

We strive for excellence in teaching and learning. We want every child to experience high quality teaching every day so that they are successful in their learning, and aspirational for their future. We believe that the more that we have a shared understanding of what constitutes effective teaching and learning, the greater our success will be. Our teaching is enhanced by collaborative planning and evaluation based on strong subject and pedagogical knowledge. The key themes of our teaching and learning policy are:

The basics – consistently high expectations are a powerful tool in ensuring high quality learning

A climate for learning – children make most progress when they feel respected and valued, and develop a broad set of life-skills.

Lesson structure – well designed lessons enable all learners to make good progress

Differentiation – our classes are made up of individual learners with a variety of needs; teaching and learning should take account of the needs of all children

Assessment – assessment gives children and teachers clear guidance about the standard of work and how it can be improved

Professional development – all teachers have both the right and the responsibility to engage in sustained and relevant professional development throughout their careers

The Basics

Setting the tone for a purposeful learning environment is critical. Children learn, progress and develop in a structured and stimulating classroom. Our shared expectations are:

- Punctuality and regular attendance
- Orderly and calm movement around school and in classrooms
- Tidy and organised learning environment – including cloakrooms
- Engaging display including the effective use of working walls
- Teachers manage the environment well, including where children sit
- All children have a 'home space' where they start the day.
- All classrooms and children are well equipped for lessons, and resources are readily available for all subjects

Climate for learning

Behaviour for learning is crucial if children are to make good progress. We teach children to:

- Listen and respond thoughtfully to each other
- Work in pairs and groups
- Be prepared to volunteer their thoughts and opinions
- Respect the values, ideas, contributions and beliefs of others
- Give honest and positive feedback to each other
- Think about their learning through effective questioning
- Contribute to lessons. This means that we sometimes adopt a 'no hands up' approach
- Discuss their learning with adults and peers
- Explore challenging and stimulating topics including items in the news

- Be prepared to stick at a task – we want to develop resilience and mental toughness
- Engage in learning beyond the classroom

Lesson Structure

Well-designed and well-planned lessons result in effective learning. There are a variety of effective strategies that teachers may choose to use. However all lessons must try to achieve:

- Good pace as part of a well-planned sequence of learning
- High expectations and challenge for all
- An element of risk – ‘we might get this wrong, but we will learn from our mistakes’
- Opportunities to develop mastery for all and deep learning for the most able
- Differentiation and/or scaffolding that enables all learners to make rapid progress
- Learning that is based on clear models (WAGOLLS – ‘What A Good One Looks Like’, teacher models etc) of outcome and process
- A clear response to prior learning and a sharp understanding of misconceptions
- Progress towards pupil targets and end of year expectations (the EYEs)
- Children have a clear understanding of what they need to do to be successful - through well-designed learning objectives and success criteria
- Pupil engagement in their learning through real and interesting activities
- Excellent work in books where presentation and quality matter
- A variety of groupings in terms of number, gender and ability
- Meet the aims of the wider curriculum
- Reflect and review – “Why was I successful?” “What do I need to do next?”
- Children taking responsibility for their learning
- Learning that takes place both inside and outside the classroom so that children benefit from opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. This includes visits and visitors.

Differentiation

Differentiation takes into account the needs of all learners to ensure that all are set challenging goals and make at least expected progress. We underpin our learning approach with mastery learning that is based on SOLO taxonomy. We recognise that:

- Different students have different needs, related to influences both within and beyond the classroom. Awareness of the needs of specific groups (especially pupil premium) will enhance the provision for individuals
- Teachers are aware of the needs of specific groups such as SEN (Special Educational Needs), More Able, EAL (English as an additional language), FSM (free school meals), Looked After children, and will provide the appropriate support
- Lesson groupings can be used effectively to meet the needs of all children, sometimes in ability groups, sometimes in mixed ability
- Individual Pupil Progress Interviews (IPPIs) identify children at risk of underachievement whose needs are subsequently addressed through lessons and interventions.
- Teaching for mastery requires the most able to experience learning at greater depth
- All children should master the current skills they are learning.

Differentiation can take many forms and can be grouped into differentiation by process (how students learn), and/or differentiation by content (what students learn)

Differentiation by process includes:

- Effective and targeted questioning
- Providing a range of alternative tasks
- Deliberate grouping of students according to tasks (e.g. grouping all of the most able students together to work on a particularly challenging task; using 'jigsaw' grouping; mixed ability grouping for peer teaching etc)
- Assigning roles to individual students (e.g. leader, expert, scribe, questioner, spokesperson etc)
- Support provided by a teaching assistant (TA)

Differentiation by content includes:

- Developing and adapting resources to both support and extend students, taking into account all students' needs
- Intervention strategies (1:1 or in small groups) can promote rapid progress where catch up is needed
- Focused input based on the EYEs that the child is on.
- Individualised support by Pupil Premium and inclusion staff eg metacognition or self-esteem support

Working with Teaching Assistants

- Teaching Assistants are most effectively deployed in the classroom when they are informed of, and involved in, the learning
- Teachers should give TAs the scheme of work or lesson plan in advance
- Regular discussion of pupil progress and wellbeing should take place
- Teachers should give TAs appropriate guidance on their role within the lesson or sequence of lessons (TAs may lead wave 2 teaching to support learning)
- TAs should share their in-depth knowledge of the learning they have supported through a written feedback grid ('Tracey's grid')
- TAs are expected to model the values and ethos of the school

Assessment (see assessment and marking policy)

Rigorous and regular formative assessment is essential if we are to give clear guidance to children about how to improve work and how they have been successful. Formative assessment allows the learner to reflect and then put in place strategies to improve. Teachers should always seek to close the gaps between current and expected learning

In lessons:

- children are given opportunities to act upon marking and feedback
- time is set aside during all lessons to edit or correct work using a purple pen
- teachers and children reflect on progress towards the EYEs
- redrafting writing is seen as a key skill
- peer and self assessment against learning objectives and success criteria are a central assessment tool
- EYEs are ticked off as they are seen and once they are judged as secure. This is an ongoing process that is recorded 6x a year on Bromcom to support summative assessment
- regular summative assessment is used to benchmark standards and to diagnose areas of relative weakness in learning

- Homework is an integral part of the curriculum and should be used to consolidate, extend and enrich students' learning.
- Homework is purposeful and meaningful and can take a variety of forms including answering questions, reading, extended writing, thinking, planning and researching. On-going projects are used to inspire learning beyond school.

Professional Development

Teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils. (Teachers' Standards)

All staff have the right and the responsibility to engage in sustained and relevant professional development throughout their careers. The teachers standards support teachers to:

- Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils
- Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils
- Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge
- Plan and teach well structured lessons
- Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils
- Make accurate and productive use of assessment
- Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment
- Fulfil wider professional responsibilities
- Maintain exemplary personal and professional conduct

We provide opportunities for experienced staff to pursue career enhancement through leadership opportunities in school and across the Vale Academy Trust (VAT). In addition, a comprehensive VAT programme of twilight workshops is offered throughout the year and is open to all.

The Appraisal process provides the context for twice- yearly discussions (September and May) about teachers' career aspirations and development.

Evidence of continuing professional development may take a number of forms, which could include:

- Reflection/evaluation of training sessions attended, including staff meetings and INSET (in service training)
- Observation records where the teacher has observed a colleague, or has been observed, in order to develop their own practice
- Coaching reflections where the teacher has worked with other colleagues on a particular skill area
- Teaching materials which the teacher has developed for their subject, with reflection/feedback on its effectiveness
- Research undertaken to broaden the teacher's understanding of a pedagogical issue
- Appraisal objectives reflect the individual teacher's developmental aspirations, as well as the main priorities of the school.
- *Post-threshold teachers* are considered to be role models for teaching and learning: they should make a distinctive contribution to raising standards across the school and provide regular coaching and mentoring to less experienced teachers.
- *Co-ordinators* are expected to undertake and lead school improvement activities and CPD for other teachers.