

John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School Teaching and Learning Policy

Introduction

At John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the idea that both adults and children learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone. 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 teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

Aims and objectives

At our school we aim:

- To ensure that children enjoy their learning.
- To provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.
- To give the children the opportunity to take part in a rich, creative, challenging curriculum reflecting high expectations.
- To provide common criteria against which teaching and learning can be celebrated and develop each area to its true potential
- To help spread and share all teaching practice that is of an excellent standard
- To provide an insight into the review and development of current and future teaching and learning practice, which enables staff and children to remain stimulated and focused
- To provide a learning environment rich in resources where children can experience innovation and technology to equip them for the future.

Effective Teaching

When teaching we focus on motivating the children and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. We use the school curriculum plan to guide our teaching.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's level of attainment. Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge and skills of the 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).

We plan our lessons with clear learning objectives. We take these objectives from the current National Curriculum or the Primary Framework. Our lesson plans contain information about the tasks to be set, the resources needed, and the way an assessment of the children's work. We evaluate all lessons so that we can modify and improve our teaching in the future.

We acknowledge that people learn in many different ways and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them.

We aim to:

- Provide carefully structured activity matched sensitively to children's needs

- Give children some responsibility for their work and independence
- Develop well planned, prepared and paced lessons that maintain high levels of interaction with the class
- Provide ample, challenging work stemming from expert knowledge of the curriculum, how to teach it and how children learn
- Maintain high levels of children's involvement in tasks
- Create a positive atmosphere in the classroom through excellent relationships
- Incorporate high levels of praise and encouragement
- Use a variety of approaches; strategies and techniques that are well selected using time productively
- Use homework effectively; particularly to reinforce and extend what is learned in school
- Enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners;
- Foster children's self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people;
- Develop children's self-respect and encourage children to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others;
- Show respect for all 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 this community;

Effective Learning

High Quality Learning is:

- When pupils are captivated and enthused by what they are learning
- An active process
- Linked to prior knowledge
- Supported by the teacher and other pupils taking the form of interaction, collaboration and teacher intervention
- Centred on the learners' responsibility for their own learning
- Reflective and enables the learner to monitor and review their learning
- Where learners make considerably better progress than may be expected
- When children display a strong desire to contribute the effort and concentration required to match the teachers passion for learning

Our main aim is to maximise every learner's potential

The staff at John of Gaunt strive to:

- Create opportunities for children to enjoy themselves and have fun; this is when children learn best, because their emotional state is fundamental to learning.
- Set high expectation of learners at school that clearly define the efforts and behaviours that pupils should put into learning their lessons
- Communicate optimism by using positive language and designing challenging tasks
- Demonstrate a commitment to every learner's success, making him or her feel included, secure and valued
- Create an environment where learners feel able to make mistakes and comfortable to learn from them, without feeling foolish or inadequate

- Create opportunities for learners to develop personal qualities such as considerate behaviour and positive and tolerant attitudes that will enable them to be role models within the wider community.

Elements in Practice

All lessons should contain the following elements listed below in some shape or form. They are strategies formulated with staff as being the most important to empower us to consistently deliver high quality lessons. In doing so we believe that these elements are core to enable us to unlock a child's full potential and hence maximise their progress and level of attainment.

Learning Objectives are identified and shared

We Are Learning To (WALT)

This needs to be a two-step approach in which children are told not only the purpose of the lesson but also what the teacher expects in terms of outcomes from activity. There is a need to communicate why they are doing what they are doing and how it fits into the bigger picture or their wider learning across the curriculum.

Variety of Learning Activity

The main activity is crucial in making a lesson an enjoyable and challenging experience. It should stimulate learning through matching teaching techniques and strategies to the range of learning styles and needs within your class to actively engage all children. Initially this should mean that you use teaching techniques and strategies that will regularly facilitate the use of all the different learning styles, so as to maximise children's strengths, and develop relative weaknesses. Ultimately it should involve pupil data and assessments to help to design different tasks to meet individual pupil learning preferences. It should provide opportunities for children to show and develop their skills and abilities to work independently and collaboratively.

This will be achieved by:

- Being confident, flexible and open minded, willing to try and experiment and embrace change in terms of individual teaching style, and adapt accordingly
- Planning and delivering a range of activities that match the maturity of the learners and the material to be learned, reflect different learning preferences and involve high levels of time on task.
- Using creativity, imagination and the resources offered by new technology, to engage, enthuse, challenge and support learners and reward their effort and achievement.
- Engaging in a dialogue with children that centres on effective learning; what it looks like and how it can be developed
- Children being aware of pace and timing within a lesson
- Activities set in sequential order that promotes progression and complexity of learning
- Assessment having informed the decisions behind which activities are selected and how children are grouped for them
- Children being involved in planning, developing and evaluating their own activity and learning styles
- Activities which are varied in order to access all learning styles and intelligences. The sequence of tasks that children are engaged in, allowing for appropriate variation in the pace of learning, and the level of challenge.

Differentiation to enable all learners to succeed

Differentiation can be seen as an on-going process that is accommodating the needs of individual children in our school. It ensures that teaching allows most learners to make at least expected progress in relation to their capability. It will also stretch the less able and the able, gifted and talented children. Differentiation is best achieved when based upon an informed review of children's learning.

Assessment used formatively to involve children in their learning

The key focus of assessment in teaching and learning must be to enable children to be continually aware of where they are now in their learning, where they can be and need to get to, and most importantly, how to get there.

This will be achieved through:

- Having a policy on marking, assessment and reporting which ensures that feedback is provided to teachers and children about progress in order to support future learning and informs necessary adjustments to teaching
- Sharing learning objectives with children
- Sharing assessment criteria with children very early on in tasks, in a way which is easy for them to understand and is transparent for all
- Recognising the standards to aim for by showing children examples of work previously produced by children
- Providing the basis for varied and effective feedback and development points for children to be active partners in their own learning
- Developing children's questioning skills
- Developing children's self and peer assessment
- Promoting confidence amongst learners and being aware of children's preferred learning styles
- Providing experiences and activities that enable children to be involved in assessing and monitoring their own achievements
- Ensuring assessment yields information that is useful in helping teachers to get to improve teaching; helping teachers to get to know children and to plan work with appropriate pace and challenge
- Ensuring assessment yields information that is useful to helping to improve learning; helping children and families to understand how they learn best, and how well they have learned
- Assessment is of prime importance to staff to inform their future planning and activity with classes. It has an influence on pupil motivation and self-esteem. Therefore it must be constructive and sensitive. Also our ability to share this information with families is effectively the key to children being supported as well as possible at home.

The Role of Families

We believe that families have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform families about what and how their children are learning by:

- Sending information to families at the start of each term in which we outline the topics that the children will be studying during that term at school;

- Sending annual reports to families in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can improve further;
- Explaining to families how they can support their children with homework with guidance leaflets and information on the school website and Virtual Learning Environment
- Offering a range of courses for families e.g. "How our children learn"

We believe that families have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies.

We would like families 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 at school;
- Promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general;
- Fulfil the requirements set out in the home/school agreement

Monitoring and review

This will be achieved and supported by:

- A firm commitment to improving teaching and learning for individuals, the school and the wider community
- The use of continuing professional development (courses, coaching, mentoring, training and so on) within the cycle and framework of performance management
- The formal and informal monitoring systems which are already in place supported by lesson observation, peer observations, teacher planning scrutiny, work sampling, questionnaires to inform the assessment of the following outcomes of effective learning:
 - a) The fun, sense of achievement and sheer enjoyment that learning brings
 - b) More connected knowledge
 - c) Greater knowledge and understanding
 - d) Wider range of skills and strategies
 - e) Increased engagement and motivation
 - f) Positive attitude to learning
 - g) Development of co-operative and collaborative learning

Signed:

Date: April 2013