

A Shared Policy for Teaching and Learning

New End Primary School

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The aim of this document is to improve the effectiveness of our teaching by focusing on how children learn.

We believe that the key to successful life-long learning is the importance of high self-esteem and that research (Assessment Reform Group, 1999) indicates that the following factors can improve learning:

- Effective feedback to pupils
- Active involvement of pupils in their own learning
- Adjustment of teaching to take account of the results of assessment
- The need for pupils to assess themselves and understand how to improve
- Removal of labels which compare levels between children but encourage children to bridge their own learning gaps.
- Feedback where pupils see next steps
- A confidence that every student can improve

Much of the research upon which this policy is based appears within **‘Unlocking Formative Assessment’** by Shirley Clarke.

SCHOOL AIMS

At New End Primary School we aim to establish a supportive working environment in which good learning and teaching flourish. An environment in which children are:

- Motivated to achieve within a broad and balanced curriculum to meet the demands of the National Curriculum
- Challenged by high expectations through a variety of teaching strategies
- Encouraged to be active, caring and self-disciplined members of the school community
- Able to develop spiritual and moral awareness
- Able to use a shared language to discuss their learning

We believe that pupils are likely to be learning effectively when they are:

- Working in a positive, encouraging and stimulating environment
- Actively involved in their own learning
- Given effective feedback
- Provided with tasks that have been adjusted according to their needs
- Involved in the planning, organisation and evaluation of their work
- Undertaking challenging activities which are appropriate for their age and abilities
- Clear about what they are trying to achieve and how their work can be improved
- Seeking and getting help when needed
- Given opportunities to work in a range of situations e.g. on their own, with a partner, in small groups and in whole class teaching situations
- Well motivated
- Staying on task throughout and maintaining a good work rate
- Self-evaluative
- Able to fully participate
- Encouraged to become independent learners

We believe that pupils are likely to be ineffective in their learning and therefore making less progress than expected when they are:

- Unsure about what they are supposed to be doing
- Occupied by purposeless teaching activities
- Finding work unduly hard, or too easy
- Unsure how to improve
- Working at too slow or too fast a pace
- Poorly motivated or working in an unsupportive environment
- Afraid to make mistakes

In order to be successful learners, then, we endeavour to promote those attitudes that will lead to higher attainment:

READINESS – RESILIENCE – REFLECTIVENESS – RESOURCEFULNESS - RESPONSIBILITY

Planning

- Learning objectives must be clear
- Plans should show day to day adjustments as indicated by **informal notes for future planning**

Sharing Learning Objectives

Where Learning Intentions (L.O.) are shared, pupil learning, motivation and achievement can be significantly improved. It is important that children know what they must concentrate on and the purpose of the task.

- L.O. should be in age-appropriate child-speak e.g. - to explore narrative order and identify and map out the main stages of a story becomes - Can you order your own and other stories?
- L.O. can be framed as a question i.e. Can you describe the difference between a solid and a liquid?
- Learning objectives should be separated from the activity instructions; e.g. “Can you blend colours” rather than “Can you paint a rainbow?”
- As soon as children can write reasonably fluently, ensure that the L.O. is always copied into their books and acts as the title for any piece of work.
- L.O. should be clear and on display for all lessons and explained to the children although it can sometimes be of benefit not to give these at start or too early. Vary approaches.
- Tasks must match the L.O; e.g. Can you find numbers up to 10? may involve children in pairs counting piles of objects and matching then with numeral cards.
- Success criteria should be created with the children so that the children will know when they have achieved the L.O. Inviting the children to create success criteria involves them in their own learning and is more challenging than being given the information.
- ‘This is because’ should be referred to frequently in order to tell the children why they are learning
- L.O. should be visually displayed and then should be read aloud with the children where possible in order to exploit different learning styles and suit different ages.

Pupil Self-Evaluation

- Learners need to be responsible for their own learning and studies have shown that self-evaluation improves achievement. Children will need support in how to do this and responses will need to be modelled throughout the year.
- These sessions should be used to inform planning and helps teachers to value pupil’s contributions.
- For Y4-6 a range of self-evaluative questions that can be based on the L.O. should be on display to capitalise on the power of the visual image
- Questions should be linked with the L.O. e.g. “What are you most pleased with about understanding pushes and pulls?”
- A variety of approaches should be used to answer these questions – whole-class responses, group responses, paired response, random responses or written individual ones. A balance of all of these approaches should be used.
- A self-evaluative traffic-light can be used to indicate how well a L.O. has been met
- Plenary should be used for self-evaluation.

Feedback

Ensure that the language that is used when children find something difficult shows that difficulty helps us to find out what is needed for new learning to take place. We need to think carefully about strategies to raise children's self-esteem.

- Feedback should focus on L.O. The main purpose of marking should be to give information to children about how well they have done against the L.O.
- Marking must be manageable and not all pieces can be 'quality marked'
- Focus on spelling or handwriting should be done in other contexts.
- Only give feedback on what children were asked to pay attention to.
- Quality marking should indicate 3 stars and a wish – that is – 3 places need to be indicated where the child has written best aspects against L.O. and an area where some improvement can be made should be indicated by an arrow/asterisk. By the arrow information needs to be given as to how the child can close the gap. Useful 'close the gap' comments are:

Reminders: e.g. What else could you say here?

Scaffolds: e.g. What was the dog's tail doing? 'The dog was angry so he....' 'Describe the expression on the dog's face.'

Examples: e.g. 'Choose one of these or your own: 'He ran around in circles looking for the rabbit/The dog couldn't believe his eyes'

This need not be done on every piece of work and for many pieces of work, a teacher tick and traffic-light is adequate in order to be manageable.

- At Key Stage 2, encourage children to self-mark/pair mark wherever possible looking for success and improvement against L.O. Partners need to be chosen carefully and should be ability based, where 2 children of middle ability can be paired together or 2 more able pupils or one of middle ability with one of a lower ability. Peer- marking particularly on written pieces should follow the same 3 stars and a wish model and where there has been sufficient support on this aspect this can lead onto self assessment.
- Shared marking where a piece of work from another class or previous year group is used is also useful.
- Time should be given at the start of lessons where possible for children to read comments or look at triangle awarded in order to capitalise on children's ability to develop. Children should be given the chance to make an improvement on the same piece of work where necessary and planning should reflect this day to day adjustment.
- Set less work, so that time is allowed to mark and reflect.
- Where work is distance marked ensure that the children can read comments.

Target Setting

The aim of target setting is to raise self-esteem which research (Black and Wiliam) sees as crucial to successful learning. We believe that children are highly motivated by their targets and make better progress where they are involved in their own learning and know how to make improvements. Setting yourself a target is a natural process for a confident learner.

- At Nursery and Reception targets should be informal and be based on social skills or early writing stages.
- From Year 1 each child should have an individual or group target (if this is found to be more manageable).
- Children should focus on one target at a time and should preferably be negotiated with the child after an assessment task.
- Numeracy targets should focus on number bonds for KS1 and x tables and other number skills for KS2.
- Children should be encouraged to recognise where in their work a target has been met.
- For children with an IEP these targets should ideally be related to those on the IEP.

Questioning

- Each child should be allocated a talking partner and ideally these will be of a mixed ability. Where children have a talking partner to discuss ideas before offering an idea to the teacher, responses from the class are much greater. Partners are changed regularly and differ depending on the activity.
- When asking questions, teachers should endeavour to allow a wait time of at least 5 seconds.
- Thinking can also take place in small groups.
- Give pupils a choice of different possible answers.
- Questions should use a range of strategies. Talking partners should be used frequently in all lessons where children are being asked to respond.
- When few children respond to questions talking partners should then be used to improve participation.

A summary and checklist for success

1. Learning objectives (including as a question) should be clear and shared with children in words that they can understand and form part of a quality introduction where success criteria and reasons for the objective (which may be a spoken aside as can take up too much space to display) are spelt out to all pupils. In order to capture and inspire the children this may not be the first thing you say. Timescales should be given.
2. All lessons should involve pupils working on quality activities (differentiated where appropriate).
3. All lessons should involve the teacher being engaged in teaching – initially to the whole class moving towards small group teaching as appropriate.
4. Planning should show clear L.O. and be based on NC PoS, school-developed curriculum plans and school polices. It should show adjustment based upon an assessment of the children's needs. Notes for future planning should be completed for each lesson.
5. A plenary should end each lesson where teachers and pupils should reflect upon the extent to which the L.O. has been met.

6. Children should be involved in self-evaluation against learning objectives.
7. Oral and written feedback should be focused around L.O. and where marking is in more depth teachers should focus on what went well and what could be improved. Marking should indicate where a gap can be closed or extended.
8. Individual targets should be set for Literacy and Numeracy.
9. Appropriate questioning should be used.
10. Children's self-esteem should be raised via the language we use and the ways we celebrate achievement.
11. Children need to be clear about current standards of achievement and know what they need to do to improve their work.
12. All children should be encouraged to ask and answer questions and talking partners should be used to facilitate full participation.
13. Pupils should be encouraged to become independent learners who are able to select and organise materials for the task in hand and to work with sustained concentration.

APPENDICES:

ILLUSTRATING THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF RESPONSES WHEN USING THE ‘CLOSING THE GAP’ MARKING STRATEGY

L.O. effectively introduce a character at the start of a story.

Activity: children have to choose someone they know, who the class will not know, to describe.

“We are learning to write about people’s characters effectively in our stories.”

Success Criteria (created with class):

We will have said something about their appearance, their likes and dislikes (including hobbies), their general personality, their attitude to others, anything else.

“This is important because it helps the reader to feel they really know the person, rather than just knowing what they look like.”

AFTER HIGHLIGHTING (3) SUCCESS PHRASES (OR PERHAPS JUST ONE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN), IMAGINE YOU HAVE PLACED AN ARROW AT THE LINE WRITTEN BY THE CHILD:

This person is a good friend.

POSSIBLE ‘CLOSING THE GAP’ PROMPTS ARE:

A reminder prompt – most suitable for brighter children because they know what to do and simply need **reminding about what could be improved:**

“Say more about how you feel about this person.”

(MOST CHILDREN NEED MORE SUPPORT THAN A REMINDER PROMPT.)

A scaffolded prompt – most suitable for children who need more structure than a simple reminder, and **provides some support:**

“Can you describe how this person is ‘a good friend’?” **A QUESTION**

“Describe something which happened and showed how they were a good friend.”
A DIRECTIVE

“He showed me he was a good friend when..... (Finish this sentence.)”
AN UNFINISHED SENTENCE

An example prompt – for all children, average and below average children, giving them a **choice of actual words or phrases**:

“Choose one of these or your own:

He is a good friend because he never says unkind things about me.

My friend is a friend because he is always nice to me.”

N.B. ‘CLOSING THE GAP’ IS A STRATEGY DESIGNED FOR DISTANCE MARKING OF INDEPENDENT WRITING – NOT FOR CHILDREN WHO NEED FACE-TO-FACE MARKING.

Questions to promote children’s self-evaluation

Self evaluation:

thinking about what happens
when we are learning

(Choose one or two and add the words of the learning intention)

- What really made you think/did you find difficult while you were learning to ... ?
- What helped you (e.g. a friend, the teacher, new equipment, a book, your own thinking) when something got tricky about learning to ... ?
- What do you need more help with about learning to ... ?
- What are you most pleased with about learning to ... ?
- What have you learnt that is new about ... (quote learning intention)?
- How would you change this activity for another group/class who were learning to ... ?