources available for which pupils can select materials suitable to the task in hand;
- all children know where classroom resources are kept and the rules about their access and use;
- children are encouraged to act independently in choosing, collecting and returning resources where appropriate;
- the library (including reading books) is a valued resource and used appropriately;
- children work together to establish an attractive, welcoming and well organised environment engendering respect, care and value for all resources.

Each classroom will be equipped with a basic set of resources and books appropriate to the age range. Specialist resources will be stored in the appropriate curriculum resource cupboard/area, and will be regularly audited by the subject leaders. Consumables will be replenished as necessary. Staff may contact subject leaders with suggestions for specialist materials which may need ordering.

Pupils will be taught how to use all resources correctly and safely, with care and respect and with regard for Health and Safety and waste. Care will be taken to ensure that resources reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of our society, and that all pupils have equality of access.

At Townley School and Pre-School the use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum is valued and these are used throughout the school to widen children's experiences and support learning across a range of subject areas.

Time is a resource that we value. To maximise its use:

- as children progress throughout the school they are encouraged to take greater control of their own learning, including their use of time;
- opportunities for learning are maximised by ensuring that tasks are made specific by focused objectives;
- teachers will encourage pupils to work within given time scales, and will facilitate the effective use of time through the provision of appropriate resources and planning extension activities;
- all children engage in useful activities upon entering the classroom and know what to do between the end of an activity and the end of a session.

Health and Safety issues are the responsibility of all who work in the school.