Thirsk

Community Primary School

Teaching and Learning Policy

Agreed by Governing body 14th November 2016

to be reviewed September 2018

<u>Teaching and Learning Policy</u>

At Thirsk Community Primary School we believe that innovation and inspiration are central to classroom practice. When pupils are engaged and inspired by exciting learning opportunities, the learning is deep and intrinsic motivation is high. This policy is based on the schools teaching and learning 'toolkit' which has been developed by senior leaders in school and forms the basis of how we teach. A copy of this is available at the end of this policy.

Our principled approach:

• Children feel safe, happy and valued due to the excellent pastoral care and nurturing approach

• Learning is exciting, engaging and inspiring for all

• Learning behaviours are developed and pupils have a growth mindset; they are critically evaluate of their learning and motivated to improve. Children are not afraid to fail in their quest to succeed

• The approach is explorative and child led; building on excellent Early Years practice

• High expectations and a culture of deep learning mean that progress is rapid and attainment is high

 • 'Keep Up not Catch Up' culture ensures that pupils access pre-teaching and interventions as soon as they begin to fall behind and in most cases before they are able to fall behind

• Teachers who will do 'whatever it takes' for their children; both academically and from a nurture and care perspective; we are driven by the conviction that no child is left behind

Our pedagogical approach is based on the work of Blooms and the SOLO taxonomy. Both approaches complement the development of the application of skills and learning to wider and varied contexts.

Our school is a safe environment that provides opportunities through the curriculum to allow children to flourish. We have developed a culture where opportunities in school and extended school enable pupils to experience success and build self-belief. This, in turn, develops the children's innate curiosity for learning and enables them to be resilient citizens of modern Britain.

Making effective assessment prior to learning taking place

Before learning takes place effective assessment of the pupil's prior knowledge happens. This is based on the outcomes from previous lessons, any pre-assessments that have been carried out as well as the schools data tracking systems.

- ✓ Teachers planning for lessons is regularly annotated to identify where there are strengths and where further improvements from previous lessons need to take place.

Planning for learning identifies how the pupil's understanding is going to be moved on. Although the length and depth of planning is for the individual teacher to decide, there needs to be clarity around how all pupils learning is going to be moved forward. This includes:

- ✓ Clear learning objectives
- ✓ Appropriate challenge and differentiation for pupils against age related expectations
- ✓ All adults working in the classroom understand clearly what there role in learning is and how they are going to help to move learning on.
- ✓ A clear understanding of what success in this lesson is.

Good teaching is based on strong subject knowledge. When planning sequences of learning teachers will take in to consideration what the potential misconceptions are likely to be. Teachers will also identify what technical language pupils are likely to need to know and specifically teach this prior to learning taking place.

Pupil know how to improve

Pupils are set individual targets for writing and for mathematics. Targets for writing are recorded in pupils Literacy books and are regularly updated. Targets for maths are shared verbally with pupils and often relate specifically to the maths topic that is being taught.

Clear and challenging learning objectives

Each session has a clear learning objective. Pupils understand what the learning objective for each session and how it fits in to the learning sequence. Learning objectives are challenging and link closely to end of year expectations. They are often posed as a question for the pupils to answer 'I can…'

Learning objectives and be either be:

- ✓ **Closed and specific for example** 'I can tell the time to the nearest half-hour?'

Or

- ✓ **Open learning objectives for example** 'I can write a persuasive argument?'

Whether is it an open learning objective or a closed learning objective depends on the subject being taught (Maths/ Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar typically are closed objectives) and where pupils are in their learning journey). Success in every lesson is identified in the Success Criteria.

Success criteria

Success criteria are typically generated by children. Through a clear understanding of the learning objective and modelling by adults, the children are able to identify how to make their work successful. The success criteria is referred to throughout lessons by children on their own and their peers work and by adults in the classroom. Clear, differentiated success criteria allow children to critically evaluate their work and the work of others.

- ✓ Success Criteria **closely** match the learning objective
- ✓ Where the learning objective is open: the success criteria will identify the specific skill needed
- ✓ Where the learning objective is open then there maybe a differentiated success criteria for different groups of learners
- ✓ All children will know how to use the success criteria to evaluate their learning.

Assessment for learning is used throughout all lessons

Accurate assessment for learning underpins effective teaching. To ensure effective assessment for learning is accurate teachers and adults working with children may:

- ✓ Make use of a learning line where pupil evaluate there understanding of the Learning objective and then position themselves on the learning line. Pupils are then asked to explain why they have positioned themselves where they have on the learning line.
- ✓ Pupils have the opportunity to talk or demonstrate what they already know about the learning.
- ✓ Throughout the session teachers and adults working with pupils systematically check on pupils understanding. This maybe in the form of a mini-plenary or through careful and targeted use of questioning.

Based on what the pupils already understand teaching is constantly adapted and changed to continually meet and challenge pupils understanding.

Modelling

At Thirsk Community Primary School, teachers and support staff use modelling across the curriculum to move learning forward. It is crucial for teachers to close the gap between what pupils can currently do and what we want them to be able to do. Teachers are confident about the learning objective; they are secure about the success criteria needed to achieve it and model the thinking and strategies needed to develop expertise. Modelling and scaffolding are crucial for effective progress and can be seen in writing and maths, as well across the entire curriculum.

Key features of high quality modelling:

- ✓ Modelling is supported by questioning and paired opportunities
- ✓ Links are made between the modelling and the working walls e.g. links to phonics whilst writing
- ✓ Modelling is clear and easy for pupils to refer back to and modelled handwriting matches the school writing policy.
- ✓ Models are referred back to during learning journeys

Questioning

For pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the learning, a range of different question types are used. These include 'closed' questions and most importantly higher order or 'open' questioning.

Bloom's Taxonomy and SOLO taxonomy is used throughout the school as an aid for adults and pupils to ask effective questions. During the cause of a lesson the type and style of questioning should develop as pupils understanding becomes deeper. Within each lesson there should be good opportunities for pupils to exposed to higher order questions.

To support learning the following questioning strategies are used:

- ✓ Pose, Pause, Pounce and Bounce questioning (PPPB questioning). This is a strategy where a question is posed and then pupils are given thinking time to formulate their answers. Rather than the answer being confirmed be the teacher is 'bounced' to another pupil to be developed further.
- ✓ No hands questioning
- ✓ Plentiful opportunities for pupils to take part in paired talk -if a question is worth asking then it is worth everyone having the opportunity to answer it.
- ✓ All pupils having access to a whiteboard and pen to model answers

Talk partners and paired talk

Talk partners are used across the school to ensure pupils are actively engaged in their learning. Adults model how to be an effective talk partner and pupils are responsible for ensuring that they use talk partner time efficiently. Teachers expect feedback that demonstrates consideration of each other's viewpoints as well as the impact of talking time on learning. Higher order questioning provides depth to the subject matter and develops thinking and reasoning skills.

Habits of mind and Growth Mind-sets to support learning.

To support pupils understanding that learning is an active process pupils are taught about different habits of mind that are needed to succeed. As part of a lesson reference is made to the principal characteristic that are needed to be successful.

The habits of mind are:

- ✓ Curious Cat
- ✓ Teamwork Toucan
- ✓ Have-a –go Hippo
- ✓ Proud Peacock
- ✓ Resilient Rhino
- ✓ Persistent Penguin

Growth Mind-sets – We believe that it is crucial for children to embrace challenges in learning. We talk to them about the importance of a growth mind-set and a positive attitude to learning. When you believe that you can achieve, anything is possible! Our child-led approach to differentiation further supports the idea that all children are able to achieve the highest level of challenge. To further support this pupils are taught about growth mind-sets and that part of learning is leaving the comfort zone and entering the 'learning pit . Reference to growth mind-sets and the learning pit form part of the on-going dialogue during lessons.

Different approaches to teaching

Whilst teachers can adapt the organisation, pace and pitch of the lessons depending on pupils learning needs. The following are different approaches to ensure that pupils make progress from their starting points.

The following is a general overview to the structure of a lesson at Thirsk Community Primary school:

- Fix-it time –gap task from previous lessons/ A bell task to find out what the pupils already know/Sprint start
- Links to previous learning
- Sharing of the Learning objective
- The use of a learning line to gauge pupils understanding
- Modelling of the learning objective and development of success criteria
- Independent working time
- Plenary session

Specific approaches:

The Condenser

- ✓ This approach is most effective with a closed learning objective. As pupils achieve the learning objective and meet the success criteria pupils work independently. The teaching group is 'condensed' to ensure that all pupils achieve. Strong assessment for learning is used to underpin this strategy. In addition there needs to be a high degree of further challenge for pupils that achieve the learning objective securely.

The staggered start

- ✓ This approach work more effectively with an open success criterial and the use of differentiated success criteria. This approach is also based on strong assessment for learning. Different groups of learners go directly in to their independent activities with the teacher focussing on a specific pupil group. During the cause of the lesson the teacher changes focus groups.

Working independently –Thirsk Top Tips

During the majority of lessons pupils should have the opportunity to work independently to have the opportunity to explore their own understanding of the skills that they have been taught. We encourage children to believe that they can help themselves when they are stuck, but also know when and who to ask for help. When pupils are stuck they are (depending in the age of pupils) expected to make good use of 'Thirsk Top Tips'. These are Brain, Buddy before finally asking the adult leading the session. As part of this pupils are expected to use the working walls and ask learning partner.

During independent time teachers will:

- ✓ Refer back to the learning objective and success criteria and give pupils the opportunities to talk about the progress they have made.
- ✓ Use assessment for learning to work with specific groups of pupils as a 'surgery time' or individual pupils
- ✓ Where there are common misconceptions lead mini-plenaries to unpick misconceptions and reteach where appropriate.
- ✓ Depending on the lesson there will be effective differentiation used
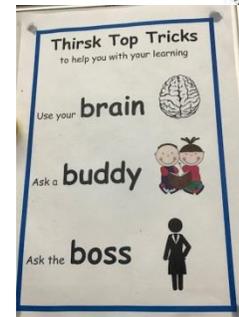
Child led challenge and differentiation

Clear differentiation is shown within all areas of the curriculum; meeting the needs of individual children as well providing opportunities to stretch the children's learning through critical thinking and real life problems. Within Maths, children have developed the skills to choose their own challenge based on their understanding and confidence within that area of learning. This means that there is challenge in every session for every child. Children are responsible for ensuring that their learning is stretched and keen to complete the most challenging work.

Plenary or reflection time

At Thirsk Community primary school we believe that reflection is an important part of learning. This is the opportunity within the lesson to explore learning at a greater depth, to unpick misconceptions and identify future actions. The basis of this is referring back to the learning objective and success criteria for the lesson and further exploring the pupils understanding. These are some of the strategies that are used:

- ✓ Self and peer assessment (this will also be used during the lesson)
- ✓ Updating the learning line with questioning that 'pulls out' the new learning
- ✓ Exposure to Age Related Questions
- ✓ Application of knowledge to 'real life' or unfamiliar situations
- ✓ Pre-assessment for next lessons.

Additional strategies that are used to support learning:

Corrective teaching

We firmly believe that if a child struggles to achieve a learning intention, there should be rapid support so that they are able to continue on the learning journey the following day. This system will ensure no child falls behind and every child will 'keep up not catch up'.

Pre-teaching

Alongside this approach, we provide a pre-teaching programme. This benefits pupils who we know are likely to find a concept difficult to grasp. In pre-teaching an adult will work with a small group to remind them of the basic skills they need to understand the concept and start to introduce language around it

before the lesson is taught to the class. This means that when these pupils are taught the new concept as part of their class, they approach it with confidence and are able to access the learning intention with their peers. Pre-teaching can also be done as a whole class. During these sessions pupils are exposed to the technical language and concepts that they may meet.

Spacing and interweaving

This relates to research carried out around the ability to remember and the role of revisiting learning and the impact that it makes. Pupils have the opportunities to revisit learning these include:

- ✓ A weekly review session. Learning is revisited at the end of the week this is based on the teachers ongoing assessment to target.
- ✓ A monthly interweaving lesson is identified where pupils revisit previous learning
- ✓ Interweaving homework

Deliberate practice

This is regular opportunity to practice specific skills and knowledge on a regular basis. Pupils should be practicing skills that are in the learning zone.
Practice should be time focussed, regular and pupils should have feedback on their progress.
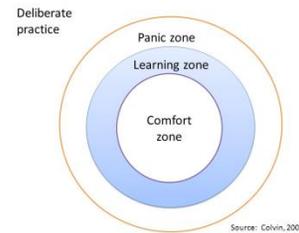
Workwatch

Workwatch is a cutting-edge practice recently introduced at Thirsk Community Primary School, whereby a group of pupils are identified by Senior Leaders as requiring additional attention. Their work is then scrutinised daily for a period of time with the class teacher e.g. for a week, or a half term, and then the outcomes of the conversations are fed back to the child. Monitoring is then undertaken to identify continual improvements to learning. This approach is based on the pioneering work carried out by Corngreave Academy in Sandwell –West Midlands.

Learning environments

Our classrooms are welcoming and stimulating. There is a consistent approach to classroom environments across school as well as an embedded ethos of nurture and care for individual children.

 In our classrooms we have:

- ✓ Maths and English working walls: Our working walls are colour coded to ensure consistency across school. They show our learning journeys, provide relevant prompts and resources and are interactive to consolidate and further learning. Children contribute to working walls and are encouraged to use them to improve their work.
- ✓ Phonics and language walls –these can be key language and words that pupils need to know

- ✓ Celebration of children's work We are committed to displaying high quality children's work around the school. This encourages a feeling of pride and high expectations for learning.
- ✓ Emotional check-in: Each classroom contains a self-registration system. Children are encouraged to share how they feel as they register. This allows teachers to 'check in' with children who may feel unhappy or worried and provide the necessary support.
- ✓ Worry boxes
- ✓ Our golden rules
- ✓ Growth mind-set prompts We display growth mindset prompts, pictures and quotes around our classrooms to encourage children to challenge themselves