



# THOMAS JOHNSON LOWER SCHOOL

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## Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

Responsibility	Head teacher and the Governing Body
Effective Date	March 2019
Review Date	April 2020
Approved by Full Governing Body	March 2019
Storage: (i) Electronic (ii) Hard Copy	(i) School website (managed by school Secretary) (ii) School staff room

### Rationale

We believe that an effective teaching and learning policy, which is consistently implemented across the school, enables all young people to achieve within the classroom and the wider school community. We believe that every young person, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion or culture, can succeed by constantly improving on their personal best! At Thomas Johnson Lower School we aim to combine academic Excellence and Enjoyment. In our school we strive to ensure that everyone is valued equally, achievements are celebrated and a love of lifelong learning is nurtured. There is a commitment to providing high quality continuing professional development to enable staff to develop and share their skills, knowledge and expertise in teaching and learning.

### Aims and Purpose

The aim of our Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Progress Policy is:

- To raise standards of achievement in all aspects of pupil development throughout the school.
- To develop each child's desire to achieve.
- To develop and communicate an ethos of high expectation throughout the school community.
- To provide a rich and varied learning environment, with a curriculum that is broad and balanced, that allows children to develop their skills and abilities, working towards achieving their full potential.
- To develop skills which enable children to deal with challenges and change and ensure they are better prepared for life in modern Britain.
- To develop a child's self-confidence and feeling of self-worth, by promoting their emotional well being.
- To provide children with a purpose and context for their learning, with a curriculum which is relevant to them.
- To promote a caring and considerate attitude towards each other within the community.
- To foster the tolerance of opinions and beliefs of others.
- To engender social skills that enable children to work and communicate effectively with others through Values and Emotional Literacy.
- To promote independence.

## Teaching in Practice

Our teachers strive to deliver high quality teaching and learning experiences in our lessons. Teachers achieve this by:

- Showing excellent subject knowledge and building on prior learning.
- Planning effectively and setting clear learning objectives and steps to success.
- Using a variety of teaching strategies to develop independent learning.
- Using assessment (gathered from pupil questioning and dialogue, and from marked work) to inform teaching and planning.
- To give children their next steps in their learning, primarily through in-lesson feedback and through adaptations in lesson planning.
- Using high expectations to challenge and inspire pupils, pace to maintain focus, and positive adult-pupil relationships to reduce the risk of failure.
- Showing knowledge of and embedding ICT throughout the curriculum.
- Demonstrating effective management of pupil behaviour and use of praise, in line with our behaviour policy.
- Demonstrating effective methods to meet pupils' individual needs.

## Effective Learning – Learning Approaches and Strategies

At Thomas Johnson Lower School teachers are aware of the importance of being “ready to learn” (ie: emotionally able to listen and assimilate new knowledge without the burden of worries and anxieties). The school uses Values-based Education and Emotional Literacy tools to underpin all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers are also aware of different learning styles, whether they are Visual, Auditory and/or Kinaesthetic (VAK), and plan a range of activities accordingly to engage these learners. We involve children in the learning process and encourage them to develop self-assessment skills through our success criteria, so that they can take greater responsibility for their learning. We make regular evaluations of lessons so that we can modify and improve our teaching and inform future planning. We regularly review our marking strategy, and use verbal and written feedback to guide the children to recognise how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve.

We set academic, and where necessary, positive behaviour targets for children in each academic year and we share these targets with children and their parents. We review the progress of each child regularly and monitor and revise targets for Reading, Writing and Mathematics. We set ambitious targets so that we can aim for the highest outcomes for each child. Children are made aware of their individual targets and how they can improve.

Through high quality learning experiences, our children are encouraged to feel engaged in their work and demonstrate high levels of participation and engagement, concentration and application. Our children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, and to reflect, evaluate and set targets for themselves.

## **Monitoring Teaching and Learning – Impact on Standards**

The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is a key element in maximising pupil progress and attainment. The subsequent evaluation of the monitoring process is vital for informing action planning for pupil needs, staff development and sharing best practice.

We aim:

- To ensure that staff know the School's Development Plan and how the school aims to achieve it
- To ensure the highest standards of teaching and learning
- To maximise pupil progress and attainment
- To inform staff development through training opportunities, working closely with our cluster schools, providing moderation, target setting and action planning
- To share good practice and ensure performance management is effective

The monitoring process will consist of:

- Classroom observation followed by feedback and developmental planning, identifying CPD needs
- Regular scrutiny of pupils' work by the SLT and Subject Leaders with feedback
- A personal performance review (see Performance Management Policy)
- Standardised proforma will be used for formal observations
- Training and staff development for those staff observing lessons
- Regular interviews with pupils.

### **Classroom Observation**

- The classroom practice of all teachers will be monitored by a member of the SLT or subject leader, by means of formal and informal observation e.g. learning walks, drop ins.
- Observations will be constructive, supportive and developmental and in line with guidelines from professional associations and Performance Management schedules
- Further observations may be requested by the teacher or monitor, but will fit in with the Performance Management schedule. No member of staff will be formally observed for more than three hours, unless there are unique circumstances (Ofsted, capability issues)
- Observations will have a focus decided by the SLT or the teacher. The focus will build on previous observations and evaluations.
- Observations will be formally recorded on the official proforma and notes will be shared with the staff member during the feedback session.

### **Groups of Learners**

At Thomas Johnson Lower School we are aware of the importance of monitoring and tracking different groups of pupils. These groups include Special Education Needs & Disability, Higher Achievers, Looked After Children, Disadvantaged and Vulnerable, and English as an Additional Language. Teachers at Thomas Johnson are made of aware of pupils who may fall into these groups and how to best support the progress of these pupils.

### **Support for teachers in improving classroom practice**

- Thorough induction for both established teachers and newly qualified teachers.
- Observation of subject leaders or skilled teachers within subject areas
- Relevant external or in-house training
- Feedback through the Performance Management Cycle
- During Staff Workshops

### **The Learning Environment**

The environment the children work in plays a crucial role in the way they learn. We strive to provide a stimulating environment conducive to learning by creating classroom environments that embody a range of teaching, learning and celebratory displays that are bright, stimulating and interactive. Our classrooms are consistent in the expectation that displays support learning (e.g. vocabulary and grammar), support behaviour (rules and Values), promote mental health (Feelings flowers and Casey Caterpillar), extend children's learning by posing questions to them, and reinforce our commitment to Safeguarding and Prevent. To provide a positive, healthy environment, all learning areas are kept clean, organised and tidy.

### **Assessment, Feedback and Marking**

Assessment for Learning is conducted during day-to-day classroom practice and takes place *during* learning. It also gives pupils an active role in the assessment process. Pupils work with the teacher to determine what is being learned and to identify what the next steps should be. Both parties then use the feedback (which includes information on how the pupils are learning, their progress, the nature of their understanding and the difficulties they are having) to improve the learning.

AfL involves the following key actions:

- sharing *learning intentions*;
- sharing and negotiating *success criteria*; – so that pupils understand what they are trying to learn, why and what is expected of them;
- giving *feedback* to pupils; – about the quality of their work and what they can do to make it better
- effective *questioning*; to create a classroom climate where pupils come up with their own ideas, think aloud and explore their understanding
- encouraging pupils to *assess and evaluate their own and others' work*. to enable them to recognise success in their own and others' work and to focus on *how* they are learning as well as *what* they are learning.

Quality feedback is essential for effective learning and teaching. Feedback can motivate pupils by building self-esteem and reinforcing the positive. Formative feedback comments on the quality of a pupil's work and offers advice on how to improve. It contains three elements:

- evidence on where the pupil is now (this is their success as it relates to the agreed criteria);
- a definition of the desired goal; and
- practical strategies to close the gap.

To be truly formative, it must help plan the next steps in learning. Formative feedback:

- is timely;
- relates to the focus of the learning (learning intention);
- identifies where success has occurred;
- identifies where and how improvement can take place;
- allows time for improvement; and
- is accessible to the pupil in terms of meaning/vocabulary.

At Thomas Johnson we recognise the potential negative impact on teachers' workload of marking every piece of work at length, especially if this marking has only a negligible impact on the pupils' work (e.g if the work is not seen until the following week, or filed). We regularly review our marking policy to ensure it is timely and relevant.

We know that oral feedback is the most powerful because it:

- is personal and specific to the pupil;
- is immediate and so allows for quick remediation and improvement; and
- reinforces the relationship between teacher and pupil and allows for the pupil to respond and participate.

In EYFS all feedback is oral, currently with a supporting written comment.

In both KS1 and KS2 pupils work to an identified success criteria and individual feedback is oral during the lesson. On reviewing the work, the teacher identifies common misconceptions and builds this into planning for the next lesson. Where further individual support is identified, 1-1 or small group work is given to support pupils with that concept.

Additionally, in KS2 pupils and teacher assess against a marking ladder in core subjects.

**We currently use simple comments at the end of many pieces of work.**

- **Green for Good: Green pen is used to indicate success in relationship to the learning (e.g. ticks and comments)**
- **Red for Remember: Red pen is used to indicate where the child can improve.**

**Staff continue to look into the effectiveness of this.**

### **Summative Assessment**

We keep a computerized record of individual pupil targets, and attainment towards those targets, at set points over the curriculum year (each half term) using Target Tracker. Teachers assess pupils' learning against each of the Key Performance Indicator statements which are defined in the National Curriculum

2014. Teachers are then able to monitor progress towards the Age Related Expectation, and also identify those children who are working at Greater Depth (also defined as “Above expectation” and “Mastery”) as well as those pupil who are “Working below”.

Beginning (b)	Beginning+ (b+)	Within (w)	Within+ (w+)	Secure (s)	Secure+ (s+)
30% of year group's criteria met	30-50% of the year group's criteria met	50-75% of the year group's criteria met	Between 75-85% of the year group's criteria met	85% of the year group's criteria met confidently and securely	100% of the year group's criteria met. Pupils show mastery and depth of knowledge, applying this in a range of contexts.
Below Age Related Expectation				ARE Age Related Expectation	GDS Greater Depth

### **Reporting to parents and carers**

Parents and carers are kept informed of their child's progress through discussion (informal and at parent meetings), interim reports and an annual report. At any time parents and carers can request time with the class teacher to discuss their child's progress.