



Ore Village Primary Academy

Teaching and Learning Policy

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‘Opportunities, Resilience, Expanding Minds’

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

At Ore Village Primary Academy everyone is committed to high expectations and aspirations – we want all learners to reach their full potential. Everything we do is underpinned by creativity and imagination. Everyone is optimistic and proud of their achievements. There is a strong sense of place and community.

At Ore Village Primary Academy everyone feels safe, included and valued. Relationships are based on honesty, trust and respect. Everyone believes in themselves.

At Ore Village Primary Academy there is a passion for learning – every opportunity is seized. Everybody succeeds, everybody matters.

The following describes how we work together as a school in pursuit of these aims. These are our common principles of teaching and learning.

Opportunities

Our children deserve to experience excellence

We recognise and value high achievement whilst creating opportunities for all children to compete beyond the school. We positively encourage teachers to seek out subject specialists to enhance topic work to enable children to work alongside experts. Each teacher has personal strengths too and is encouraged to share these with their class or by leading a club. Examples of how this policy looks in practice are:

- Each term we welcome experts into school to enhance topic work, for example a cricket coach, a professional guitarist, local orchestra or a scientist;
- We belong to the Hastings and Rother Sports Association and take part in numerous competitions;
- We run Forest Schools and each child will complete a Forest School programme of study each year
- We enter, take part and aim to win;
- We create regular opportunities to work with artists through the Jerwood gallery;
- We give children time to complete work and to achieve something of quality.

Inclusion for success

OVPA is an inclusive school. The achievements, attitudes and wellbeing of every person in the school matters. This is made evident in our ethos and values. All staff instinctively attempt to overcome children’s barriers to learning.

We regard pupils equally in relation to their individual needs. As a staff, we constantly consider teaching styles, environment, approaches to learning and expectations of behaviour to ensure that every child is feeling confident happy and secure. There are good supports in place for SEN provision.

Recognising and celebrating success through assemblies, displays and performances is very important at OVPA. We ensure that there is a broad range of opportunities to shine. Examples of how this policy looks in practice are:

- It is expected that work be differentiated to at least 3 broad levels.
- We have good relationships with a range of other professionals and value their support and advice in meeting children’s needs;
- When we do a whole school themed week, we ensure every class’s work is

- displayed;
- Our unique music scheme means that every child can learn an instrument partly funded by the school;
- Our school is filled with high quality work on display that reflects current topic work and showcases deeper thinking and reasoning;
- There are regular mentions in our newsletters and social media of a range of achievements;
- Our 'Funky Friday' assembly is a celebration of the children and their achievements;
- Children's opinions are regularly sought through questionnaires, discussions and suggestion boxes.

We believe that the planning process demands thought, creativity and time

There is a high expectation of the quality and depth of medium term planning and it is not acceptable to simply photocopy and follow pre-written plans, although these may be used as a starting point. Topics that are unique and original are positively encouraged. If teachers are motivated and enthusiastic about the term's work, then the children will be too. Examples of how this policy looks in practice are:

- Topics are planned for the year through the Curriculum Working Group ensuring that different subjects take priority, essentially, one history led, one geography led and one science led;
- There is no expectation that every subject is taught in every week of every term;
- Professional Development Meeting (PDM) time is set aside periodically for sharing ideas and looking for creative links and innovations for the following term;
- Termly plans are prepared each term and are then discussed with the Phase leader;
- It is expected that planning is kept by each teacher and are available to SLT, inspectors and students on request;
- Teachers are expected to actively research and plan ahead for opportunities to use museums and galleries.

We put creativity and risk taking at the heart of teaching and learning

We believe that children who think creatively and independently are more likely to discover things for themselves, to be open to new ideas and to be motivated to work beyond lesson time to pursue topics of interest. Allowing children to think and work creatively develops self-confidence and builds up key learning skills e.g. how to manage their own behaviour, their understanding of the learning process, their preferred learning style, their ability to think systematically, to manage information and to learn from others. We believe these key skills and attitudes are best developed within a motivating cross-curricular thematic approach. Our aim is to create a rich and varied curriculum, meeting national requirements but uniquely developed by us. Teachers are encouraged to think creatively when planning a term's work in all subjects to make connections between subjects, to take risks and to be innovative. Examples of how this policy looks in practice are:

- Each class has an over-arching topic each term and the whole school knows about it;
- There is no requirement to stick within the structures of any particular schemes of work. Working from the National Curriculum or medium term plans produced by subject leaders, teachers are free to create the context for learning that they feel most inspires them and will inspire the children, whilst covering all statutory requirements;
- We have a dedicated Art room called 'The Studio' to support work with arts groups and artists;
- Teacher's personal enthusiasms and passions are positively encouraged
- Teachers use each other's expertise and during their PPA time may work alongside colleagues sharing particular expertise;
- We value children's individual responses and independence of thought;

- We have several special events e.g. Music evenings, Art open days, Maths workshops – which encourage creative thinking and innovation.

We teach to the needs of the children

Teachers working at this school must be strong in the full range of teaching techniques. We believe in matching teaching technique and strategy to learning need and objectives and as such, a week's lessons should include whole class direct teaching and modelling, ability group work, mixed ability work, practical tasks, paired work and individual work. There should be a good balance between teacher/pupil talk and well-structured pupil/pupil talk opportunities. We structure and pace teaching and learning so that children understand what is to be learnt, why and how. Examples of how this policy looks in practice are:

- Ability groups, if used, are flexible so teachers can respond to different rates of progression and appropriate next steps;
- Clear defined space for whole class teaching, and tables arranged to facilitate group and individual teaching;
- We regularly share 'tips' for teaching techniques at PDMs;
- We make good use of 'talk partners';
- There are many real opportunities for co-operative group work;
- Our youngest children learn songs and stories with actions;
- We make good use of visual resources in our teaching.

We assess to move learning forward

We aim to include children in their learning as much as possible. Teachers are constantly assessing, as they ask questions in lessons. We greatly value this style of formative assessment for learning during lessons. We also value summative assessments of learning, where the children are assessed against national standards. Teachers meet with parents individually to discuss progress, twice a year and teachers write a very full report on each child at the end of the year. Examples of how this policy looks in practice are:

- All work is marked and deeper marking is used twice a week in Maths and English;
- Why work is happening and what needs to happen next to improve is always discussed and explained;
- We keep all formal assessment levels on Target Tracker, tracking each class in Maths and English, alongside contextual data on each child;

Resilience

We persist

Rather than simply praising success we praise effort and persistence. We believe the best thing to do is to teach children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning. For children who find work easy we make sure they encounter more difficult tasks. Our children recognise that effort, persistence and good teaching are what help them improve. If children have fixed mindsets they find it hard to cope with failure: we teach our children to see mistakes and failure as positive. This makes for a very energetic and inclusive culture. It also has a really positive effect on our ethos and on how children approach learning and support each other. Examples of how this policy looks in practice are:

- Children know that mistakes are how we learn, and that failure is part of learning.
- We always mark English and maths and ask developmental questions where even the very brightest see a way to grow.
- We don't have set ability groups that are fixed for the year;

We are a professional collegiate community

At OVPA, there is a common purpose and shared responsibility amongst children, parents, staff and governors. All are actively committed to the life, growth and development of this

school. There is intellectual challenge for everyone and a culture of learning and questioning practice. Teachers share a common understanding achieved through discussion, consideration of practice, the sharing of information and whole school planning of important issues. Teachers are thoughtful and self-critical. Teachers' individuality is valued but some autonomy must be sacrificed for coherence, consistency and shared standards in school life. Examples of how this policy looks in practice are:

- We are very open to teachers visiting our school to share our successes;
- We expect teachers to be motivated individuals who are open to new ideas and enquiry;
- Staff readily talk at meetings;
- The performance management cycle is well established for all staff;
- Attendance at courses and further study is positively encouraged and supported;
- We actively seek to build partnerships with local organisations to enrich learning.

Expanding minds

We have high expectations

We have high expectations of staff in terms of commitment and professionalism, classroom organisation, display and personal expectations of the children.

We have high expectations of learners and the effort they should put into learning at school and at home, and what they can achieve. Examples of how this policy looks in practice:

- Staff meetings begin on time and everyone is there;
- Deadlines must be met – they are set for a reason;
- There is a strong culture of volunteering and taking on 'extra' amongst all the staff;
- Classrooms are expected to be well organised, tidy and arranged to enable the children to be independent in using resources;
- Art work is valued and displayed accordingly
- Sympathetic and carefully thought out colours should be selected for mounts and backing paper;
- Classroom display boards show work that reflects the term's theme. These are primarily working walls that are dynamic and develop over time;
- We work as a team to cover all communal display boards once a term;
- Children are expected to be at school on time every day;
- The quality of work expected from the children is high.

Everyone must ask questions

We place great store by asking questions, participating in shared thinking and discussion, in our teaching and in our work as a staff. Teachers' questions need to be well planned and to both prompt ('What was the name of...') and probe ('What if...') the children's thinking. The best extension questions are those aimed just above what the child can already do; Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development". Examples of how this policy looks in practice are:

- We start each topic finding out what the children already know and what they would like to find out;
- We make good use of 'talk partners' and 'hot seating';
- The plenary is seen as a vital part of the lesson, and is used to further extend children's thinking and to test possibilities for next steps;
- Children's questions are always responded to and valued;
- We positively encourage inquisitiveness and intellectual curiosity!

We make learning vivid and real

As teachers, we work hard to plan interesting and engaging work that stimulates imaginations. We maximise first hand and practical experiences using as many resources (objects, artefacts, people, places) as we can find. Depth is more important than breadth and work can be blocked in subjects such as design technology and art to allow for maximum engagement and quality rather than superficial curriculum coverage. Examples of how this policy looks in practice are:

- We aim for a minimum of 3 trips or visitors per class per year;
- We have a fund to subsidise visits and visitors for those in receipt of Pupil Premium;
- Our PTFA is supportive of funding work in school;
- It is expected that artefacts that support topic work will be displayed centrally in the classroom;
- We allow teachers to be flexible and plan work in blocks to maximise the impact of a series of lessons;
- Children are actively encouraged to bring in resources to support class work.