The Grove School

Policy for:

Teaching and Learning

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Next Review Date: March 2028

Signed By: Mrs P.J. Derries

Governor Responsible for: Mr Robert Curry

Headteacher: Mrs P Derries

Our Learning Policy

Rationale
Our ultimate priority is to enable our children to become thoughtful, independent adults who have been supported to maximise their strengths and abilities. Everyone's commitment to our whole school approach is essential and is observed through each individual's commitment to being a life-long, autonomous learner.

Aim
Our Learning and Teaching Policy aims to support everyone's learning through providing clear guidelines which include specific, assessable objectives, it comes in two parts:
1. Part one details matters of principle and policy.
2. Part two is guidelines of good practice.

Our aim is to focus upon facilitating learning, with learning being the outcome which is achieved through the impact of successful teaching. All learning is focussed upon the personalised and specific needs of each individual. As Charles Desforges advocates,

" … we need powerful questions that will help us build tools for learners not tips for teachers …"

Definition – Learning
Our definition of learning enables us to effectively put into practice a consistent, whole school, commitment and understanding. There are many possible definitions, and we are in agreement that the following reflects our joint thoughts.

" Learning is a unique and personal process through which the individual is able to create knowledge, deepen understanding and so take responsibility for their development."
(New vision course material, NCSL)

Objectives/Key Principles of Learning
1 Learning involves making personal sense of information and experiences.
2 Learning occurs when we make sense of and connections between what
   we already know and new inputs – experiences, practice, knowledge.

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3 Learning is therefore an active process, done <u>by</u> people and not <u>to</u> them.

4 Learning is essentially a reflective process.

<u>Definition – Teaching</u>

Our definition of teaching enables us to be practitioners who have a consistent, whole school commitment and understanding of the role of 'the teacher'. There are many possible definitions and we are in agreement that the following reflects our philosophy and practice.

"Teaching is a shared experience between one or more people in which individuals work collaboratively to further their knowledge, deepen their understanding, progress their skills and support each others development."

<u>Objectives/Key principles of Teaching</u>

1 Teaching involves being able to clearly express information and detail experiences at an appropriate level which enables others to understand the information and deepen their knowledge and experiences.

2 Teaching occurs when we are able to help others make sense of what they already know, understand and can do. Teachers enable others to further develop their abilities through new input – experiences, practice, knowledge.

3 Teaching is therefore a collaborative process achieved through people supporting each other.

4 Teaching is essentially an interaction which enables others to discuss and reflect upon their own learning, therefore all who interact with others and achieve this outcome are 'teachers'. Our ideal practice is pupils peer teaching/tutoring each other, their parents and the adults who are supporting their learning.

Our philosophy and practice is intrinsically based upon teaching, which supports effective learning, not being achieved through a professional qualification and status but through the outcomes of positive interactions by two or more people establishing and creating a learning process. Through our understanding of learning and teaching we consider that the expectations, skill, knowledge, role and most importantly practice of qualified teaching practitioners is greatly enhanced because we recognise and optimise the learning potential of all interactions.

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Our objectives for Teaching and Learning are that all children will:-

- develop their confidence, self-esteem and self-worth, initiative, self-motivation, imagination, self-discipline, a sense of personal and social values as well as their concepts, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding
- achieve their potential in terms of academic achievement, aesthetic appreciation and spiritual awareness
- be tolerant, understanding and respectful of the rights, opinions, thoughts and property of others
- develop a responsible and independent attitude towards work and towards their roles in society, through being thoughtful members of our local community

Objectives/Principles of Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning is a process of positive interactions and we welcome and actively encourage the involvement of parents and others in our local community.

All members of our school community – children, students, parents, governors and staff work towards our school's aims by:

- valuing children/students as individuals and respecting their rights, values, thoughts and beliefs
- nurturing and encouraging good relationships and a sense of belonging within our school community
- providing a safe, well ordered, aesthetic learning environment which supports positive behaviour
- recognising mature learning attributes, personal, social and emotional development through encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviours and work
- providing equal opportunities in all aspects of school life
- working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another

Staff work towards our school aims by:

- providing a challenging and stimulating environment conducive to learning and designed to enable all children to reach the highest standard of personalised achievement
- being good role models and autonomous learners on a life long basis by actively creating and optimising opportunities to model learning and thinking
- working collaboratively with a shared responsibility

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- having a positive attitude to change and the development of their own expertise
- having a thorough knowledge of the Individual Education Plan, of all pupils they work with and actively contributing to these
- working collaboratively with a shared responsibility for the planning, preparation and assessment of learning
- ensuring that children/students are supported at all times with their personal knowledge and understanding of their individual learning objectives and intrinsically involving children in the setting of these

Pupils are encouraged to work towards our school aims by:
- taking a growing responsibility for their own learning and caring about the quality of their efforts
- understanding how they learn best and what helps them to achieve this
- talking about their learning, actively participating in choices and decisions about knowledge content and objectives they are striving to achieve and asking questions
- expressing and sharing their thoughts and listening thoughtfully to others views and opinions
- contributing to their I.E.P. and annual school report

Parents are encouraged to support our school aims by:
- ensuring regular contact with school to discuss anything which may affect a child's happiness, progress and behaviour
- providing support for their child's learning in school by following through with agreed individual objectives at home which primarily aims to support their child through being good role models for autonomous learning by actively seeking and creating opportunities to model learning and thinking through open discussions and interactions which support and encourage the development of confidence, self esteem, independence, personal and social skills, curiosity, creativity and an inquiring mind which loves learning.
- by attending their child's annual review of statement meeting and by contributing either in writing or discussion to this
- by following our positive approach and culture by supporting the development of maturing attributes, attitudes and concepts through sensitive encouragement and thoughtful praise which nurtures positive behaviours

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- supporting their children, as they grow and mature into young students, to gradually take on a range of responsibilities, enabling them to become independent, young adults
- ensuring that their child is well enough to attend school and keeping us informed about their health when they are absent

Guidelines of Good Practice

<u>Strategy Objectives for Teaching and Learning</u>
Our curriculum is planned through much of the practical application of work being organised on a personalised basis through each pupil's IEP. A termly theme based upon the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, Early Years Foundation Stage Goals, Post 16 curriculum supports an agreed, whole school, long term planning structure which provides a regular change of stimulus to excite, enthuse and energise learning.

❑ The Curriculum is appropriately personalised to support each pupil's individual learning targets as detailed in their IEP and annual school report.
❑ Specific strategies which support cognitive and Habits of Mind/Higher Order Skills development are infused throughout our whole school life.
❑ Early developmental learning needs are supported through appropriate planning which effectively includes and manages developmental, therapeutic and experiential planning.
❑ Most subjects are timetabled on a weekly basis with some exceptions.
❑ Each class plans their learning content for the term based upon the termly theme ensuring that all learning is based upon pupil's individual objectives and provides stimulating and challenging learning experiences.

<u>Learning involves ………</u>
❑ sharing experiences, knowledge and skills with the intention of extending personal learning
❑ an understanding of how to do something
❑ knowing and understanding something new that you did not know before
❑ changing and developing ones understanding of concepts and skills, thoughts and attitudes
❑ the development of collaboration, communication, the ability to question and the ability to think - skills which support further learning throughout life
❑ motivation, determination, perseverance, resilience and patience which are skills which sustain learning
❑ initiative, investigating, experimenting, comparing and contrasting which are skills which encourage children to take risks with their

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learning and to value the process of the experience rather than the final product outcome

We know children learn best and learning is most effective when:-
- children are happy and relaxed
- children are treated with respect
- all aspects of their development are seen to be of equal worth
- children work in a stimulating environment
- the whole school learning environment is well ordered
- children have a broad range of learning experiences
- children are set tasks that are appropriately challenging and enjoyable
- children are given the responsibility to make decisions about their own learning
- children take responsibility for their own and others learning
- children have the opportunity to develop and discover a range of new interests
- children clearly know and understand what the lesson and their personal learning objectives are
- there is a supportive culture of expectation and praise which challenges and motivates children to learn
- a variety of learning styles is routinely used and the pace of lessons is individualised to meet the needs of each learner
- children are given time to think creatively and critically and to express these thoughts
- children experience a range of strategies which includes individual, paired, group, class and mixed/joint class teaching
- children are able to work collaboratively and peer tutor each other
- children reflect on their learning, particularly at the end of a lesson
- children's achievements are celebrated

To help children be happy and relaxed we will:
- greet them with a smile
- make them feel safe, both physically and emotionally
- listen to them when things go wrong
- comment on poor behaviour not the child
- be firm and set specific boundaries and show understanding and empathy
- be fair and consistent in our own behaviour

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In treating children with respect we will:
- ❑ use their names
- ❑ praise each child with genuine and sincere comments
- ❑ show genuine and sincere interest in each child as an individual
- ❑ value each child's contribution equally
- ❑ take every opportunity to give positive feedback to everyone
- ❑ recognise that children learn in different ways and adapt strategies accordingly
- ❑ set a personal example that is consistent with what we expect from the children
- ❑ maintain high expectations

Further principles of teaching and learning:
- ❑ All learning is achieved by the learner
- ❑ Everybody learns in different ways
- ❑ We work with what the learner brings
- ❑ We start from where the learner is
- ❑ We understand that making mistakes is the first step to greater understanding
- ❑ Everyone is challenged and supported for real learning to take place
- ❑ Learning takes place over time, at a pace which is individual to us all
- ❑ Just because it has been taught does not mean that it has been learned
- ❑ The steps and scaffolding we can provide to support learning are infinite and only limited by our own understanding, thoughts, experience and knowledge

The Language of Learning
Adults help pupils to scaffold their questions and answers by modelling and encouraging the use of 'A Language for Learning', for example:

"I thought about it"
"I talked about it"
"I thought of several possible questions"
"I thought of several possible answers"
"I said it out loud to see if it sounded right"

Adults use constructive conjunctions

Don't use But use And

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Your work is good <u>but</u> now I want you to (has a negative inference)

Your work is good <u>and</u> now I want you to (has a positive inference)

<u>Adults ask open questions and make space and listening time</u>

Make waiting time, using patient silence for thinking and supporting this with expectant and encouraging silent prompts.

Ask follow up questions, for example:-
"What made you think that?"

Ask for more than one question/answer.

Encourage the children to ask questions and to seek answers to these amongst themselves.

Encourage the children to develop their thoughts by skilful questioning.
" Have you changed your mind?"   "What helped you to do that?"
" How did you develop your thinking about.....?"

Encourage the children to compromise and understand from another's point of view, for example:-
"Have 2 minutes to discuss this in pairs, then give me a joint answer."

Adults understand that there is more than one right answer and skilfully build upon children's contributions through using pause and waiting times and if necessary inference, which is therefore then modelling an answer.

<u>Adults give choices and encourage pupils to make their own choices and decisions</u>

"You could do task 3, you could do task 5, your choice, you decide."

<u>Classroom Script</u>

❏ What do <u>we</u> need to remember?
❏ <u>When</u> you finish, you can …
❏ I <u>know</u> you are clever, you can do …
❏ Which bit didn't I explain properly?

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- Take your time, think it through …
- Listen carefully, can you repeat what I've just said?

<u>"Children learn effectively when ………"</u>

- students find the work challenging and enjoyable
- students know, understand and are involved with decisions about what their learning objectives are for the lesson
- there is a culture of expectation and praise
- students are supported to use a variety of learning styles
- students are given time to think creatively and critically
- students are able to work collaboratively
- students know what is needed for success and how well they are progressing by receiving frequent, individualised feedback which guides improvement by "stepping" their achievements
- students reflect on their learning, particularly at the end of the lesson
- the learners' achievements are celebrated

<u>Who are the learners?</u>
All people in our school community are learners:

- children
- adults (staff, governors, volunteers and students)
- parents/carers

The CPD policy outlines in full detail our aims regarding professional development. In summary, our aim is to help all staff develop their professional learning, leading them to:

- know and direct themselves as learners
- extend and enhance their professional skills
- develop their awareness and self-esteem
- contribute fully to the learning and success of the school and its pupils.

As adults, we seek to act as role models for life-long learning by seeking to improve our own learning.

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<u>Development for staff learning is fostered through:</u>
- a wide range of learning opportunities that meet the needs of individual learners
- developing a learning climate that supports openness, risk-taking, sharing experience, learning from mistakes, leaders who are also co-learners
- opportunity to be part of a development team that focuses on learning
- opportunity to be involved in a system of coaching

As a learning school we strive for improvement and development and as a staff will seek to be self-directed learners. We aim to achieve this through:

- a shared vision
- all staff being engaged in learning as well as pupils
- the use of reflection – all staff are encouraged to reflect upon and consider their practice and to discuss this
- sharing of practice by staff visiting each other's classrooms/place of work and developing a whole school knowledge and understanding
- all staff sharing their practice and experiences at our team meetings
- staff directing their own learning through a supportive but challenging performance management system and the maintenance of individual portfolios
- all staff being part of ongoing training and support which helps them both to give and receive honest, open and constructive feedback which aims to develop their personal attributes and professional skills, as an individual who is a valued and invaluable member of our school team
- a constant drive to learn and develop as individuals and as a staff
- Team Leaders who are supportive, effectively trained and who strive to develop all individuals
- effective collaboration
- the maintenance of an up-to-date professional library that focuses on learning
- opportunities to observe each other and to discuss and learn from these opportunities
- an effective system of support for new staff

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Stress

We promote the professional development of all staff and reduce stress for them at a whole-school level if:

❑ the school has clear aims and objectives

❑ there is effective communication on all issues

❑ there is an affiliative and collaborative whole school culture

❑ everyone is encouraged and is given the opportunity to enhance their professional development through high quality in-service training and through in-house sharing of expertise and experience

❑ individual strengths and experience are recognised and taking on additional responsibilities is actively encouraged, which supports an individual's development and is to the advantage of our whole school

❑ all staff are supportive of each other, and there are regular opportunities for the staff to meet informally

❑ all staff are encouraged to raise and discuss issues which they find stressful

❑ all staff have a sense of belonging and ownership within the school

Interactive Learning

Our school specialises in supporting all children's learning through our expertise, knowledge and experience of the process of learning. Our methodology and pedagogy are centred around the individual child, their needs and how we can structure their learning into infinite 'steps' of objectives and provide each child with the scaffolding and support they need, to enable them to achieve.

A copy of Our Learning Policy and all other policies is available from Mrs Penelope Derries, Headteacher by contacting Mrs Lorna Stevenson, School Office Manager.

Policy reviewed:- March 2025

Penny Derries   George Murray
Headteacher   Chair of Governors

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Next date for review:- March 2028

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