

Carrdus School

Teaching and Learning Policy

Introduction

At Carrdus we believe that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun and challenging. 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

Through our teaching we aim to:

- 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;
- help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens;
- to give children a broad education suitable to their potential abilities;
- to give children a solid and creative foundation for their future life, including their secondary and future education;
- making learning vivid, enjoyable and challenging;
- ensuring that every child succeeds;
- building on what children already know and on previously-learnt skills;
- introducing consistency of method where sensible;
- helping children to take part in their learning and assessment;
- encourage children to articulate their thinking and learning;
- keeping a fluid boundary between play and study;
- sound classroom management including variety, pace and structure;
- staff receiving and giving worthwhile CPD;
- accepting that subject expertise in a small school often rests with one individual.

Effective teaching

When teaching we focus on motivating the children and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum with lessons building on prior learning. Lessons need to be interactive and engaging; pace is particularly important. Differentiation can be well served by small group work. Teachers must keep in mind the range of learning styles: visual, aural and kinaesthetic. ICT is incorporated into many lessons and is increasingly used as children move up through the school. Questioning is an essential part of the toolkit, differentiated according to the learning patterns of all pupils. Good display which changes regularly is an important part of classroom reinforcement and celebration.

Learning styles

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

We offer opportunities for children to learn in a range of multi-sensory ways including:

- investigation and problem solving;

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- researching and finding out;
- taking part in group work, team work, pair work, independent work and whole-class work;
- asking and answering questions;
- using information technology;
- visiting places of educational interest and for fieldwork;
- enjoying creative activities;
- watching video clips online;
- undertaking debates, role-plays, drama sessions and oral presentations;
- designing and making things;
- participating in sport and other physical activities.

Assessment for learning (AfL)

We use AfL in our approach to learning where children can understand success and see what it looks like, where they can see what they have done well in their learning and what and how they can improve it. Skilled use of the following are our methods: clear learning objectives; wait time, talk partners; what represents success; teacher modelling; peer and self-evaluation; effective questioning; high quality marking and verbal feedback; understanding a child's preferred learning style.

Using AfL, we encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible reviewing the way they learn, and to reflect on how they learn – what helps them learn and what makes it difficult for them to learn. Please refer to our Curriculum Policy.

Planning

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's level of attainment. Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge, understanding and skills of every child. We plan carefully to cover our curriculum each year and ensure that our plans demonstrate continuity, consistency and progression in the long, medium and short terms. We are creative in our planning and ensure links are made between different areas of the curriculum. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability. In the Foundation Stage we plan activities based on information from child observations and parental discussions. 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).

Assessment

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 adjust our teaching and to base our lesson plans on a detailed knowledge of each pupil for more information regarding assessment please see our assessment policy. We do not take part in SATS. Please refer to our Assessment Policy.

Curriculum

We are not required to follow the National Curriculum, but we use it as a basis for our own school curriculum. This enables us to be flexible in what we teach our pupils, tailoring our curriculum and making it relevant to the needs of our pupils. We have our own internal programmes of study for English, Science, History, Geography, Art, DT, Sport, Music and MfL. We follow external programmes of study for the EYFS, Maths, RE and PSHE. Please refer to our Curriculum Policy.

We provide a creative curriculum at Carrdus which is skills based and taught through a topic and taught through a themed approach. Rigorous, high-quality teaching of English and Maths is at the core of a broad, rich curriculum which builds skills, knowledge and understanding in progression.

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Class management

Each of our teachers makes a special effort to establish good working relationships with all children in the class. We treat the children with kindness and respect. We treat them fairly and give them equal opportunity to take part in class activities. All our teachers follow the school's Behaviour Policy. We set and agree with children their class rules. We expect all children to comply with these rules which we jointly devise to promote the best learning opportunities for all. We praise children for their efforts and, by so doing, we help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general. We insist on good order and behaviour at all times. When children mis-behave we follow the guidelines for sanctions as outlined in our school Behaviour Policy.

Risk Assessment

We ensure that all tasks and activities that the children do are safe both inside and outside the buildings and risk assessments have been undertaken. When we plan to take children out of school on trips, we inform parents, obtain their permission and complete risk assessments.

Use of teaching assistants

We deploy teaching assistants and other adult helpers as effectively as possible. Sometimes they work with individual children, sometimes they work with small groups and sometimes with the whole class. Teaching Assistants may work across more than one class.

Classroom environment

Our classrooms are attractive learning environments. We change displays regularly, to ensure that the classroom reflects the topics studied by the children. We ensure that all children have the opportunity to display work at some time during the year. We use 'working wall' displays to help with learning, particularly over-learning including spellings, phonics and mental maths facts. Displays reflect our broad curriculum. We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning, and an exciting classroom promotes independent use of resources and high-quality work by the children.

Performance management and appraisal.

We manage carefully the performance of all our teachers. We expect them to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and to plan their professional development needs accordingly. We do all we can to support our teachers in developing their own knowledge, understanding and skills, so that they can continually improve their practice. We appraise all staff.

Role and responsibilities of parents in teaching and learning

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

- holding parent meetings to inform them of their child's targets and progress against these targets;
- providing curriculum overviews to parents at the start of each term in order to outline the topics that the children will be studying that term;
- sending bi-annual reports to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can improve further;
- explaining to parents how they can support their children with homework. We suggest, for example, regular shared reading with very young children, and support for older children with their projects and investigative work;

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- Providing information to parents in which we explain our school strategies for teaching Relationships Education, Sex Education and PSHE.

In terms of responsibility of parents in teaching and learning, we would like parents to:

- ensure that their child attends school every day, unless they are ill or have an authorised absence;
- ensure that their child is equipped for school with the correct kit for PE, Swimming, Ballet and Gym;
- 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 their child's performance or behaviour at school;
- promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general.

Monitoring and review

The Head monitors the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observation, planning discussions, assessment data and children's work as well as regular walks round classrooms, learning environment audits and individual or group teacher discussion sessions. These findings feed into the annual review of our teaching and learning policy so that we can take account of not only our existing provision but also new initiatives, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. The headteacher provides regular reports to the governors.