

Teaching and Learning Policy

Aims

This teaching and learning policy has been approved by the staff and Governors of The Free School Norwich and will be reviewed annually. In line with the ethos of 'Opportunity and Achievement for All' the school aims to:

- Provide a truly broad and balanced primary school education for children;
- Enable children to identify and develop their individual strengths and interests so that they can achieve their potential in life;
- Help increase the economic well-being of children by enabling their parents to work;
- Develop children's social and emotional awareness through the use of the THRIVE approach.

Children learn through their total experience at The Free School Norwich. This policy guides what children do, what teachers do, how time is managed, the organisation of the classroom and what the school as an organisation does to create an effective and well managed learning environment in which the individual needs of each child can be met.

Curriculum

We aim to offer a broad and balanced curriculum in order to help each pupil to make the most of their talents, gifts and interests, so that he/she can grow in confidence and work towards his/her potential. The Teaching and Learning Policy is intended to promote consistency and high standards and the achievement of the School's aims.

The School has decided that all children will be provided with an education in line with the Primary National Curriculum (2014) document. Key skills are taught through the use of a Maths and English scheme and through reinforcement online through programs in the school Cloud. Information technology (ICT) is embedded throughout the curriculum with children being expected to use the key skills they are taught where appropriate. The remainder of the curriculum is taught thematically with key skills being directly applied to the topic. Topics change termly and cover all the foundation subject objectives throughout a cycle of one year.

Personal Learning Activities (PLA)

Personalised learning is at the heart of effective teaching and learning. At The Free School Norwich, we recognise the need to develop strategies that will allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them so that they may fulfil their potential. The PLA curriculum forms 10% of the school timetable and gives children a chance to have some control over their learning, either to follow a particular interest or to try a new skill in a familiar setting. Part of this curriculum involves outside partners coming in or children working in the community. Curriculum partners are expected to:

- Provide full plans with National Curriculum links;
- Have the same CRB checks;
- Provide risk assessments where appropriate.

Our range of PLA includes learning to ski, canoe, cook, investigate local history, play chess, dance, do karate, football skills, do orienteering, wall climb, mini-engineering, understand environmental issues, read and talk about children's literature, problem solve, make models and garden. As part of encouraging children to direct their own learning, they are encouraged to suggest activities that they might like to do in the future. All activities are fully funded by the school and are supervised by qualified teaching staff and instructors.

Specialist Teaching

Music, Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) and Physical Education (PE) are taught by specialist teachers and professional coaches at The Free School Norwich.

All children in Key Stage 1 are given a basic knowledge and understanding of music through rhythm, and song. Children can then choose to specialise in a musical instrument. They are encouraged to play in school ensembles, choir and to take part in annual music festivals in Norwich as they increase in skill and confidence.

French lessons are taught throughout the school. Spanish lessons are also offered to those children who show a particular aptitude for languages.

PE is taught by professional coaches at Norwich City Football Club Sports Park during the Harvest, Whitsun and Summer terms. During the Christmas, Winter and Spring terms children are taught at Wensum Lodge, an indoor venue. Children are also given regular opportunities to compete in competitions and events with other schools in Norwich. Swimming is taught in Key Stage 2 by professional instructors at the Riverside Swimming Centre in Norwich.

All children take part in two productions each year; Christmas and at the end of the Summer term. Visits to plays and performances also take place throughout the year to enrich the children's understanding of theatrical performance.

Teaching Approaches

Many learning opportunities are made available to the children to cater for their individual learning needs.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- Enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring, independent and reflective learners;
- Foster children's self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people;
- Develop children's self-respect and encourage children to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others;
- Show respect for all cultures and, in so doing, to promote positive attitudes towards other people;
- Enable children to understand their community and help them feel valued as part of this community;
- Enable children to grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.

The methods include:

- Use of ICT;
- Through talk in snack and chat;
- Investigation and problem solving;
- Research and finding out;
- Group work;
- Paired work;
- Independent work;
- Whole-class work;
- Asking and answering questions;
- A range of experiences - fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- Visitors;
- Creative activities;
- Debates, role-plays and oral presentations;
- Designing and making things;
- Participation in athletic or physical activity;
- Outside classroom/environment.

We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way they learn, and to reflect on how they learn – what helps them learn and what makes it difficult for them to learn.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's level of attainment. Our prime focus is to further develop their knowledge and skills. We have high expectations of all children and believe that everyone should be included in the full range of educational opportunities and that these should be of the highest possible standard.

All teachers strive to establish positive working relationships with the children that they are teaching. We treat them fairly and give them equal opportunities to take part in class activities. All teachers follow the school behaviour management policy. We praise and reward children for good effort and have high expectations with regard to behaviour in and outside of school. By so doing, help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general.

Educational Visits

The Free School Norwich is committed to providing as dynamic an education as possible for all children. Children are taken off site as much as possible to develop their learning in the community (see also the Educational Visit policy). Optional visits and residential trips are also provided for all children but are payable by parents.

Differentiation

In line with current research, the school recognises that by having a rigid differentiation structure, this can limit children's aspirations and development. For this reason, while some lessons will continue to be differentiated, the school will also teach whole class lessons which encourage children to aim higher; these will be assessed according to 'all/most/some' criteria with explicit expectations for children to achieve the highest level of attainment possible. This may also include peer assessment where appropriate.

Special Educational Needs (SEND) support

We want all of our children to achieve their full potential to give them the very best start in life. Children with special educational needs are assessed by the SENCO or a qualified professional at an early stage and are given full support to help them realise their potential. This may include regular one to one tuition by a qualified teachers/ support assistants, or through support within a small group.

The Free School Norwich works in partnership with the Indigo Dyslexia Centre in Norwich to provide specialist provision and support for children diagnosed with dyslexia or other language based learning difficulties (SPELD).

Children diagnosed with dyslexia are fully supported through a personal programme of skills and strategies to enable them to succeed academically.

Planning

Long term planning is agreed as a school and is in place for the next seven years. From this, staff work together to lay out the year's objectives to ensure that there is good coverage of all skills and knowledge. Once this has been done, individual staff plans for their class in accordance with their needs

Teachers at The Free School Norwich strive to plan lessons which are engaging, fun and challenging. The school has regard to the following strategies with regards to planning:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS);
- Oxford Owl: Big Write English objectives;
- Maths Mastery: White Rose objectives.

Subject co-ordinators are responsible for sharing out all objectives for each class every term, ensuring there is full coverage of the national Curriculum. Planning is made available to parents in a termly email and is monitored by the Principal and the Vice Principal on a regular basis.

Displays

The displays in the school are used to create an attractive and stimulating environment. The work displayed should:

- Be a celebration of children's achievement reflecting the individual child's efforts as well as ability;
- Be of a high standard;
- Be in 2D or 3D in a variety of media and changed regularly;
- Stimulate discussion and be accompanied with children's questions and answers where appropriate;
- To provide opportunities for self-assessment and/ or challenge.

Assessment

Assessment of each pupil's current progress is a core element of teaching and learning at The Free School Norwich. Lesson planning is based on prior learning and throughout the learning process, active assessment is required to ensure that the expected rate of progress is being made. All teachers use the following marking stamps for day-to-day marking:

- Target achieved- where the child has met the lesson's objective;
- Always check your work- where the child has not met the lesson's objective. This will be followed by a short comment to advise the child where they have made mistakes;
- Verbal feedback- where the teacher or teaching assistant has spoken to the child directly about their work;
- Adult assisted work- where an adult has worked with a group of children to develop their understanding. This will be logged in the group discussion book.

Fundamental to our formative assessment procedures are a range of AfL strategies are used in the classroom:-

- Learning objectives are made explicit and shared with the pupils in the form of a WALT (We Are Learning To...);
- Success criteria are agreed by the pupils and teacher;
- Self and peer assessment is used against the success criteria;
- Pupils are engaged in their learning and receive regular feedback on their progress;
- Non-core subjects use a marking ladder throughout the term where pupils and teacher express whether they feel they have met the weekly learning objective.

Summative assessment opportunities are detailed in the school assessment calendar. These include the following RS Assessment materials:

- PUMA: Progress in Understanding in Mathematics Assessment;
- GAPS: Progress in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling Assessment;
- PRA: Progress in Reading Assessment.

These are undertaken twice a year in the Winter and Summer terms and give a scaled score to enable staff to monitor progress. Spelling is also assessed at the beginning and end of the academic year through the use of the Schonell Spelling test.

Science is teacher assessed at the end of each topic. Non-core subjects use mind mapping at the beginning and end of a topic. Moderation of marking across the school occurs after the formal assessment periods in the Winter and Summer terms.

Tracking is used to ensure that children are progressing well and ensure that rapid intervention occurs should children not be making the expected progress.

Reporting to Parents

The Free School Norwich has two parents' evenings timetabled during the school year, one at the end of the Winter term and another optional meeting after the final report is shared with parents at

the end of the Summer term. Parents receive a written interim report in the Winter term and a full written annual report about their child's progress in the Summer term.

Monitoring Standards

Lesson observations by peers and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) occur on a regular basis throughout the year. Peer to peer observation is seen as being more constructive and effective at raising standards. During lesson observations, the focus may be on:

- Whether lessons are well planned and resourced;
- Whether success criteria central to the planning of the lesson;
- Whether assessment of previous learning is being used to inform the planning and teaching of this lesson;
- Whether learning objectives and success criteria are shared with children and that the children engage in their own learning;
- Whether the teacher employs a range of teaching strategies to match the needs of the children and the lesson;
- Whether there are high but attainable expectations – both in standards of work and behaviour – with teaching focused on achieving success;
- Whether there is a positive attitude between teacher and pupil;
- Whether the children encouraged and praised;
- Whether any assessment is taking place;
- Whether there is any pupil self-assessment.

Role of Governors

Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school's policies on Teaching and Learning. Governors meet every term to:

- Support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
- Monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment;
- Ensure that the school buildings and premises are effective in supporting successful teaching and learning;
- Ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching;
- Monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations;
- Monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning policies through the school self-review processes.

Role of Parents

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping their children to learn. We work hard to inform and support parents in how they can support their children's learning and confidence at school. All parents are given a breakdown of their child's progress at the parents' evening meetings with teachers and in the annual report. This includes targets for the following term.



It is expected that all children will read regularly at home and learn their weekly spellings. Homework is sent home when requested and all children can access the learning programs highlighted by teaching staff.

Parents of children in EYFS can also access Tapestry where they receive updates of their child's learning and can upload evidence themselves.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that children attend school regularly. Some parents offer their time to help in school. These offers are always welcome and parents undertake a variety of tasks, working with individuals and groups of all ages.

Any third party in school to work with children is required to undertake a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) clearance before starting work.

This policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis or as and when required.

Principal: Mrs Tania Sidney-Roberts

Chair of Governors: Mr Andy Skeggs

Policy Review Date: Harvest 2020