

The Firs Lower School  
**Teaching and Learning Policy**



**Rationale**

At The Firs Lower School our mission statement is 'Working Together To Achieve Our Best'. To this end, teaching and learning is the business of the whole school. We believe in the concept of lifelong learning. All members of the school community, adults and children are learning and developing and we strongly promote a learning environment which caters for the needs of all learners.

We aim to make learning a rewarding and enjoyable experience for all. Through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to achieve high standards and to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives.

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## **Section 1**

### **Aims:**

At The Firs Lower School we undertake to:

- Raise levels of attainment for all pupils, enabling them to achieve their best
- To enable children to make rapid progress, through high quality teaching with effective and positive feedback, which ensures that the next learning steps are clearly understood and move learning on.
- Foster a love of learning.
- To arouse children's curiosity, awe and wonder about the world in which we live.
- Develop confident, enthusiastic and enquiring learners, able to make informed choices.
- Foster, through our Behaviour Policy, a strong moral code, good self-esteem and a sense of personal responsibility, linked to respect for the needs and feelings of others.
- To encourage in everyone, a 'growth mind-set', where mistakes are valued as opportunities to learn and the belief that all can improve is cherished.
- To celebrate and promote the school's core values, including all the aspects of British Values.
- Ensure equal opportunities in relation to gender, race, class, special needs and belief.
- Value and respect all cultures.
- Facilitate considerate and positive relationships between all members of the school community.
- Enable children to understand the different communities to which they belong and help them feel both a valued and productive member.
- Promote a thoughtful and respectful attitude towards the immediate and wider environment.
- Help children to grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.
- Provide a safe, secure and happy working environment.

## **Section 2**

### **I. Ethos:**

The ethos and atmosphere underpin the agreed aims of the school and create the correct conditions for learning. Teachers will provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which will develop the skills, concepts and knowledge necessary for future learning. In the course of their daily work the staff will contribute to the development of this ethos through:

- Providing a calm and effective working environment at all times, in which each child can achieve his or her maximum potential.
- Providing a welcoming environment, in which courtesy, kindness and respect are fostered.
- Providing positive role models.
- Providing a fair and disciplined environment, in line with the school's 'Behaviour Policy'.
- Maintaining purposeful and informative planning, record-keeping and assessment documents, in line with the school's record-keeping and assessment procedures.

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- Effective management of their professional time.
- Developing links with the wider community.
- Providing children with meaningful, purposeful tasks, related to the National Curriculum programmes of study and EYFS curriculum
- Valuing and celebrating pupils' success and achievements.
- Promoting the idea that children need to learn skills of collaborating, both as a vital skill for their future and as a powerful tool in the present to promote learning.
- Reviewing personal and professional development in order to ensure a high level of professional expertise.
- Welcoming, supporting and developing NQTs, trainee teachers and other students.

**II. Equal Opportunities:**

In accordance with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, all children at The Firs Lower School must be given full access to the National Curriculum. Staff will endeavour to help all children to reach their full potential irrespective of race, gender, age or ability.

**Section 3**

**I. Management of the School Day:**

**Key Stage 1 sessions**

8:55 – 12:00 morning session	3 hours 5 minutes
1:20 – 3:30 afternoon session	2 hours 10 minutes
Total	5 hours 15 minutes per day
	= 26 hours 15 minutes per week

**Key Stage 2 sessions**

8:55 – 12:15 morning session	3 hours 20 minutes
1:20 – 3:30 afternoon session	2 hours 10 minutes
Total	5 hours 30 minutes per day
	=27 hours 30 minutes per week

**Non teaching times**

Daily play times	15 minutes morning playtime (KS1 additional 10 minutes play each afternoon)
Assembly	15 minutes daily
Registration	15 mins per day
Total	55 minutes for KS1 and 45 minutes for KS2 per day
	= 4 hrs 35 mins KS1 and 3 hours 45 minutes
KS2	

**Total teaching time**

<b>Key Stage 1</b> – 26 hours and 15 minutes	- 4 hrs 35 mins	<b>= 21 hrs 40 min</b>
<b>Key Stage 2</b> – 27 hours and 30 minutes	- 3 hours 45 mins	<b>= 23 hrs 45 min</b>



## **II. Time Allocation**

Curriculum time can be planned as continuous study throughout the term, or as blocks of study.

At The Firs Lower School we are committed to following the programmes of study as required by the National Curriculum. These programmes will be enriched by other elements such as Forest Schools work or the Read Write Inc. literacy programme.

We are committed to raising standards of *Basic Skills* at The Firs Lower School. By *Basic Skills*, we mean the ability to read, write and speak in English and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and in society in general.

## **III. Classroom Management and Organisation:**

### **a. Class Organisation**

The school organises pupils into mixed ability classes. The school aims to have two parallel classes per year, each containing children from a single year group. The classroom will be organised to facilitate learning and the development of independence. This may require flexibility in the organisation of furniture.

- All staff and pupils will endeavour to maintain a tidy, clean and attractive environment.
- The resources in each area will be grouped logically (with pupil accessibility in mind) and will be clearly labelled.
- Writing resources will be available for use at all times, and will be centrally accessible.
- Themed areas in classrooms, such as role play and ICT will be welcoming and well kept, to encourage appropriate use.
- Children's work will be displayed and valued. Display will also be seen as a teaching resource and will be used to contribute to the classroom as a learning environment.
- In Pine (YR) areas for imaginative play will change regularly both inside and in the outdoor area, in order to give opportunities for a range of play and role-play, generating different forms of language and social interaction, which will contribute to learning in a purposeful manner.
- Pupils will be involved in the maintenance and care of all equipment and resources.
- Safety will be promoted by all staff, in accordance with the 'Health and safety Policy' and agreed 'Firs Risk Assessments'.

The learning environment will be managed in such a way as to facilitate different styles of learning:

- Mixed ability whole class teaching
- Sets or groups within classes, organised by ability
- Collaborative learning in pairs or small groups e.g. 'learning partners'
- Independent learning
- Small group work on special projects or blocks of work e.g. Forest Schools, booster groups etc.
- One to one teaching
- Conferencing



All areas of the learning environment will be planned for, including, where appropriate, the outside areas, in order to ensure opportunities for a range of practical activities, which will develop appropriate skills, concepts and knowledge.

Teaching assistants and external agencies will be employed / liaised with to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, as outlined on the related My Action Plans (MAPS) / Provision Maps. (See SEND Policy)

#### **IV. Behaviour Management**

The School's policies for Equal Opportunities, Behaviour and our Equality Scheme are promoted by all staff in the planned teaching and learning process. Class teachers will establish a class code of conduct at the beginning of the academic year and high standards of behaviour will be expected at all times with children reminded regularly about our golden rules 'Ready, Respect, Safe'. Children will be encouraged to develop a 'Growth Mindset', building positive attitudes to school and learning through the use of positive reinforcement and praise.

#### **V. Planning**

Teachers will, where possible, meet weekly in year group teams to plan. The agreed planning documents will be automatically backed up to the school server. Teachers will liaise with teaching assistants to ensure they are informed. Teaching assistants will be given copies of all planning documents which will provide information concerning learning objectives, success criteria and appropriate individual information about targeted groups of pupils as well as details about how they will contribute to children's learning.

Planning is objective led and the lesson objective or LO (WALT – We Are Learning To in KS1) will be shared with the children at the start of each lesson. Children will also be informed about / contribute to the creation of the success criteria (SC) for each lesson, so that they know how to be successful in the lesson and what the teacher is looking for when he/she assesses their progress – (WILF – What I'm Looking For in KS1).

#### **VI. Differentiation and Challenge:**

Teachers will differentiate the curriculum by:

- Task
- Expected outcome
- Teacher / adult support

Differentiated tasks will be detailed in planning. Children with special needs are planned for in the context of the targets and information contained in their MAPS. Staff will plan the activities and questioning / 'learning partner' discussions to provide appropriate challenge, to develop the knowledge and skills of pupils and to encourage children to think more deeply about key concepts. See web link below for more guidance:

<http://www.jamesnottingham.co.uk/learning-pit/>

Differentiation will be carefully designed to, where possible, involve children in choosing, with the guidance of staff, the level of complexity that is suitable for them.



This is important in ensuring that **all** children are challenged appropriately and encouraged to strive to achieve their best.

### **VII. Record-keeping and assessment:**

Regular assessments are made of pupils' work in order to establish their level of attainment, and to inform future planning.

- The progress of Reception pupils will be monitored/recorded using the 'Tapestry' on line package during the course of their time in Pine.
- The 'Rising Stars; Objectives will be used in 'Classroom Monitor' (CM) the on line recording and analytical tool used in Y1-Y4 for planning purposes to ensure complete National Curriculum coverage.
- The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be used within CM as a tool to assess pupil's progress in reading, writing and numeracy.
- Year Two pupils will be assessed for mathematics, reading and writing through a process of teacher assessment (using the 'Interim Y2 Framework) and using the Key Stage 1 Statutory Assessment Tests.
- All results from these assessments will be analysed and reported to Governors and the LA. Conclusions from this analysis will be used to inform future curriculum planning and to guide the formation of school priorities for improvement.
- Assessment for Learning will be used as an integrated part of children's classroom experience. In lessons, teachers will ensure that children know the learning objective and how they can be successful (see 'Planning' - page 6). Children will be encouraged to give feedback on their learning and that of their peers. Children will be given increasing opportunities to share in the learning process, entering into a dialogue with teachers about their learning, and acting upon the evaluation of their progress (verbally and through marking) and what their next learning steps are. (See Marking and Feedback protocols Appendix A and Assessment Principles Appendix C)

### **VIII. Target Setting and Pupil Progress**

Teaching will be characterised by high expectations and striving for the highest possible standards.

Children's achievement will be discussed with parents at the two formal consultation meetings each year (in October and March), in the interim report in January and in the annual written report in the summer term.

Pupils' numerical targets for the end of each year are recorded and reviewed formally each term at a Target Monitoring Meeting, in discussion with the headteacher and appropriate action taken to support pupils in achieving them.

### **IX. Monitoring and evaluation:**

- Teachers review and evaluate their teaching with their colleagues in regular planning meetings.
- Pupils' work will be monitored and moderated as part of the termly 'Staff Development and Monitoring Plans'.
- Teaching will be observed by the headteacher, other members of the SLT and outside consultants/FARM heads etc.

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- Other information sources will aid the monitoring of teaching and learning e.g. learning walks, questionnaires, pupil and parent surveys and consultations etc.
- Feedback from monitoring activities will be given to individuals or groups as appropriate and whole school issues / findings will be communicated to the whole staff as well as to Governors.

**X. Resources:**

Each classroom will be equipped with a basic set of resources and books appropriate to the age range. Specialist resources will be stored in the appropriate curriculum resource area, and will be regularly audited by the relevant Curriculum Leadership Group.

Pupils will be taught how to use all resources correctly and safely, with care and respect; and with regard for Health and Safety and waste.

Care will be taken to ensure that resources reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of our society, and that all pupils have equality of access.

**Section 4**

**Teaching Strategies:**

In order to ensure equality of access, and effective matching of tasks to needs, teachers will employ a variety of strategies:

- Creating a learning ethos in the classroom that ensures high standards of behaviour ('1,2,3' and 'clap / hand up signal'- see Behaviour Policy) and encourages positive and enthusiastic approaches to learning based on the concept of developing a 'Growth Mind-Set' including the realisation that mistakes are powerful (and not to be feared) as we can learn from them.
- Use of learning objectives and success criteria to ensure children are appropriately guided and aware of how to achieve well in each lesson.
- Providing, through appropriate differentiation, opportunities for all children to achieve success (see page 5 – 'differentiation and challenge'.)
- Asking open questions that encourage children to deepen understanding or to encourage the consideration of issues in more depth and using investigative and problem solving processes to foster thinking skills – e.g. Blooms Taxonomy, De Bono's Thinking Hats, Ian Gilbert, 'Learning Pit' idea –James Nottingham etc. (see page 5 – 'differentiation and challenge'.)
- Use of 'learning partners', 'The 3 Way Edit' and other techniques, such as use of wowo boards etc. to ensure engagement and a good pace of learning.
- Demonstrating high expectations and showing children what 'excellence' looks like e.g. stopping at various points mid lesson for a 'mini plenary' to share examples of pupil work that meet the success criteria in a notable way.
- Use of drama, role play, debate and presentations
- Providing opportunities for reflection by pupils
- Providing encouragement, positive reinforcement and praise
- Intervening, as appropriate, in the learning process in order to encourage development and correct misconceptions
- Using ICT to enhance learning such as use of 'Learnpads'
- Using fieldwork and educational visits/visitors

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- Designing activities that promote stimulating and/or thought provoking moral social and spiritual experiences/learning, reinforce the value focused on each month and to support the teaching of 'British Values'
- Use of the outdoor learning environment to inspire and motivate learning
- Marking that provides feedback that enables children to see how to improve or take the next step and leads to children's learning moving on.
- Building a sense of partnership working with parents e.g. good communication and flow of information and opportunities for face to face meetings, such as home visits, to initiate contact and a relationship between parent, child and teacher in Pine (YR).

(See What makes a great lesson at The Firs? 10 key features – Appendix B)

(See Expected Practice Guide – Appendix D)

Teachers will use a range of strategies in any one session, although the emphasis will be on approaches that engage the learner and allow them to participate actively in lessons.

Activities will show a balance in terms of individual, group and whole class work, as appropriate. Teachers will design the structure of lessons with reference to the needs of the pupils, learning objective and activities to be undertaken.

## **Section 5**

### **I. The Role of the Governors:**

It is the Governors' role to monitor and review this policy (and other key policies) by:

- Receiving reports from the Head teacher and/or other members of staff.
- Attending appropriate Governor training
- Ensuring that Governors on the Finance and Environment Committee receive reports from the Business Manager or headteacher on relevant issues, in particular Health and Safety, so that the school building and premises provide an appropriate learning environment.
- Allocating resources effectively in line with the needs expressed in the School Development Plan.
- Promoting equal opportunities in relation to race, gender, class and belief.
- Promoting and ensuring at all times the practice of giving value and respect for all cultures and faiths.
- Ensuring Governors on the Curriculum and Achievement Committee monitor the teaching and learning provision, the delivery of the curriculum and pupil achievement.
- Ensuring Governors on the HR Committee guarantee that staff are given appropriate access to professional development and training and that appropriate Performance Management procedures are in place and are undertaken appropriately.
- Ensuring that teaching and learning is scrutinised through the school monitoring process and judgements recorded using a Self Evaluation Form (SEF).





## **II. The Role of Parents:**

Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning by:

- Ensuring that their child comes to school feeling confident and positive.
- Ensuring that their child arrives at school punctually and regularly.
- Ensuring that they promote a positive attitude towards school and learning.
- Sharing with the teacher any problems in school that their child is experiencing.
- Supporting their child by attending Consultation Evenings and other meetings.
- Supporting their child and the teacher by becoming actively involved, where applicable, in the operation of My Action Plans (MAPs) and any Special Educational Needs processes.
- Ensuring that all contact addresses and telephone numbers are correct.
- Ensuring that their child arrives at school wearing the correct uniform and bringing the correct P.E. kit.
- Agreeing to the terms of the 'Home School Agreement'.
- Agreeing to, and supporting, the school's homework policy.
- Welcoming staff at home-visiting times, before children begin in Reception.
- Attending medicals and health interviews when invited.
- Reading and responding to letters sent home from school.
- Informing the school of reasons for their child's absence.
- Informing the school of any significant matters at home which may affect their child's progress, happiness or behaviour.
- Supporting extra-curricular activities e.g. visitors to school, concerts, fairs etc.

## **III. The Role of The School:**

In relation to each of the above areas the school will reciprocate by:

- Responding to all offers of support as far as it is able and welcoming parents as helpers / visitors in school.
- Respecting all information given in confidence.
- Giving clear information on the aims and objectives of the curriculum and school procedures.
- Setting up curriculum meetings.
- Communicating regularly with parents so they are appropriately informed about what children are learning and approaches and strategies being used.
- Supporting parents appropriately in helping children to complete homework tasks.
- Meeting termly with parents of those children with a MAP.
- Giving reasonable / appropriate access to parents as part of the 'Open Door' approach so that parents are able to approach school easily when they have a question or concern or are in need of support.
- Working in partnership with parents and guardians to ensure the success of their child, and encouraging parental involvement in working out the way forward for their child's educational future.
- Implementing the elements of the 'Expected Practice Guide' – Appendix D