Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

Introduction

A dynamic curriculum is instrumental in shaping the lives of children and nurturing them into becoming lifelong learners. At The Free School Norwich, we are committed to the idea that our curriculum should raise aspirations, foster independence and provide authentic real-life experiences for children of all ages and developmental stages. These principles are fundamental to the design and implementation of our curriculum across all subject areas.

Nurturing children's curiosity not only instils a passion for learning but also equips them with the essential skills, values, and attitudes crucial for navigating modern Britain and the broader global landscape. Our approach ensures that children acquire deep knowledge and explore a diverse set of skills, preparing them for life beyond the classroom. While academic success is a primary focus, our curriculum serves as a versatile tool, shaping the whole child. It supports their creative and athletic ambitions, fostering positive and active citizenship on a global scale. Purposeful activities are crafted to enhance confidence, self-esteem, and, consequently, contribute to the overall mental health and well-being of our students.

Children learn through their total experience at The Free School Norwich. This policy guides what children and teachers do, how time is managed, 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.

Key Curriculum Principles



Knowledge and Skills

Our Curriculum Leads have designed a comprehensive, knowledge-engaged curriculum that ensures a seamless and progressive approach to teaching across all subjects. The curriculum documents detail intent, implementation strategies, and impact, embedding long-term plans, vocabulary lists, assessment ideas, and progression maps. Teachers create meaningful connections between subjects to enhance vocabulary development and reinforce learning through repetition, with these links purposefully planned on long-term maps. To maintain progression and facilitate assessment, we use a discrete subject teaching approach, allowing mastery of individual disciplines and fostering robust cross-subject connections.

Vocabulary and Reading

At The Free School Norwich, our passion for reading is at the heart of our educational mission. Our ultimate goal is to foster a love for reading in every child, ensuring they read fluently, confidently, and with genuine enjoyment. Recognizing that it is the gateway to comprehensive learning, we believe that a child's proficiency in reading is the key to unlocking all future educational endeavours. Beyond academic benefits, we understand that reading contributes significantly to overall wellbeing, making it an essential life skill that we are dedicated to instilling in our students. Furthermore, we Emphasize the use of precise technical vocabulary to enhance children's understanding, analytical abilities, and communication skills.

Engagement

At The Free School Norwich, we are deeply committed to holistic education, integrating social and emotional learning with a passion for fostering a love of reading and essential life skills. We prioritize delivering cultural capital by creating an inclusive, diverse learning environment that reflects global cultures and embraces students' varied backgrounds. Our curriculum incorporates diverse perspectives across subjects, celebrates cultural events, and actively engages with local communities through guest speakers and field trips. We ensure linguistic inclusivity with a diverse library, encourage family involvement, and provide platforms for students to express their cultural identities. By fostering global awareness and empathy, we prepare students for life beyond the classroom, emphasizing a well-rounded education that extends beyond academic achievement.

Curriculum Design

Our Curriculum Leads have designed a comprehensive curriculum to ensure a seamless and progressive approach to teaching and learning across all subjects following The National Curriculum. Each subject has a Curriculum Overview and Progression Map which detail the lead's intent and implementation strategies, and the resultant impact. Long-term plans, vocabulary lists, assessment ideas are embedded within these documents, guaranteeing that our curriculum is both knowledge-engaged and systematically progressive in the development of skills and vocabulary.

Teachers actively seek meaningful connections between subjects, fostering the development of children's vocabulary and providing opportunities for revisiting learning in diverse contexts. Structuring learning through relevant curriculum links supports retention via repetition and reminders, enabling the practical application of acquired knowledge and skills. Importantly, these links are purposefully planned, appearing on long-term curriculum maps to ensure they genuinely enhance learning. While inspirational, these links align with key lesson objectives.

To uphold progression and facilitate assessment, we opt for a discrete subject teaching approach. This allows us to draw from and respond to the rich traditions of individual academic disciplines and their specific vocabulary, body of knowledge, and skills. Mastery of these disciplines empowers children to establish robust connections across subjects and apply their knowledge and skills with versatility.

Behaviours for Learning

At The Free School Norwich, we teach behaviours for learning in the same way we teach other essential skills. Our commitment to personal development and well-being involves teaching children to understand, regulate, and manage emotions. Additionally, we emphasize the application of critical thinking between sensation, emotion, and action. Encouraging empathy and understanding towards others, we teach the skills needed to foster resilience and responsibility, preparing students for active participation in society. The cultivation of a sense of pride and self-awareness is integral to this process.

CU THRIVE

Our school values guide how we think, how we behave and what we believe are important in the school community. These enable children to Strive, Thrive and Achieve, encapsulating the specific qualities that we aim to develop in our pupils for them to become resilient, global individuals prepared for the wider world. The Free School Norwich values are **CU THRIVE** with each letter standing for a core principle. These are as followed:

Communication: Fostering caring relationships through talking and problem-solving.

Understanding and Valuing Difference: Embracing differences in oneself, others, and the wider world.

Trust: Building positive and purposeful relationships based on trust.
Hard Work: Inspiring engagement through learning activities, leading to achievement.
Respect: Placing respect at the core of everything we do.
Independence: Cultivating responsibility as we grow and learn.
Vitality: Generating productive energy by making the most of opportunities, leaving us happy, well, and fulfilled.
Expectations: Establishing a cycle of high expectations within opportunities, resulting in personal bests, leading to praise, and constructive self-evaluation and reflection that continually informs our learning, behaviour, and emotions.

In EYFS, our Learning Superheroes- Super Explorer, Fantastic Focus, Agent Ideas, I Know Agent, Keep it Up Captain, Link and Learn Hero, Have A Go Hero, Achieving Superhero and Super Chooser- illustrate the behaviours we foster in the children. The Superheroes play an integral part in all learning and activities which take place within the school and are precursors to our CUTHRIVE values promoted from Key Stage 1 onwards.

These attitudes to learning are discussed in assemblies, during PSHE lessons and whenever they are demonstrated during lessons. Staff model these traits throughout the school day.

Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers:

- Plan and deliver engaging, inclusive, and challenging lessons aligned with the curriculum framework, selecting the best subject pedagogy to deepen knowledge and understanding.
- Use a variety of teaching strategies and assessments to meet the needs of all learners, believing that each and every child can accomplish remarkable feats regardless of their background.
- Provide timely and constructive feedback to support student progress.

School Leadership:

- Oversee the implementation of the teaching and learning policy, ensuring consistency and quality across the school.
- Provide support and professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their practice.

Parents/Guardians:

- Support their children's learning at home and collaborate with the school to reinforce educational goals.

- Engage with school activities, events, and communication to stay informed about their children's progress.

Children:

- Take responsibility for their own learning, engaging actively in lessons and striving to achieve their best.
- Respect the learning environment, peers, and teachers, contributing to a positive and productive school community.

Assessment and Live Marking

Live Marking

Live marking is an approach to providing real-time feedback to students during lessons, allowing them to immediately correct and learn from their mistakes. At the Free School Norwich we believe that this method of feedback is more effective than written marking. Importantly, formative assessment outcomes do not need to be recorded unless there is a reason which benefits learning.

Here's how Live Marking is used in The Free School Norwich:

1. **Immediate Feedback**: Instead of waiting until after class or the next day to mark students' work, teachers review and provide feedback during the lesson. This allows students to correct errors on the spot and understand the material better while it's still fresh in their minds.
2. **Active Engagement**: As the teacher moves around the classroom, they interact with students, checking their work as they go. This keeps students engaged, as they know the teacher is available to support them and they can ask questions when needed.
3. **Adaptive Support**: Live marking allows teachers to identify who needs more help with a concept. They can offer more focused assistance to those struggling while providing challenges to students who have grasped the material quickly.
4. **Encouraging Self-Correction**: By guiding students to see their mistakes and encouraging them to correct them, live marking helps develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students learn to be more reflective about their work and become more independent learners.
5. **Efficient Use of Time**: Since the marking is done during the lesson, it reduces the workload of teachers after school. It also ensures that learning is reinforced immediately, making it more effective.
6. **Boosting Confidence**: When students receive positive reinforcement and can quickly fix their mistakes, it builds their confidence. They feel supported in their learning journey, knowing they have the chance to improve before moving on to the next task.

Live marking is a dynamic and interactive way of enhancing the learning experience in The Free School Norwich, ensuring that feedback is timely, relevant, and effective.

Formative Assessment:

Ongoing assessments are used to gauge student understanding, inform planning, and tailor instruction to meet the needs of all children. Formative assessments include pupil observations, quizzes, class discussions and student self-assessments/peer assessments.

Summative Assessment:

Formal summative assessment of English (SPaG, Reading and Writing) and Maths takes place in the Christmas, Spring and Whitsun terms with results informing future teaching strategies. Analysis of these subjects are conducted to enable staff to target teaching to monitor wider trends throughout the school. Science is teacher assessed at the end of each topic. Foundation subjects are teacher assessed at the end of each term.

Term	Assessments
Harvest	Assessments in Science and taught non-core subjects and EYFS Baseline assessment and Wellcomm assessment.
Christmas	Summative assessments in Reading, Writing, Maths and SPaG. Assessments in Science and taught non-core subjects.
Winter	Assessments in Science and taught non-core subjects and EYFS Mid-Point assessment.
Spring	Summative assessments in Reading, Writing, Maths and SPaG. Assessments in Science and taught non-core subjects.
Whitsun	Assessments in Science and taught non-core subjects and EYFS Profile assessment. Optional KS1 SATs and KS2 SATs.
Summer	Summative assessments in Reading, Writing, Maths and SPaG. Phonics Screening Check and Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check. Assessments in Science and taught non-core subjects.

Adaptive Teaching

The Free School Norwich recognises that children learn at different rates and sometimes not consistently. For this reason, it is essential that all lessons are appropriately adapted to allow all children to succeed from where they are. Adaptive Teaching is about teaching and learning

styles as well as individual ability and teachers take this into consideration in their planning. The mastery approach is used in many lessons which encourages children to move outside their comfort zones through building their confidence throughout a lesson.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) 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 SENDCO or a qualified professional at the earliest stage and are given full support to help them realise their potential. This could include regular one to one tuition by a qualified teacher/ support assistant, or through support within a small group. They are regularly reported upon and reassessed to review the impact of these interventions.

Monitoring Standards

The school is fortunate to have subject specialists who lead their subject in school and deliver training and support to other teachers and teaching assistants during staff meetings. The monitoring of lesson observations, planning and book looks by peers, teacher buddies and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) occurs on a regular basis throughout the year as part of this programme.

Term	Subjects Monitored
Harvest	Core Subject English monitoring Core Subject Science monitoring Non-Core subject monitoring: History General school procedures
Christmas	Core subject Maths monitoring Core subject Computing monitoring Non-Core subject monitoring: Music
Winter	Core subject English monitoring Core subject Science monitoring Non-Core subject monitoring: DT/PSHE
Spring	Core subject English monitoring Core subject Computing monitoring Non-Core subject monitoring: Art and Geography
Whitsun	Core subject Maths monitoring

	Core subject Science monitoring Non-Core subject monitoring: RE
Summer	Core subject English monitoring Non-Core subject monitoring: Music, PE

The Learning Environment

- We strive to create a safe, supportive, and nurturing learning environment where all students feel valued and respected.
- Classroom management strategies are positive, consistent, and focused on promoting a culture of respect and cooperation.

Stimulating Learning Spaces:

- Learning spaces are designed to be stimulating and conducive to exploration, creativity, and collaboration.
- Classrooms are equipped with resources that support diverse learning styles and encourage independent learning.

Principal: Darren Webster
Chair of Governors: Julia Virgoe
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Policy Review Date: January 2027

Appendices

Live Marking / Feedback Guidelines

What is Live Marking?

Live Marking is an approach to providing real-time feedback to children during lessons, allowing them to immediately correct and learn from their mistakes. At The Free School Norwich we believe that this method of feedback is more effective than written marking as evidenced in multiple studies ('Eliminating Unnecessary Workload Around Marking Report of the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group March 2016 - Department for Education' and EEF Guidance Report 'Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning') .

Here's how Live Marking is used in The Free School Norwich:

1. **Immediate Feedback**: Instead of waiting until after class or the next day to mark children' work, teachers review and provide feedback during the lesson. This allows children to correct errors on the spot and understand the material better while it's still fresh in their minds.
2. **Active Engagement**: As the teacher moves around the classroom, they interact with children, checking their work as they go. This keeps children engaged, as they know the teacher is available to support them and they can ask questions when needed.
3. **Adaptive Support**: Live marking allows teachers to identify who needs more help with a concept. They can offer more focused assistance to those struggling while providing challenges to children who have grasped the material quickly.
4. **Encouraging Self-Correction**: By guiding children to see their mistakes and encouraging them to correct them, live marking helps develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Children learn to be more reflective about their work and become more independent learners.
5. **Efficient Use of Time**: Since the marking is done during the lesson, it reduces the workload of teachers outside of lesson time. It also ensures that learning is reinforced immediately, making it more effective.
6. **Boosting Confidence**: When children receive positive reinforcement and can quickly fix their mistakes, it builds their confidence. They feel supported in their learning journey, knowing they have the chance to improve before moving on to the next task.

How to use Live Marking

1. Prepare for Live Marking

- **Identify Key Learning Objectives**: Determine the main goals of the lesson and the specific areas where children are likely to need immediate feedback.
- **Plan the Lesson**: Structure your lesson to include time for independent work or practice where live marking can occur. Ensure that this time is enough for you to move around the classroom and check on children's progress.

2. Set the Stage with Children

- **Explain the Process**: Ensure children know that you'll be providing feedback during the lesson as they work. Emphasize that this is to help them improve immediately and that it's a normal part of the learning process.
- **Establish Expectations**: Encourage children to keep their work accessible and to be ready to discuss their progress with you when you approach them.

3. Move Around the Classroom

- **Be Active and Observant**: As children begin their work, move around the classroom. Observe how they are approaching the task, becoming aware of any common mistakes or struggles.
- **Check Work in Real-Time**: Look at what children are doing as they do it. This might involve glancing at their books, worksheets, or screens (if using technology).

4. Provide Immediate Feedback

- **Focus on Key Areas**: Address the most important points first, such as common errors, misunderstandings, or areas where a student is excelling. You may review work from the previous task if necessary.
- **Use Clear, Specific Feedback**: Tell children exactly what they did well and where they need to improve in relation to the learning objective of the lesson. For example, "Great use of line and tone in your observational drawing" or "Have you been consistent with perspective in your sketch?"
- **Guide, Don't Give**: Instead of simply correcting mistakes, ask guiding questions or give hints that lead children to find and correct the errors themselves.

5. Encourage Self-Correction

- **Prompt Reflection**: After giving feedback, ask children to review their work and make corrections. For instance, you might say, "Can you think of a different way to solve this?" or "Is there another word you could use here?"
- **Use Visual Cues**: Mark areas that need attention with a simple symbol (like a dot or underline) to prompt children to revisit that part of their work. Equally, you may use ticks to highlight strengths in work.
- **Initials** of the adult providing feedback should be written on the page.

6. Adapt Your Feedback

- **Tailor Your Approach**: Adjust your feedback based on each student's needs. Some may need a lot of guidance, while others might only need a quick check-in.
- **Offer Extra Support**: If a student is struggling, spend a little more time with them to ensure they understand the concept before moving on.

7. Incorporate Peer Marking (Optional)

- **Facilitate Peer Feedback**: For some tasks, allow children to review each other's work under your supervision. Teach them how to give constructive feedback.
- **Model the Process**: Show children how to provide feedback that is both kind and helpful, emphasizing the importance of being supportive.

8. Reflect and Adjust During and After the Lesson

- **Monitor Patterns**: As you live mark, be aware of any recurring issues. If several children are struggling with the same concept, consider addressing it again with the whole class.
- **Follow Up**: After the lesson, review any work that you feel needs to be followed up and initial this underneath.