

Stepney Greencoat Church of England Primary School



Teaching and Learning Policy

Developed first November 2005
Previous Review: Jan 2008
Current Review: September 2011
Next Review: March 2013

INTRODUCTION

At Stepney Greencoat School we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the notion that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun. 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 & OBJECTIVES

This teaching and learning policy is intended to promote consistency and high standards and the achievement of the school aims. At Stepney Greencoat School we aim to provide a caring, supportive and stimulating environment with high quality teaching through which to foster

- A high level of literacy and numeracy and an enquiring mind which wants to learn more each day;
- Independent young people who are confident, flexible and able to cooperate with others;
- Imagination and creative expression through a wide range of media;
- Conscientious young citizens of our multi-cultural society who are tolerant and respect others' values;
- Pride in achievement and a desire to succeed;
- Effective links between the school, the child's home and the community, which promote aspiration and high expectations;
- Equality of opportunity for all;

EFFECTIVE LEARNING

We acknowledge that people learn in many different ways and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them. The psychologist Howard Gardner identifies seven main areas of intelligence: linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal/group working, and intrapersonal/reflective. We take into account these different forms of intelligence when planning teaching and learning styles.

We offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways. These include:

- investigation and problem solving;
- whole class work;
- watching television and responding to musical or tape recorded material;
- research and finding out;
- questioning;
- debates, role plays and oral presentations;
- group work;
- use of the computer;

- designing and making things;
- pair work;
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- participation in physical activity;
- independent work;
- creative activities;
- reflecting on what has been learned

We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in 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. Self review and peer review strategies are used, as well as planned plenary at the end of lessons to review the key learning objectives and to assess the level of understanding.

Children learn best when the teachers:

- share a common philosophy based on values explicitly grounded in equality issues.
- reflect this understanding in their planning, delivery and classroom organisation
- plan time to focus, observe and assess pupils.
- plan laterally and vertically to ensure that learning is building on previous knowledge and experiences
- are organised and well prepared in order to minimise stress
- are not rushed for time/ are punctual and ready when the children enter the classroom.
- have knowledge of the National Curriculum, Numeracy and Literacy Strategies and keep up to date.
- provide opportunities for pupils to be made aware of different perspectives.
- have researched their topic and have examined it for areas of bias.
- share good practice (eg good work from the children and good teaching from the staff)
- co-operate with one another
- keep in mind individual child's needs.
- are reliable and conscientious.
- are happy and healthy.
- are not constantly interrupted in the classroom.
- have an open attitude to change and development or expertise.
- are good role models.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING

When teaching we focus on motivating children and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. We use curriculum plans based on DfES and QCA schemes to guide our teaching. This sets out the aims, objective and details of what is to be taught to each year group.

We believe children learn effectively when the teacher provides:

- thorough preparation;
- an atmosphere where children are prepared to take risks;
- lessons where children's previous learning and interests are built upon, through purposeful application of knowledge to different situations;
- shared learning objectives which are understood by the pupils;
- innovative teaching;
- opportunities to review and reflect on the learning;
- high expectations of what pupils are expected to achieve by the end of the session;
- appropriate pace to the lesson;
- thinking time before answering questions
- open-ended, thought provoking, challenging questions of the children;
- lessons where children's understanding is developed through active, practical and first hand experiences, involving individual and collaborative talk, exploration, questioning, prediction and investigation, so that the lesson makes a difference;
- developmental feedback and constructive criticism of pupil's work;
- support for the learning of pupils with differing abilities;
- a planned programme of educational visits to reinforce and stimulate learning;

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's level of attainment. Our prime focus is to develop further their knowledge and skills. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability. When planning work for children with special educational needs (SEN) we give due regard to information and targets contained in the children's Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

We have high expectations of all children, and believe that all children should be included in the full range of educational opportunities and that their work here at Stepney Greencoat School should be of the highest possible standard.

All teachers try hard to establish positive working relationships with the children that they are teaching. We treat them fairly and give them equal opportunity to take part in class activities. All teachers follow the school policy with regard to discipline and classroom management.

We praise and reward children for good effort and, by so doing, help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general. We insist on good order and behaviour at all times. When children misbehave we follow the guidelines for sanctions as outlined in our school Behaviour Policy.

Teaching Assistants and other adult helpers are deployed in a variety of ways. Sometimes they work with individual children and sometimes they work with small groups. Teaching Assistants are also fully involved in the delivery of support programmes such as Early Literacy Support (Y3), Early Words and Phonological Awareness Training (PAT). Our adult helpers also assist with the preparation and storage of classroom equipment.

All teachers reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and plan their professional development needs accordingly. We do all we can to support teachers and teaching assistants in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice.

DISPLAY

The school believes that the purpose of display is to support pupil's learning. This may be achieved in a variety of ways:

Engaging pupils in learning – ownership by the pupils

- Interactive display
- Exciting ideas
- Asking questions
- Fresh / relevant to current topics & themes
- Challenging
- Colourful
- Criteria for success

Enabling learning to take place

- Word lists
- White boards
- Connectives
- Access to basic resources by pupils (crayons, scissors, paper, glue, etc.)
- Number lines
- Number squares
- Timelines
- Tables squares
- Clocks
- High-frequency words
- Place value cards available

Keeping what is learnt in mind

- Key ideas
- Word lists
- Flip charts
- Connectives
- Mind maps, links

Celebrating success

- Displaying good work (also in corridors)
- Exemplar materials
- Pupil's photos

Raising expectations

- Setting targets
- Aims
- Class/group targets (literacy/numeracy)
- Agreed class rules

Clarifying routines

- Timetables
- Visual activity cues
- Access to resources labelled
- Signs

Encouraging independence

- Self-registration charts
- Word banks, dictionaries, thesaurus
- Access to resources
- Class responsibilities, rotas, monitors
- Strategies for self-help

Inclusive classrooms

- Multi-cultural content (not only relating to RE)
- Access
- Gender role models
- Pupil ownership
- Named work by all pupils

In general there is a variety of the children's work on display in each classroom - Maths, creative writing, topic based, design and technology, Art etc. so that current work themes are reflected and all children's work is seen to be valued.

TARGET SETTINGS

Whole school targets are agreed on and then targets are set in English and Mathematics for individuals and groups of children. Literacy targets are based on reading and writing assessments and are discussed with the children. Numeracy targets are based on the work to be studied each term. Targets are discussed with parents at parents' evenings.

Pupil Tracking meetings are held termly to discuss each pupil's progress in relation to the expected end of year targets for Reading, Writing and Mathematics for all children. These are on spreadsheets with SATs results and QCA test results to show children's progress.

PLANNING

Encouraging independence

- The National Numeracy Strategy
- RE scheme of work
- The National Literacy Strategy
- Foundation Stage planning
- The National Curriculum / QCA

Long term planning

The Whole School Curriculum Map details what should be covered every half term in every year group. It follows a one-year rolling programme. All subjects are taught to discrete year groups to ensure progression. The Headteacher as well as curriculum co-ordinators help to monitor coverage in all areas. The Whole School Curriculum Map is located on the board in the staffroom and every teacher should have a copy for easy reference.

Medium term planning

The Medium term plans for every half term or term for all subjects are identified in subject schemes of work folders (QCA documents) and outline:

- Learning Objectives to be covered each week
- References to NNS, NLS or National Curriculum/QCA
- Content to be covered each week
- References to Foundation Stage Objectives

A Pacing Sheet is written each half term, detailing what is to be taught each week in each subject. The Pacing Sheet is handed to the Headteacher by the end of the first week of each half term.

Short term planning

All subjects are planned on a weekly basis. This will:

- Show learning objectives
- Show how ICT will be undertaken in different subject areas
- Show differentiated tasks for 3 ability groups (& children on SEN register)
- Show Foundation Stage planning based on Foundation Stage Profile Objectives
- Show focus group for the teacher (F), TA and for any other adult helpers (OT)
- Show opportunities for assessment (A)

These plans are used as working documents. Evaluation of lessons should be recorded on them in order to inform the teacher's future planning.

Weekly Plans

- Weekly plans for **Literacy, Numeracy, RE and Foundation Subjects** are handed to the Headteacher either on the Friday or first thing on Monday, as it is important for every lesson, including those taught on Monday mornings to be fully recorded in plans.
- Weekly plans for **Literacy, Numeracy, RE and Foundation Subjects should be easily accessible in each classroom. These should either be on display or in the planning folder all the time.**
- Teachers' weekly plans are kept in the Headteacher's room (a different one for each year group) and are available for all teaching staff to view.

Support for Teachers

Discussion of Plans

Whilst drafting plans, staff should consult curriculum co-ordinators on each area of the curriculum, when necessary.

Having submitted the pacing sheet and weekly plans to the Headteacher, discussion will follow with class teachers, as and when necessary. The Headteacher will also consult with co-ordinators should there be any concerns over the planning in their particular curriculum area.

Monitoring of plans

- Curriculum co-ordinators are released according to the school's priorities (and therefore the state of the budget) in order to monitor the implementation of plans in the classrooms. Notes of visits are kept by co-ordinators and discussed with each teacher at the end of the visit. A copy of the note of visit is given to the teacher and to the Headteacher who will follow up the visit, if necessary, in an appropriate way.
- The Headteacher regularly visits classrooms in order to monitor the implementation of specifically defined areas of the curriculum and teaching practice. Notes of visits are kept and shared with each teacher at the end of the visit.
- Team teaching, peer coaching and demonstration lessons – this is always followed by discussion
- Samples of the children's work are monitored by the Headteacher and co-ordinators. Notes are made and shared with the class teacher afterwards.
- Advisory staff for specific curriculum areas work alongside teachers in classrooms or help with planning if necessary.

Staff INSET and CPD

The in-service training needs of the school are linked to the School Development Plan. Staff have opportunities to further their own professional development through outside and in-house training. These are usually linked to the teachers' Performance Management targets. Twilight sessions are FREE to schools. Day courses normally require supply cover, for which an annual budget is allocated. Therefore, courses have to be negotiated with the Headteacher bearing the budget in mind together with the priorities of the school.

Class Timetable

Class teachers are required to develop a class timetable; this may vary on a termly basis depending on the subject focus. All class timetables should ensure the following:

Daily coverage of Literacy and Numeracy lessons.

- 1 hour for KS2 and 45minutes for KS1

Weekly coverage of subjects

- Religious Education should be timetabled for all pupils (1hour 15 minutes for KS2 and 1 hour for KS1).
- Foundation subjects time allocation is as follows:
- Physical Education – 2 hours
- Art or DT – 1 hour
- History or Geography – 1 hour
- Music -30 minutes weekly plus 30minutes of Key Stage Singing
- ICT- 1 hour for skills development. It is expected that ICT will be applied through other subject areas.

The timetables should be displayed visibly in the classrooms for ease of reference. An updated copy should be given to the Headteacher termly.

Class Teacher's Planning Folder

Every class teacher should have a planning folder that carefully documents plans showing the relevant QCA Unit for that half term, plans for previous weeks and for the current week. The planning folder should also have a section that records assessment information about the class, ability groups and general information about the class. Groups for Literacy and Numeracy activities should be displayed in each classroom for ease of reference.

Absence

When a teacher is on course or knows that they are to be absent, he or she must set the work for the class beforehand. The supply teacher is expected to mark all the work undertaken while he/ she is in charge of the class.

Class Outings for Curriculum Enrichment

It is primarily the class teacher's responsibility to plan all class outings. The teaching assistant and the office staff play a supportive role in ensuring that all arrangements are secured.

The Headteacher must approve of any plans for out of school trips. Letters should be sent home in advance for parental permission. A copy of every letter that is sent home should be filed in the office.

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

Assessment exists to help the teacher to help the child. It ensures more effective teaching by providing the evidence for closer matching of tasks to the child's needs. It assists the children by providing them with an indication of what stage they have reached in the learning process. It helps to identify future planning and teaching strategies. It also helps us to recognise and move on from success.

Assessment for learning

- Is part of effective planning
- Affects learner motivation
- Focuses on how students learn
- Promotes commitment to learning objectives and assessment criteria
- Is central to classroom practice
- Helps learners know how to improve
- Is a key professional skill
- Encourages self-assessment
- Has an emotional impact by promoting self-esteem
- Recognises progress from child's previous best

We use these strategies to link assessment to better teaching and learning:

- Evaluation of one week's planning informs next week's plan
- Writing books: used every half-term from Year R to Year 6 show children's progress
- Use of data from formal assessment to inform planning and setting
- Assessment tasks, e.g. writing, numeracy, science, RE: results used to inform future planning
- Improvement time: children are given back work with suggestions as to how part of it might be improved, then allowed planned improvement time (5 -10 minutes)

RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENTS, COMMUNITY AND GOVERNORS

Parents

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping their children to learn. We work hard to inform and support parents in how they can help further their children's learning and confidence at school.

Parents' consultation meetings with teachers are held to discuss progress and strategies for further improvement. We encourage parents to attend parents' evenings – to meet the teacher early in the Autumn Term, to discuss each child's progress later in the Autumn term and in the Spring term, and in the Summer term to discuss the written report.

In between parents' evening, parents should feel able to approach the teacher, and vice versa, after school to discuss the child's learning. If a long period of discussion is necessary, teachers are advised to ask the parent to make an appointment.

The school sends information to parents at the start of each term about the programmes each child will be following in Literacy, Numeracy and in the Foundation subjects (in Foundation Stage information about Early Learning goals). Information about homework expectations is also sent at this time so that parents know what will be given to children each week.

As children begin at Stepney Greencoat School, they follow our induction process, which gradually introduces the child to their new teacher and class and to the sort of experiences they will be having in Reception class. Parents are provided with important information and meet with staff and the Headteacher, as well as their child's class teacher. Parents can share any concerns they may have. They also receive information about helping their child with early literacy and numeracy skills.

Parents receive a detailed school report in July. This outlines the child's achievements during the year, how they are achieving relative to expected levels and how they can improve and develop in the future. Parents may discuss any concerns they have with teachers.

Parents are encouraged to attend the weekly Class Assemblies, where the children have an opportunity to demonstrate some of the work they have done in the class.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that children attend school regularly. Holidays during term time should be avoided as these interrupt the child's progress and they miss important work and may fall behind. Parents are asked to inform the school of any absence on the first day (telephone answer phone available) so that we know that they are safe at home.

Many parents offer some of their time to help in school. These offers are always welcome and parents can undertake a variety of tasks depending on the teacher's judgement - working with individuals and groups of all ages or supporting during class outings. All school helpers are officially required to undertake a CRB (Criminal Record Bureau) clearance before starting work.

Unsupervised helpers must have CRB clearance.

Teachers are encouraged to support the PTFA, which is a vital component of life at Stepney Greencoat School, both as a fund raising group and organiser of social events.

Community

Teachers are encouraged to maintain links with the local community. Stepney Greencoat School has strong links with the local churches, St Dunstan's and St Anne's Churches.

- We encourage our partnership with local secondary schools, particularly Sir John Cass Secondary School.
- We encourage visits to other primary schools. We have forged closer links with our Primary Network Learning Partner schools – Sir William Burrough Primary School, Stebon Primary School and Our Lady’s Catholic Primary School.
- We are very interested in forging links with businesses and we have become members of the Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership. This has helped to develop our links with businesses such as Lloyds of London, Barclays Bank and Waitrose in Canary Wharf.
- We encourage the children to help people living in the local community e.g. harvest gifts are distributed to disadvantaged local people or to charities. National charities are supported by the proceeds raised by other events such as Red nose Day, UNICEF Day etc.
- We receive visitors from the local community regularly e.g. local ministers, the police, fire brigade, road safety officers and Dockland Light Railway staff etc.
- We take part in music festivals e.g. Prom Praise for School

Governors

Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school’s policies on teaching and learning. In particular they:

- Support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
- Monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment
- Ensure that the school buildings and premises are effective in supporting successful teaching and learning;
- Ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching;
- Monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations
- Monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning policies through the school self-review processes. These include the Headteacher’s reports to governors and the work of the Standards Committees.

Governors are encouraged to:

- Visit classrooms regularly
- Attend governors’ annual day in the Spring term
- Attend all full Governing Body and relevant sub-committee meetings
- Attend school functions and PTFA events
- Participate in training sessions e.g. school based or LA organised
- Liaise with the curriculum co-ordinator with whom they are twinned

ENGLISH/LITERACY

At Stepney Greencoat our language curriculum revolves largely around the teaching of basic skills to enable all children to read fluently, write imaginatively and neatly in a grammatically correct manner, spell correctly and develop good speaking and listening skills. We approach the teaching of reading through a variety of means. Our practice involves using the relevant core scheme, supplemented by additional reading material to widen each child's sight vocabulary.

From an early age the children are taught phonics using relevant materials, and word building skills. Opportunities are also given to increase their vocabulary by borrowing a variety of books available in school. In Key Stage One, parents are strongly encouraged to assist with their child's reading, and guidance is given by the teacher in a reading diary sent home. The older children are taught to develop wider reading competency through topic research and library reference skills. The Parent and Child

Together/Teacher (PACT) folder provides a link between a child's reading record in school and at home. Parents should comment and sign when they have listened to their child read. The class teacher and teaching assistant or any adult who hears a child read in school, should continuously update the reading record.

Writing ability is promoted by providing opportunities for self-expression, as well as by teaching grammar, spelling techniques and correct letter formation and handwriting skills. Several schemes such as Letts Literacy, Nelson Handwriting and other modern schemes are being used with the children to support the skills being taught. Additionally, the children are introduced to many forms of literature and poetry and are encouraged to develop speaking and listening skills through discussion, debate and drama.

Our English skills are taught daily through the "Literacy Hour" introduced by the Government in September 1998. Lessons are planned using the Tower Hamlet Literacy Medium Term Plans, which are in line with the National Literacy Strategy.

NUMERACY

The work in Mathematics is based wholly on the philosophy and expectations of the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) and the Mathematics elements of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. Each child is assessed continuously against a progressive series of objectives and their future work is dependent upon their achieving the appropriate level of understanding that these require.

During the foundation stage much of the work involves practical tasks, games and activities to build an understanding that Mathematics is involved with real things and part of the real world. Children count by counting objects, manipulate numbers by dealing with objects and, as they are ready, begin to understand that numbers can be used to represent the group of objects without their being there. Sequences and patterns and an understanding of shape and position all start in similar ways.

As children progress through the school they will be given more demanding challenges according to their level of ability. To further this development the work is differentiated to cater for different abilities. The philosophy is to provide as much support as possible for those who need it most, whilst giving independence and freedom to explore and to meet higher challenges to those who are ready for this. The progress of the children is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

Although assessment is a constant part of the process from the earliest stages, from Year 2 onwards there is a nationally accepted series of formal and annual assessments, which are used to provide evidence of the children's levels of achievement. These assessments are used at Stepney Greencoat School and provide much valuable information about how children are progressing. The results of these assessments are, of course, shared with parents at these times.

Mental mathematical skills and the ability to solve problems in a 'real life' context are given particular importance within the National Numeracy Strategy.

We are always keen that children are encouraged at home to develop their skills and any efforts made to encourage and develop these areas in particular will be of great benefit to a child's progress. Mathematics is also one of the areas in which children will be expected to carry out regular homework tasks and again parental support and encouragement with the completion of these tasks will be very beneficial.

If a parent has any questions, or concerns about their child's Mathematics they should make an appointment to see the child's class teacher. If there are any concerns about the overall provision for Mathematics then the Maths Co-ordinator should be consulted.

This school policy reflects the consensus of opinion of the teaching staff and has the full agreement of the Governing Body.

Developed: November 2005

Reviewed: January 2008, September 2011

Next Review Date: September 2014

Stepney Greencoat Church of England Primary School

A Policy Statement for Equal Opportunities

At Stepney Greencoat School we recognise that Equal Opportunities issues feature in every aspect of school life. Our major responsibility is how such issues are addressed. In the curriculum and are the responsibility of all those involved in the processes of teaching and learning.

When children start they bring with them their own experiences, their imagination, their curiosity and a range of skills in the process of development. They often bring, too, the special qualities of an optimistic attitude to learning and a positive image of themselves. To reflect our commitment to ensuring Quality and Equality in what we provide at Stepney Greencoat School, we aim to identify ways in which we can build on these positive factors, through our focus on what pupils should be taught, as well as how they should be taught.

We understand that quality is not merely about 'offering' opportunities, but that it is a matter of taking action to ensure that opportunities are taken up and used. At Stepney Greencoat School we aim to achieve a balance between diversity on one hand and shared values on the other, which are based on principles of fairness and justice.

Children soon become aware of the ways in which people are grouped in terms of class, gender, race and age. We aim to encourage pupils to learn to question the stereotypes produced by social groupings, particularly in the case of gender and race and with regard to people with differing levels of physical and sensory attributes and the wide range of intellectual abilities. This is why it is important for us to foster respect by challenging the stereotypes, which limit pupil achievements.

Therefore, at Stepney Greencoat School we aim to promote equality of opportunity through the children's classroom experiences and through the ethos of the school, which affect the type of learning which takes place inside and outside the classroom, in such places as the corridors, the playground, and the routes between home and school. Our Teaching and Learning and Record Keeping and Assessment policies aim to clarify the ways in which we are working towards achieving these aims.

We aim to monitor, evaluate and review schemes of work, individual lesson plans, teaching methods and choice and use of resources to avoid stereotypes and low expectations, in order to ensure that the entitlement set out in legislation becomes a reality at Stepney Greencoat Church of England Primary School.

Vivian Onwubalili

Headteacher

September 2011