

WOODLANDS FEDERATION

**Teaching, Learning and
Assessment Policy**



March 2019

To be reviewed March 2020

Teaching and Learning

At Woodlands Federation schools we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the idea that both adults and children learn new things everyday. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun.

Through our teaching we equip the children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives.

Vision Statement

At Woodlands Federation schools, we recognise that we are privileged to share in the responsibility for the development of the children in our care. The staff and governors are committed to working together for the benefit for all the children in partnership with their parents/carers. Together, we aim to realise the unique potential of each child within a caring and stimulating environment.

Aims

We believe that people learn best in different ways. At Woodlands Federation schools we provide a rich and varied learning environment and curriculum that allows children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.

Through our teaching we aim to:-

- Create a learning environment that is engaging, supportive and encourages creativity
- Develop children's self-esteem, enabling them to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners
- Ensure that every child succeeds
- Use and keep abreast of new technologies as much as possible
- Foster a culture of high expectations
- Provide an inclusive education in all aspects of school life.

Effective learning

We offer opportunities for children learn in different ways and we encourage the need to develop strategies to allow children to engage in their learning in ways that suit them best.

The Learning environment will:-

- Be challenging and stimulating
- Be supportive and caring
- Be organised to allow independence
- Be a safe place for learning from mistakes.

Children will have the opportunity to:-

- Work as a class, in groups, with a learning partner and individually
- Develop independence
- Work co-operatively
- Make decisions and share opinions
- Solve problems
- Be creative
- Develop social skills
- Use their initiative
- Work in safety
- Participate in athletic, physical and outdoor activities.

Displays in school will be used to:-

- Create an attractive and stimulating environment
- Show the range of learning
- Reflect the efforts of the children as well as ability
- Support learning
- Show progression from year to year.

Rules and routines

These contribute to a healthy learning environment by being:-

- Clearly understood
- Fair and consistent
- Realistic and positive.

Achievement (both in and out of school)

Children are encouraged to recognise and celebrate both their own and each other's successes.

Social, physical, creative and academic achievements are celebrated by:-

- Sharing achievements in assemblies
- Verbal and written praise by teachers and the Head of School
- Opportunities to perform and share with others
- Encouraging and building self-esteem
- Awarding stickers and certificates
- Displays of work and achievements around the school.

We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, and to be involved by:-

- Reviewing the way they learn
- Reflecting on how they learn
- Deciding what helps them learn
- Identifying what makes it difficult for them to learn.

Effective teaching

We plan our teaching with clear learning objectives, which are shared in the lesson and are taken from the National Curriculum. Our lessons are planned to meet the needs of all pupils and make links across the curriculum, wherever possible, to ensure children see relevance to their learning. We use a range of styles and resources to plan our learning. We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children and evaluate and modify our teaching accordingly. Through assessment we set and review targets with the children during each academic year and these are shared with parents/carers.

We work closely together with the Inclusion Manager, teaching assistants, outside agencies, other professionals and visitors to provide a varied and supportive learning experience.

All staff support each other in developing our skills so that we can improve our practice. We promote an atmosphere of trust and respect across our school community.

The role of Governors

Our governors support, monitor and review school policies. Visits are made to talk with staff, look at children's work or complete pupil voice activities as part of their monitoring cycle, working in partnership with the senior leadership team.

The role of parents/ carers

Parents/ carers have a fundamental role to play in helping children learn.

We ask parents/carers to support and encourage their children's learning by:-

- Promoting good attendance (aiming for 100%)
- Providing their child with correct uniform and PE kit
- Encouraging healthy life choices
- Keeping the school informed of matters outside school that might affect behaviour or performance
- Promoting a positive attitude towards learning in school
- Hearing them read, reading to them and discussing the text read and learning times table facts.

At Woodlands Federation schools we inform parents/carers about what and how their children are learning by:-

- Holding parent consultation meetings
- Holding open classroom events
- Sending home an annual curriculum overview and termly topic letters
- Displaying curriculum information on the school web site
- Holding subject specific information events
- Writing annual reports indicating the progress their child has made

Assessment

1.1 We believe that effective assessment provides information to improve teaching and learning. We give our children regular feedback on their learning so that they understand what it is that they need to do better. This allows us to base our lesson plans on a detailed knowledge of each pupil. We give parents regular reports on their child's progress so that teachers, children and parents are all working together to raise standards for all our children.

2 Aims and objectives

2.1 The aims and objectives of assessment in Woodlands Federation schools are:

- to enable our children to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in their work;
- to help our children understand what they need to do next to improve their work;
- to allow teachers to plan work that accurately reflects the needs of each child;
- to provide regular information for parents that enables them to support their child's learning;
- to provide the senior leaders and governors with information that allows them to make judgements about the effectiveness of the school.

3 Planning for assessment

3.1 We use our school's curriculum plan to guide our teaching. In this plan we set out the school's curriculum and give details of what is to be taught to each year

group. Through the use of milestones related to the content of the National Curriculum we are able to progress children through each phase of learning to the expected standard at the end of KS2.

3.2 We use the National Curriculum 2014 to support our teaching. We use the assessment guidance in these schemes to help us identify each child's expected standard of attainment.

3.3 We plan our lessons with clear learning objectives. We base these upon the teacher's detailed knowledge of each child. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's prior attainment and build on that. Our lesson plans make clear the expected outcomes for each lesson. We make a note of those individual children who do not achieve at the expected standard for the lesson, and we use this information when planning for the next lesson.

4 Target setting

4.1 We set targets in mathematics and English for all our children during each academic year. We discuss individual targets where necessary and communicate these to parents. We review the progress of each child at least three times a year.

4.2 We also set targets for other areas of work in school. We encourage the children to set targets that are linked to their individual working habits. The targets set in English and Maths relate to the milestones which are kept for each child to refer to.

4.3 We ask our older children to review their targets with fellow pupils, because we believe that this encourages them to work together and share evidence of progress. We encourage the children to involve their parents in this process.

5 Recording

5.1 We recognise various methods of assessing a child's learning. The type of assessment that we make varies from subject to subject. We think that it is unnecessary to keep a formal record of all these assessments; we record only information that affects future learning.

5.2 We plan our lessons with clear learning objectives. After a lesson, we record only those pupils who have not yet met the learning objective, or who achieve more than was expected, so that we can take the needs of these pupils into account when planning for the next lesson or 'keep up' session. Where the majority of the class makes the planned progress, of course, there is no need to record this.

5.3 We take the objectives for individual lessons from the broad learning objectives within the school's curriculum plan. These in turn reflect the demands of the National Curriculum. Our teachers record the progress of each child against these broad objectives. This enables them to make a judgement about the work of each child in relation to the National Curriculum. This allows us to monitor the progress of each child. Each teacher passes this information on to the next teacher at the end of each year.

6 Reporting to parents

6.1 We have a range of strategies that keep parents fully informed of their child's progress in school. We encourage parents to contact the school if they have concerns about any aspect of their child's work.

6.2 In the Terms 2 and 4 we offer parents the opportunity to meet their child's teacher. At the first meeting of the school year we review the targets that we have identified for their child. At the second meeting of the year (which we hold at the end of term 4) we evaluate their child's progress as measured against the targets.

6.3 During term 6 we give all parents a written report of their child's progress and achievements during the year. In this report we also identify target areas for the next school year. We evaluate progress, effort and attainment in all subjects of the National Curriculum and on religious education. We welcome parental feedback. There is an opportunity for parents to speak to the class teacher if they have any questions about the written report.

6.4 In reports for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 we also provide details of the attainment achieved in the national tests. Information is also given about Year 1 pupils' achievement in the phonics screening test.

6.5 We offer parents of pupils in Early Years the opportunity to discuss the results of the Early Years Foundation Stage Assessment with their child's teacher.

6.6 Each of our teachers gives parents a termly update that identifies the main areas of study for that particular class. In this update the teacher identifies how parents can support any elements of the work during the term.

7 Feedback to pupils

7.1 We believe that feedback to pupils is very important, as it tells them how well they have done and what they need to do next in order to improve their work. We have an agreed code for marking, as this ensures that we all mark in the same way.

7.2 We give children verbal feedback on their work whenever possible. We usually do this when the children are working during the lesson although we sometimes give feedback on a particular lesson at the beginning of the next one. When it is best suited to children's learning, we may write comments on the children's work. We give written comments to children of all ages.

7.3 When we give written feedback to a child, we relate this to the learning objective for the lesson. By so doing we make clear whether the objective has been met and we produce evidence to support the judgement. If we consider that the objective has not been met, we make clear why this was the case. In both cases we identify what the child needs to do next in order to improve future work.

7.4 We encourage the children to make comments about their own work and the work of fellow pupils. We encourage pupils to be the first markers/editors of some pieces of work by using a purple pen.

7.5 We allow time at the beginning of each lesson for the children to absorb any comments written on their work. If it is impractical at the beginning of the lesson, we set aside other timetabled occasions for pupils to read and respond to marking. We do this to ensure that the time that our teachers spend marking really has an impact on the children's work.

8 Consistency

8.1 All subject leaders collect examples of children's work within their subject area. Where appropriate, subject leaders use the national exemplification materials to make judgements about the standard of the children's work. All our teachers discuss these standards, so that they have a common understanding of the

expectations in each subject. By doing this we ensure that we make consistent judgements about standards in the school.

8.2 It is each subject leader's responsibility to ensure that the samples that they keep of children's work reflect the full range of ability within each subject. This is shown as WTS (working towards the standard), EXS (at the expected standard) and GDS (of a greater depth standard).

8.3 We work with our local secondary schools as we believe there should be a common understanding of standards right through the education process.

9 Monitoring and review

9.1 The Head of School is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy. The Head of School inspects samples of the children's work and observes the policy being implemented in the classroom.

9.2 Governors and the Executive Headteacher also monitor the progress, achievement and attainment of pupils throughout their career at the school.

Assessing without levels (pre-2014)

Too often levels became viewed as thresholds and teaching became focused on getting pupils across the next threshold instead of ensuring they were secure in the knowledge and understanding defined in the programs of study.

Depth and breadth of understanding were sometimes sacrificed in favour of pace. Levels also used a 'best fit' model, which meant that a pupil could have serious gaps in their knowledge and understanding, but still be placed within the level. This meant it wasn't always clear exactly which areas of the curriculum the child was secure in and where the gaps were.

Woodlands Federation schools use the mastery principle where subject content is presented to all, with the facility for learners to go deeper into subject matter rather than rushing ahead through content and missing on the depth of learning.

A house can be explored in a matter of minutes, and the layout of the house is known. However, much more can be gained by exploring the house level by level, and taking in all the detail of the parts.

We can all draw a person, but there is a big difference between a stick man, and Leonardo Da Vinci's anatomical drawings!

The mastery pedagogy works on the principle that **all learners**, with effort, **will meet expectations**. It works on the premise that **great teaching**, based on **formative assessment**, particularly **great questioning**, is key. **Precise assessment**, teaching that **closes any gaps, thinking about ability differently** are all part of the mastery pedagogy

Good formative assessment ranges from the probing question put to a pupil as they think something through; quick recap questions at the opening of a lesson; scrutiny of the natural work of pupils; right through to formal tests. This is how we gather information about what a pupil knows, understands and can do.

All children should have a deep learning of key ideas/constructs and opportunities for even deeper learning (needing a growth mindset). For some learners they will be able to access, within a construct, even greater challenge to deepen their thinking further.

Mastery learning is deep learning that sticks, and can be recalled over time. It is necessary to have deep learning in order to meet the key objectives of the curriculum. In essence, in order to meet the objectives securely children need to have mastered them.

Differentiation through challenge

All pupils learn the same content for their year group, so next year they can all learn the same content for their year group (no one is left behind). Occasionally there will be some pupils who do not have the ability to function at the standards for their year group who will be supported appropriately

Supported pupils – teachers scaffold the same objective (they do not simplify the objective although the work may be different), and pupils may take longer to secure the objective. This may be different pupils at different times in different subjects. At some time in their school career all pupils will need to be supported at some time.

Standard pupils – These pupils secure the objective through a sequence of learning opportunities and application in a variety of situations (a change of context) to embed intelligent practice.

Greater depth pupils – having secured the objective, pupils go on a deeper journey to explore, being effective and accurate in new settings (but not necessarily without guidance but without scaffolds).

There are many ways differentiation can be achieved including:

- access to concrete, pictorial and abstract resources,
- differentiated activities
- offering all children the same starting point and subsequently varying tasks as the lesson progresses
- Support and intervention provided rather than in the topics taught to different pupils
- Questioning and scaffolding for different pupils. (Difficulties and misconceptions will have rapid intervention so 'closing gaps' will dwindle as all keep up)

Groupings to deepen learning

This approach can often lead to collaborative approaches to teaching and learning with **fluid groupings** rather than fixed groupings.

Some grouping strategies to deepen understanding are:

Random grouping

- Cumulative partners (starting with 2 children and 'growing' as the lesson progresses)
- Mixed ability grouping – one child is the teacher; the other completes the task
- Ability grouping (based on the topic being taught, some children may be excellent at shape but need support with statistics)

What greater depth is not

- Moving pupils on at undue pace rather than developing depth of understanding
- A label for a child
- Mastery (that early term was replaced by 'even greater depth')
- Going on to other year group's material
- Practising with bigger numbers
- Reading a more challenging text

Characteristics of learning at greater depth

Independence	• Apply the skill or knowledge without recall to the teacher
Fluency	• Apply the skill and knowledge with a high level of confidence and show good resilience when the task seems demanding.
Application	• Apply the skill and knowledge to a range of different contexts, including other areas of the curriculum.
Consistency	• Consistently use their skills, knowledge and understanding.
Synthesise	• Organise ideas to make connections with other areas of learning and new areas.
Re-visit	• Return to this aspect of learning after a break and still feel confident that they can work on the skill and knowledge without difficulty.
Explain it	• Able to explain others their understanding and perhaps be a learning buddy to others

In EYFS, higher attaining pupils are known as exceeding. There are specific criteria laid out to assess this in EYFS. This is across all good level of development areas.

At the end of KS1 there are also specific statements for pupils to attain in order to be working at greater depth. This is in reading, writing and maths.

At the end of KS2 in maths and reading, pupils who attain a scaled score of 110 or above are said to be reaching the higher standard (a scaled score of 100 is judged as reaching the age related standard). There are specific criteria in writing in order to be working at greater depth.

Woodlands Federation assessment of pupils working at greater depth

At the end of key stages we use the criteria given by the government in the assessment materials for those year groups (Reception, Year 2 and Year 6). In other year groups we use the following guides:

- Application of understanding and skills in new contexts
- Independence in reflection, evaluation and improvement
- Fluency leading to rapid recall to support application of knowledge
- Confidence and resilience when mistakes are made or persistence needed
- Accuracy
- Sustained concentration, effort and perseverance
- A judgement gained over time which shows a consistency of approach; not a short term judgement based on what has just been taught but a broader approach.

Most judgements about pupils showing consistent greater depth traits will be made in terms 5 and 6. New content is largely taught in terms 1-4 with challenge opportunities being available to all pupils in all lessons.