

# GPS TEACHING & LEARNING POLICY



## **1. Policy Development**

Why have we produced a Teaching and Learning policy? What process did we use? In what ways did we involve: Teachers, TAs, Governors, children, parents?

- We have produced this updated Policy because we wanted to sum-up what we view as effective Teaching and Learning at GPS. The collaborative process involved in producing the Policy has, in itself, acted as valuable Professional Development.
- In updating this Policy, we used 2 'twilight' professional development sessions, and part of a staff meeting. Staff worked together to share ideas and discuss key aspects of Teaching and Learning. A 'working party' of staff took the lead, collating information and finalising the document.
- Following the initial 3 discussion sessions, a 1<sup>st</sup> draft was produced. This was further edited and refined in a Staff Meeting, again through a process of discussion.
- Children will be consulted, as in point 5 below.
- Parents have an opportunity through our annual Survey to comment on Teaching & Learning.
- The process of further developing this Policy was slowed by the onset of C-19 in March 2019, and the subsequent school closure. We will be resuming work on our approach to Teaching & Learning, during 2020-21.

## **2. Aims of this Policy**

The key aims of this policy are:

- To provide an appropriate level of consistency of teaching and learning across the school, whilst also recognising that there will be planned differences in line with pupil age and the professional decisions made by teachers
- To clearly set out key aspects of our approach, in the main areas of Teaching & Learning
- To enable teachers to teach as effectively as possible
- To enable children to learn as efficiently as possible
- To provide a working environment that is stimulating and effective
- To provide an inclusive education for all children
- To give children the skills and knowledge they will require to successfully move through primary school, building a firm foundation for secondary school and indeed for life beyond school.

## **3. Effective Teaching**

In what ways do staff at this school ensure that teaching is successful? What are the characteristics of teaching at GPS?

### **Effective Teaching at our school...**

- Builds a classroom and school culture where learning is valued, and where children want to learn & do their best

- Places current learning within the context of prior & existing knowledge & learning
- Is based on well-organised planning which takes into account the needs of all children (age, ability, physical etc)
- Always includes high expectations of behaviour & attainment
- Meets pastoral as well as academic needs
- Takes place in a safe environment
- Is characterised by clear and concise instructions & explanations, skilled questioning, effective modelling and scaffolding, and immediate interventions where appropriate
- Is purposeful and meaningful
- Is often practical and hands on
- Is flexible and adaptable
- Is built on excellent relationships (staff/child – staff/staff). In effective lessons the rapport between teacher and children is always evident.
- Builds confidence in children
- Is characterised by excellent teacher subject knowledge
- Is delivered by teachers who are enthusiastic, reflective, and confident , using varied teaching strategies, and who feel able to try out new approaches
- Builds upon consistent and understood classroom routines
- Is characterised by a supportive classroom and school environment
- Allows children to make mistakes, and – through effective feedback – sees these as learning opportunities
- Makes excellent use of carefully planned activities, including visits/visitors where appropriate – this extends learning and ‘makes it real’
- Includes teachers using a range of grouping options in their classes. They may use ability groups, paired work, response partners, individual 1:1 tuition or whole class.
- Helps children develop skills as independent learners
- Includes good use of praise
- Builds a culture where learning is valued, and where children ‘want to learn’
- Has appropriate pace – whether slow/medium/fast – the rate depends on the context, and is carefully calibrated by the teacher
- Builds on prior knowledge
- Is delivered by effective teachers who have access to up to date and relevant CPD
- Makes excellent use carefully planned and varied lessons and activities, which take into account the needs of all children.

#### **4. Children Learn best when...**

We believe that children learn best when they...

- Feel happy and valued
- Are confident, feel safe and secure and are aware of boundaries and expectations
- Have positive relationships within the classroom
- Are interested and motivated, because their learning is purposeful
- Achieve success and gain recognition and approval
- Are given tasks that match their ability
- Clearly understand the task (explanation & modelling by teacher, etc.)
- Are appropriately challenged and stimulated
- Feel confident enough to answer questions, have a go, ask questions and ask the teacher or TA for support when needed

#### **5. I Learn best when ... (children’s contribution)**

*This section will be ready by added at a later point.*

## **6. The GPS Curriculum**

- During 2019-20 we worked on a full review of our Curriculum – this was in part to ensure that we were in line with the renewed Ofsted focus on Curriculum. As part of that review, we:
  - Used 3 training days – staff worked together in Key Stage groups
  - Provided non-contact time for all subject leaders, on a weekly rota
  - Discussed and clarified the ‘Intent – Implementation – Impact’ of our Curriculum
  - Looked closely at the content – knowledge & skills – and at how this was sequenced
  - Produced a document to set out of Long Term Planning – The GPS Quest Curriculum
  - Refined our approach to Medium Term Planning, to ensure greater focus on subject related knowledge & skills.
- We use the 2012 Development Matters Framework (EYFS), 2014 National Curriculum (KS1, KS2) to guide our teaching and to provide a broad, balanced curriculum. There is a whole school plan which is translated into medium term (half termly) plans and then short term weekly lesson plans.
- Each lesson has a clear purpose, understood by the children.
- Some subjects are linked to half termly topics or ‘contexts for learning’, and some are taught discretely
- We provide a wide range of enhanced opportunities to broaden children’s experience and support their personal development.
- We organise a number of carefully planned themed days and themed weeks, to bring together the whole school in a shared learning experience e.g. Science Week, Chinese New Year, Health Week, Anti-Bullying Week, French Day, #Hello Yellow, and...
- Teachers use visits and visitors to ‘bring learning to life’
- Several years ago we developed our own, tailored “50 things to do before you leave Grangetown’ – these experiences are embedded within our curriculum, so that they support learning in meaningful ways.

How do we ensure that our Curriculum successfully supports effective pupil learning? How would we sum up the key strengths of our curriculum?

### **The Curriculum that we have developed at GPS...**

- Is built upon a clear understanding of how young children develop, and an understanding of how they learn
- Is built around children’s interests, learning needs and starting points (EYFS)
- Develops independence, confidence, problem solving,, imagination and creativity
- Is adapted according to ongoing and frequent assessment
- Provides a range of adult/child led activities, with play at the heart of learning (EYFS)
- Is topic based, to create a broad and engaging curriculum
- Is purposeful and meaningful, and provides real life, memorable, first-hand experiences
- Enables the children to make links between subjects
- Incorporates technology, where it aids or extends learning
- Includes hooks which excite and motivate the children
- Is broad and balanced
- Makes use of themed weeks and days
- Includes visits/visitors and a range of new experiences, all embedded within the curriculum
- Makes appropriate links between subject areas, but includes standalone subjects where needed

## **7. Assessment**

- Secure knowledge of each pupil’s current attainment, and ongoing progress, is a core element of teaching and learning.
- Lesson planning is based on prior learning and active assessment is required to ensure that progress is made in all lessons.

- There are **three formal summative assessment points annually, including** Reading, Writing, Grammar Punctuation Spelling (GPS) and Maths
- In EYFS we assess the children summatively at 4 key points across the year
- Mini assessment (e.g. end of Unit) are used by teachers across the year, in line with their professional judgements
- Following each round of Summative Assessment, the information gathered is analysed, and then discussed in Pupil Progress Meetings so that overall next steps, interventions, targets, and support can be looked at closely (SLT & class teachers)

In what key ways do GPS teachers assess the children? How is assessment information used?  
**Assessment at GPS...**

- Informs planning
- Includes an approach to marking which values oral feedback, immediate feedback where possible, group and/or whole class feedback, and which enables the sharing, praising and discussion of pupil work (e.g. visualiser), whilst also including appropriate and manageable feedback
- Is strengthened by teachers' effective use of feedback sheets, so that the outcomes of lessons are evaluated
- Includes skilled questioning to develop thinking, prompt learning and assess understanding
- Draws upon observations of children – working alongside, standing back to observe, keeping records (e.g. Tapestry)
- Uses mini tasks where appropriate e.g. whiteboard work – this gives immediate feedback to help the teacher assess understanding
- Evaluates outcomes
- Gives children opportunities to practice and demonstrate skills and knowledge – for example through tasks, tests
- Includes the tracking of children via in house summative assessment
- Uses 1:1 assessments when needed
- May lead to Immediate interventions
- Includes effective summative assessment – Sunderland solutions, end of term assessments
- May include an 'end of unit check', where this is needed – to check whether have children retained information and knowledge, and whether they know how to use and apply that knowledge,
- Includes Termly Data reports, used to plan next steps, presented to and discussed with Governors
- Forms the focus of Pupil Progress Meetings, which enable teachers to identify what children need, where the vulnerable groups or 'more able' are, what the next steps are for SEND children, EAL, Ever 6, G&T.
- Includes Self-Assessment – what children think of their work, changes they can make

## **8. Meeting Learning Needs**

How do we meet the learning needs of all children?

**In EYFS at GPS, to ensure that we meet the learning needs of all children, we...**

- Use strategies such as small groups and 1:1 where appropriate
- Get basics right first before anything
- Differentiate through groupings, TA support and questioning
- Observe and assess to identify target groups
- Share with parents/educate them to support at home – ISPs, parent workshops and discussions, parent consultations
- Ensure that there is early intervention in 2yo provision

### **In KS1 & KS2 at GPS, to ensure that we meet the learning needs of all children, we...**

- Differentiation via activity, questions, instructions, resources
- Individualised work where needed
- Ensure that TAs are well deployed (in class support, interventions, etc.) and that there is excellent communication between teachers and TAs
- Use Immediate interventions where appropriate, based on immediate feedback from the lesson
- Group children appropriately, to suit particular subjects and learning contexts – grouping is fluid and is often based on ongoing assessment
- Work with a range of outside agencies e.g. EP, AOT, CYPS, CAMHS, to support more complex needs
- Always have high expectations, of the children and of the adults who work with them
- Build good relationships with parents, through regular communication
- Use skilled questioning, to scaffold or extend children's learning
- By providing swift oral feedback, to groups / individuals
- Plan carefully - individual targets/group targets/ISPs
- Use Interventions effectively e.g. – Pre or post intervention based on feedback sheet/groups/basic skills/1:1/Teacher/TA/SEND group/challenge children

### **Children in receipt of Free School Meals – Pupil Premium/EY Pupil Premium**

- The Pupil Premium is a payment made to schools by the Government to support the teaching and learning of children in receipt of Free School Meals.
- It makes up part of the school's funding, and is received into our budget annually. At Grangetown, we ensure that the Pupil Premium is used to raise the attainment of pupils in receipt of FSM, through additional support with their learning as well as pastoral support and curriculum enrichment.

## **9. Creating an environment for effective learning**

### **To ensure an effective environment for learning, we:**

- Build supportive relationships with children & parents, where everyone feels happy & safe
- Ensure that routines and expectations are understood and firmly in place, including our Golden Rules
- Create calm classrooms and a calm school environment
- Ensure that our school, classrooms and learning areas are welcoming, as well as well organised, stimulating, tidy and attractive
- Ensure that resources are labelled, and that children can access appropriate equipment themselves
- Ensure that classrooms are organised in ways that enable children to
  - work individually, in groups, and as a class,
  - make decisions, solve problems, and engage in discussion
  - be creative
  - develop social skills
  - develop independence
  - use initiative
  - receive support
  - achieve academically
  - ***work without being distracted by others***
- Set up our rooms in ways that include the appropriate level of pupil independence
- Use continuous provision where appropriate
- Use display wisely – to support learning e.g. numbers, letters, pictures, traffic lights, photos, examples of work, and as a means of celebrating pupil work
- We ensure that displays are changed regularly, so that key displays are current – and this means they can be referred to in ongoing lessons as a means of supporting learning

- Create a positive ethos, and one where children respect others and respect equipment
- Ensure that every classroom has an inviting and engaging Reading area, a role play area for younger children, a maths area with appropriate resources, and...
- Ensure that staff act as role models. Staff have high expectations, model respect, and are proactive in maintaining a positive ethos and environment – we expect children to behave in the same manner.

## 10. **Behaviour**

We ensure that pupil behaviour at GPS is always appropriate, by

- Maintaining clear and high expectations
- Establishing and then maintaining appropriate routines
- Giving the children jobs/responsibilities
- Being consistent and firm/fair
- Creating safe and happy classrooms
- Discussing the Golden Rules with the children, & ensuring that they are displayed in classrooms and around school
- Maintaining effective links with parents & carers – letters, phone calls, discussions, and a brief word at the classroom door
- Working closely with IMPACT, FoL, and other agencies as appropriate
- Ensuring that our culture of Choices, praise & consequences is consistent across school , Encouraging children taking ownership of their behaviour , and helping them to understand what this means and how to do it
- Using Reward systems in appropriate ways (though these are not the ‘be all and end all’) – Dojo, Prizes, Certificates, Stickers
- Insisting on excellent behaviour when out on visits, as well as in school
- Ensuring our LSAs are well-trained, & that they have access to regular professional development (half termly meetings with DHT)
- Ensuring that behaviour expectations are upheld at all times, on the playground
- Having teams of playground buddies, sports leaders, Y6 monitors, and the School council, all of whom act as good role models
- Ensuring that we teach good behaviour and appropriate attitudes – as the need arises and via our PSHE curriculum.

## 11. **Sharing good practice**

How do we ensure that good practice is shared, so that staff learn from each other?

- There is mutual respect amongst all staff, and a sense of shared purpose.
- Informal, ad-hoc, regular communication as and when needed
- Key Stage Meetings
- Planning Meetings
- Staff Meetings
- Coaching in pairs
- Observing colleagues teaching
- Learning Walks
- Book and Planning scrutinies, with supportive and constructive feedback
- Effective mentoring of NQTs.

## 12. Monitoring

How do we monitor and evaluate Teaching & Learning

- The school leadership team has a structured programme of monitoring learning and teaching through regular lesson observations, learning walks, pupil progress meetings, KS meetings, pupil interviews, and book and planning scrutiny.
- In addition, all teachers have subject leadership responsibilities. They have non-contact time, on an ongoing rolling programme ('In-Focus initiative for Foundation subjects), to enable them to monitor and evaluate the standards in their subject and create plans to develop teaching and learning in their subject.

## 12. The importance of an effective Partnership between School and Home

**We believe in strong and effective School-Home links because:**

- This has a positive impact on pupil learning and on pupil behaviour and attitudes
- Such links demonstrate that we are at the heart of our community, and that we see learning as part of a partnership between school and home
- A culture of 'working together' impacts positively upon the whole culture of the school
- If the children see their parents working closely with the school, and valuing what school does, this will have a significant influence upon the children's attitudes and behaviours in terms of being cooperative and wanting to work with their teachers and with their peers

**We build positive links with home, in the following ways:**

- Ensuring that the school provides a friendly welcome to all parents and visitors, and that parents feel we are approachable
- Establishing and maintaining effective communication: at the classroom door, via the office, and through Newsletters, letters, website, and social media, etc
- Provision of a half termly parent pamphlet, providing a rundown of the curriculum for that period
- A half termly attendance letter, emphasising the importance of good attendance and providing up to date attendance figures, plus weekly and termly Awards
- Providing information and guidance for parents in terms of how they can support their child's learning, through workshops, meetings and written information
- Special initiatives which are designed to directly engage parents in their child's learning – e.g. Stop, Drop, Read, the before school Phonics group, Early Bird scheme
- Using digital technology to share learning – for example Tapestry, Dojo, Twitter, etc
- Using Home-School diaries, to ensure that parents support their children's Reading
- Termly Consultations, which are always very well attended
- Termly Family Learning opportunities
- Termly Parent Learning Workshops, again which are very well attended
- A thriving Friends of Grangetown group
- Many opportunities for parents to visit the school to share in special events – performances, concerts, Sports Days, etc
- Two Annual 'Fayres' – Christmas and Summer
- A new Homework Policy ('Learning at Home') specifically designed to increase parental engagement, with reminder letters to encourage reading at home.
- A 'Home School Agreement', signed by parents/carers
- We use Parent Surveys as and when needed, and feedback the outcomes to all parents – this shows that we value their views.