

Teaching and Learning Policy

Date: October 2017

Summary

This document sets out the aims, principles and strategies for teaching and learning at Marish Academy Trust. We want all learners (students, staff, parents and the wider community), to:

- Feel valued, motivated and encouraged
- Stay safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well being in their adult lives.
- Be independent enquirers, creative thinkers, reflective learners, team workers, self managers and effective participators.
- To have the skills and opportunity to be confident and contributing members of a cohesive local community.
- To have the opportunities to develop their potential and exceed their own expectations.
- Share best practice across the whole Trust learning community to maximise op-

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Introduction

At Marish Academy Trust we believe in the concept of lifelong learning; in effect 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, stimulating and relevant teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives now; enable them to make the most of their opportunities throughout life and set them firmly on a pathway to achieving their potential and the best possible outcomes in future.

Aims

We believe that people learn best in different ways. At both our schools we provide a rich and varied learning environment that aims to allow all children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.

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, to promote positive attitudes towards other people;
- enable children to understand their community, and help them feel valued as part of it;
- support children's growth into reliable, independent and positive citizens.
- embody the idea that 'Every Child Matters' by encouraging and equipping children to stay safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and (ultimately) achieve economic wellbeing.

Effective Learning

Research tells us a lot about how to maximise learning. We know that people learn in many different ways, and respond best to different types of input (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic); 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 (for example, mathematical/logical, visual/spatial, interpersonal, and musical) when planning our teaching. We also recognise that some boys and girls learn best in different ways and thus vary our teaching strategies to meet their needs.

We ensure the best possible environment for learning by developing a positive atmosphere where pupils feel safe and feel they belong, where they enjoy being challenged, and where they enjoy learning, knowing that they will succeed (because they know the challenge will have been set at the

right level). The Trust seeks to ensure children are always active in their learning, primarily through making learning relevant, exciting and challenging as well as highlighting the applicability of learning to their own lives as well as taking opportunities to celebrate and incorporate the diversity we have in our Trust. We use a range of techniques to promote the best learning environment such as playing music to accompany learning, providing 'brain breaks' at various points in the lesson to refocus children's attention, and making sure that the children have access to drinking water.

Concerning the structure of a lesson, learning-theory tells us:

- to ensure lessons are progressive
- that learners know what is expected of them, and what their learning outcome will be;
- to ensure all pupils work towards their specific targets and make progress;
- to ensure that children are aware of the progress they are making;
- to ensure challenge is always present;
- to present the information in a range of styles;
- to allow opportunities for the pupils to build up their own understanding through various activities;
- to review what has been learnt, and so increase recollection;
- to provide feedback, celebrating success and reviewing learning strategies;
- to outline the next step in the learning before moving on.

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

- investigation and problem-solving;
- research and discovery;
- group work;
- paired work;
- independent work;
- whole-class work;
- asking and answering questions;
- use of ICT;
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;

- creative activities;
- watching video resources and responding to musical or tape-recorded material;
- debates, role-plays and oral presentations;
- designing and making things;
- participation in athletic or physical activity;
- inviting visitors to speak on a range of topics.

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.

Effective Teaching

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 follow the 2014 National Curriculum to ensure that we are planning all subjects and lessons to the relevant expectations for pupils, depending on where their starting points may be. Although we base our curriculum on the coverage and objectives expected from the National Curriculum, we expect teachers to be inventive and creative with their planning. They plan lessons to meet the needs of all pupils, and tailor learning to be relevant to our pupil's experiences and backgrounds, as well as being stimulating and providing suitable access to learning.

All 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.

We plan our lessons with clear learning objectives, and outcomes which may relate to the content taught in the lesson but more likely to skills development or a mixture of both. Our lesson plans contain information about the tasks to be set, the resources needed, and the way we assess the children's work. We evaluate lessons, so that we can modify and improve our future teaching.

We share our learning objectives with children in terms of targets. These include learning skills as well as curriculum content. This will be done in a way that suits the learning needs of the individual child as well as they cohort. It may well take the form of a shared target, individual target or a collection of targets. It is also appropriate to have a range of differentiated targets and we encourage children to be active participates in this process but identifying areas in their own learning that they feel they need to progress in, with the support of the teacher and (where appropriate) select their own targets.

Age Related Expectations

Due to the removal of level descriptors to assess pupil's progress and attainment, from September 2015 we use age related expectation bands to plan to children's learning needs and to monitor their progress. These bands are provided for each year group in reading, writing and maths and outline what objectives should be covered and achieved in line with the National Curriculum. Obviously,

children have different starting points and so teachers will adapt lessons, tasks and activities to meet the needs of all children and will provide appropriate challenge. All pupils will work towards covering the objectives in their lessons and achieving them; target cards in books will reflect which step the pupils are on so that they know what they have to learn next in order to make progress. Within year groups, teachers will look to ensure there are opportunities to increase the breadth of knowledge within year group targets as a means of challenging children further.

Foundation Subjects

We place a high value on the skills that children develop through the primary curriculum, and want to ensure that a right concern for curriculum coverage never comes at the price of extending the children's skills as lifelong learners. Thus, in history, children may be learning about the Tudors, but the emphasis of our teaching and assessment will not be on whether the children can name the wives of Henry VIII, but on whether they can participate in historical enquiry, make links between the past and their present, and handle critically a range of source material. Objectives and QFLs will reflect subject specific skills rather than tasks. We also expect literacy and maths to feature in every subject area so that these skills are embedded in the children's learning. In order to achieve this children use their literacy targets across the whole subject range so that they are continually achieving and making progress in that area. Maths investigations are topic related so that children have the opportunity to apply their skills in a range of different contexts.

Curriculum Skills

We ensure that our curriculum meets the coverage expectations of the 2014 curriculum and that literacy and numeracy are embedded throughout every subject, but we also provide opportunities for skills to be taught, learnt and applied by including skills coverage in all foundation subject planning.

We expect teachers to refer to the skills provided on target tracker, which are in line with the new National Curriculum, as a basis for planning. Subject leaders and the Curriculum Team are responsible for ensuring their subject is in line with the National Curriculum and that the relevant skills are being taught and learnt. This will be monitored through lesson observations, work scrutiny and planning scrutinies.

Allowing a clear emphasis on teaching skills as well as content, enables meaningful cross-curricular links to be made. So, for example, children's evaluative skills may be extended in PE through peer-evaluation of gymnastic sequences, in Music through feedback on group compositions, and in History through reflection on the usefulness of various sources of evidence. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's skill progression is laid out in the Areas of Learning and recorded in the EYFS Profile. These areas of learning are then taken up directly in the Curriculum Skills grids in KS1 & 2 to ensure progression from Birth to age 11.

Assessment for Learning

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. Ongoing teacher assessment forms the basis for 'best-fit' assessment of children at the end of each year. Assessment is aided by lessons that are planned around the set objectives that must be covered by

each year group. Running records of how children achieve in each objective inform progress and planning ensuring a clear picture of the child is evident by the end of the academic year.

At the end of a lesson children will be given opportunities to review lesson targets and the work they have produced. At the early stages this may simply be an opportunity to reflect again on their learning. As children become older they may evaluate their learning in many ways and have opportunities to discuss their achievements and future learning needs with friends and teachers. This feedback helps teachers to plan their teaching more effectively to meet the needs of individuals and groups. The range of self-assessment techniques we employ is outlined in the Target-Setting policy.

Inclusion

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 Education Plans (IEPs) or Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) as well as any reports from relevant agents such as Speech and Language or Education Psychologists. Teachers modify teaching and learning as appropriate for children with disabilities.

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 are truly inclusive. In a school with children from such a wealth of different ethnic and language backgrounds, we aim to celebrate diversity and ensure that we have high expectations for bilingual learners and those new to English. We deploy teaching assistants and other adult helpers as effectively as possible. Sometimes they work with individual children, and sometimes with small groups.

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 opportunities to take part in class activities.

Ethos and Rules

Rule 1: Show good manners at all times

Rule 2: Care for everything and everyone

Rule 3: Follow instructions with thought and care

All our teachers follow the R time and Simply Behave behaviour plan. We remind children constantly of the three school rules and expect everyone connected with the school to adhere to them, so that we can create the best learning opportunities for all. We praise and reward children for their efforts and, by so doing, we help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general.

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. We inform parents, and obtain their permission, before the visit takes place.

The Classroom Environment

Our classrooms are attractive learning environments. We change displays regularly, 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 both fiction and non-fiction books, as well as displays relating to literacy and mathematics. We also use displays as learning prompts for the children. 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.

Timetabling

Effective teaching and effective teachers are flexible. We believe in giving teachers the autonomy to organise teaching and learning to fit their own ways of working, strengths, and the needs of the children they teach as well as ensuring that this is supportive of colleagues and children across the Trust.

Teaching every subject every week does not necessarily lead to the most effective teaching and learning. Teachers may choose to block certain subjects and teach them in alternate weeks, half-terms, etc. For example, several year groups find DT work lends itself to an intensive, focused approach and may tackle an entire DT unit of work in a single week, over a number of afternoons. This practice of 'blocking' subjects can have the advantage of making learning more meaningful and less 'bitty' for the children, can reduce the need for recapping of the previous week's learning, and can make juggling a crowded and demanding curriculum more manageable for teachers.

Moreover as our curriculum evolves, the overlap in skills increases and divisions between subjects blur, as the children's own enquires start to lead the learning experiences.

We use staff meeting time periodically to share ideas for timetabling learning and seek to learn from each other and try new things out. Some year group pairs swap classes for certain subjects to allow teachers to play to their curriculum strengths and inspire the children with their love for those subjects.

Roles and Responsibilities

Trust wide Senior Leadership Team

TWSLT is responsible for taking the 'big picture' view of teaching and learning and curriculum development across the Trust. In particular, they will:

- coordinate curriculum planning and development across the school to ensure continuity, coverage, consistency and progression;
- oversee the development of an increasingly creative, skills-based curriculum, which is broad, rigorous and creative, yet manageable to deliver;
- foster the development of cross-curricular links;
- ensure half- termly curriculum planning happens smoothly in Year Groups Trust wide;
- collaborate closely with Literacy and Numeracy subject leaders in implementing the Big Writing, Guided reading, SPAG, Maths and appropriate schemes of learning developed from Revised National Curriculum 2014 and ensuring skills progression across the school;

- support subject leaders as required in developing teaching and learning in their subject, offering a sounding board, support, collaborative partnership, etc., as appropriate;
- keep teaching staff regularly informed about curriculum development and work alongside them in overseeing planning in their phases;
- report regularly to ALT and, where appropriate governors, about progress in curriculum development.

TWSLT are also responsible for encouraging, monitoring and developing high standards of teaching and learning in their phases. They do this by:

- implementing school performance management procedures, including the observation of teaching;
- holding regular phase meetings to share ideas and encourage collaborative working;
- championing the phase expectations in the year groups they are responsible for;

Curriculum Subject Leaders

Individual subject leaders are responsible for monitoring and reviewing teaching and learning in their subject across the school. They do this by:

- reviewing the curriculum targets and skills grids regularly to ensure they continue to reflect best practice;
- Ensuring that literacy and numeracy are securely embedded in their subject area
- using staff meeting time to champion and develop teaching and learning in their subject;
- review resourcing for their subject and keep abreast with new resources, including ICT software.
- Coordinating and leading book looks, as well as feeding back to teams
- Ensuring planning is available, rigorous and meeting skills objectives appropriate to the year group.

Class Teachers

Class teachers are the workers at the chalk-face; they are where the actual teaching and learning takes place day by day. They have the crucial role of:

- teaching in accordance with the Teaching & Learning Policy;
- planning based on the New Curriculum Targets and Skills Grid for their phase to ensure skills development as well as curriculum coverage, differentiating to meet the needs of their year group;
- making their children familiar with the Phase Expectations posters and applying those principles to the learning which takes place in their classrooms;

- ensuring their classroom is a positive and stimulating environment for learning;
- effectively deploying other adults, including TAs to maximise teaching and learning for all children.
- overseeing the implementation of the interventions agreed in the Inclusion/provision map for each year group.

Governing body

Our governors' role is to challenge, 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 and the termly associate and executive headteachers' reports to governors.

Parents

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 parent afternoons to meet teachers at the beginning of the year and hear about the curriculum;
- holding special curriculum events such as the KS1 SATS evening to explain in more detail about teaching and learning;
- regular parent consultations with teachers to discuss progress
- by sending parents reports in which we explain the progress made by each child, and indicate how the child can improve further;
- explaining to parents how they can support their children with homework, and suggesting, for example, regular shared reading with very young children, and support for older children with their projects and investigative work.
- having parent afternoons when parents can discuss their child's work with them before the parents consultation with the teacher.

- sending home termly curriculum letters, outlining the learning to take place in that year group, and suggesting ways in which this could be supported and build on at home.

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

Monitoring and review

We are aware of the need to monitor the Academy Trust'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. Responsibility for this review currently rests with the Executive Headteacher.

Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Comments
1.0	19/08/2011	HT	
2.0	September 2013	HT	
3.0	September 2015	HT	
4.0	September 2017	HT	

Approval History

Version	Approved	Comments
1.0	Autumn 2011	By Governing Body
2.0	Autumn 2013	Reviewed by all staff then ratified by Strategic Board of Governing Body
3.0	Autumn 2015	Reviewed by all staff
4.0	Autumn 2017	Reviewed by all staff