



Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

Date of latest review: January 2024

Review completed by: Head Teacher

Date of next review: January 2026

Review

The Governing body reviews this policy every 2 years. The Governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the Governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

Signed.....Governing Body

Signed.....Head Teacher

AIMS OF THE POLICY

At Cirencester Primary School we are committed to high quality teaching and learning to raise standards of achievement for all children. All teachers and Governors have been consulted in developing this policy, which summarises expectations and common working practices. It reflects what has been agreed in terms of approach and consistency and makes explicit the best practice to which the school aspires. It also reflects the aims and objectives of the school and supports its vision.

Basic Principles:

- 1) Learning is the change to long term memory
- 2) Our aims are to ensure that our pupils experience a wide breadth of study and have, by the end of each key stage, long term memory of an ambitious body of both procedural and semantic knowledge.

Teaching is the process of attending to people's needs, experiences and feelings, and intervening so that they learn particular things, and go beyond the given. It involves creating an environment and engaging with others, so that children learn particular things. This can be anything from tying a shoe lace to appreciating the structure of a three act play. At Cirencester Primary School we believe that teaching involves three main areas, namely: focus, knowledge and the ability to engage children in learning.

Teaching has to have a focus. Clear learning intentions help children to see the point of a lesson, series of lessons or intervention(s) and helps to keep the process on track. Teachers must have strong subject knowledge for the lessons they teach as well as making and maintaining positive relationships with everyone in the classroom. Clear and high expectations for all, help children achieve well.

Learning is the process whereby new knowledge, skills and behaviours change to the long term memory, often through practice, study, experience or being taught, repeatedly, over and over again.

PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Learning is the purpose of the whole school and is a shared commitment. At Cirencester Primary School we recognise that education involves children, parents, staff, Governors, the community and the local authority, and that for optimum benefit all should work closely together to support the process of learning. Working in partnership, we aim to:

- provide a supportive, positive, healthy, caring and safe environment, which has high expectations and values all members of the school community;
- recognise the needs and aspirations of all individuals and provide opportunities for all pupils to make the best possible progress and attain the highest personal achievements;
- ensure children can develop as literate and numerate individuals, within a broad, balanced, exciting and challenging curriculum;
- provide rich and varied contexts and experiences for pupils to acquire, develop and apply a broad range of knowledge, skills and understanding;
- provide a curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, physical, mental and emotional development of the pupils;
- develop individuals with lively, enquiring minds, good thinking skills, self-respect, self-discipline and positive attitudes;

- encourage all children to be enthusiastic and committed learners, promoting their self-esteem, self-worth and emotional well-being;
- develop children's confidence and capacity to learn and work independently and collaboratively;
- develop enduring values that promote social as well as learning behaviours of being: respectful, caring for others, responsibility, truthfulness and trustworthiness, curiosity, doing the right thing, politeness, a sense of belonging and self-motivation;
- encourage children to respond positively to the opportunities, challenges and responsibilities of a rapidly changing world;
- encourage children to value the diversity in our society and the environment in which they live;
- encourage children to become active and responsible citizens, contributing positively to the community and society.

Ethos

The ethos and atmosphere underpin the agreed aims of the school. In the course of their daily work the staff will contribute to the development of this ethos through:

- modelling all of the school's values and illustrating each value through daily work and behaviour
- providing a calm and effective working environment, in which each child can produce his or her best work;
- providing a welcoming environment, in which care, kindness and respect are fostered;
- providing positive role models;
- providing a fair and disciplined environment, in line with the school's behaviour policy;
- effective management of their professional time;
- developing links with all stakeholders and the wider community;
- valuing and celebrating pupils' success and achievements;
- reviewing personal and professional development in order to ensure a high level of professional expertise.

Provision is designed to advance understanding, gradually throughout a key stage.

Lessons are not an event in themselves. They are part of the process of learning and therefore we do not expect pupils to complete learning within a lesson. Many lessons will carry on over several days or even weeks until a pupil is showing the required degree of understanding. As learning is the change to long term memory, it is invisible to see in the short term.

Progress is defined as the widening and deepening of essential knowledge, skills, understanding and behaviour. This means that pupils will experience the same content over and over again, each time in a richer and more challenging context, thus deepening their understanding. We have designed an ambitious curriculum at Cirencester Primary School, based on breadth, subject knowledge and cultural capital. Teachers, subject leaders and school leaders monitor, assess and evaluate how well children are coping with the demands of this ambitious curriculum in order to evidence progress.

Roles and Responsibilities

Learning and teaching is a shared responsibility and all members of the school community have an important part to play. (See Home-School Agreement)

All members of the school community should work towards the school's aims by:

- esteeming children as individuals and respecting their rights, values and beliefs;
- fostering and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community;
- providing a well ordered environment in which all are fully aware of behavioural expectations;
- offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life and recognising the importance of different cultures;
- encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviours and work;
- working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another.

Teachers will endeavour to:

- provide a challenging and stimulating curriculum designed to encourage all children to reach the highest standard of achievement;
- provide opportunities for all pupils to develop their communication skills
- recognise and be aware of the needs of each individual child according to ability and aptitude;
- ensure that learning is progressive and continuous;
- be good role models, punctual, well prepared and organised;
- keep up-to-date with educational issues;
- provide clear information on school procedures and pupil progress;
- have a positive attitude to change and the development of their own expertise;
- establish links with the local community to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life;
- work collaboratively with all involved in education to develop a shared philosophy and commonality of practice.

Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning by:

- ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, well-rested and in good health;
- ensuring that their child arrives at school wearing the correct uniform and bringing necessary equipment;
- providing support for the discipline within the school and for the teacher's role;
- supporting the work of educational targets and becoming actively involved in the implementation of any support programme;
- participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainment;
- ensuring early contact with school to discuss matters which affect a child's happiness, progress and behaviour;
- support the school's homework policy and give due importance to any homework;
- ensuring that all contact addresses and telephone numbers are up to date and correct;
- allowing their child to become increasingly independent as they progress throughout the school;
- informing the school of reasons for their child's absence;
- actively supporting the Home-School Agreement.

Pupils are encouraged to support the school's aims by:

- attending school in good health, maintained by adequate diet, exercise and sleep;
- attending school regularly and punctually;
- being organised, bringing necessary equipment, taking letters home promptly, etc;
- conducting themselves in an orderly manner in line with the expected behaviour policy;
- taking increased responsibility for their own learning.

The community is invited to support the school by:

- contributing to activities, such as assemblies, specialist outings, clubs, etc;
- presenting themselves as positive role models to be emulated;
- organising activities and events throughout the year to extend and deepen pupils' knowledge and skills;
- supporting school events;
- voluntarily helping in the classroom.

Planning

The foundation for curricular development is the School Development Plan, developed through a process of collaboration between staff, and approved by Governors.

At Cirencester Primary School we are committed to following the programmes of study as required by the National Curriculum 2014. A cycle of National Curriculum Programmes of Study is drawn up by staff and is carefully balanced to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum, PSHE and RE. Our curriculum is based upon a series of enquiry questions that children explore, which over time lead to them being able to respond to a Big Question.

Enquiry Learning and Big Questions

Subject leaders design units of work which are set out as a series of sequential and progressive enquiry learning questions. The main focus for each term is a big overarching question. By the end of the term, children have learned sufficient knowledge and skills to be able to respond to this Big Question. Children have to remember knowledge and skills taught to them that term, in order to respond deeply to the Big Question.

At Cirencester Primary School we are committed to raising standards in communication skills. By communication skills, we mean the ability to listen, use positive body language, speak, read and write for clarity and concision, be friendly, confident, show empathy, be open minded and respectful.

Subject leaders have a variety of roles. These include:

- taking the lead in subject development and the cohesion of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in their subject throughout the school;
- supporting colleagues in their development and implementation of the scheme of work, and in assessment and record-keeping.
- monitoring progress in their subjects and advising the Curriculum leaders on action needed; taking responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for their subjects;
- using release time to support colleagues;
- keeping up-to-date through reading and attending relevant courses.

Organisation

The learning environment will be managed in such a way as to facilitate different types of learning. Opportunities will be made for:

- whole class teaching;
- group work, organised according to appropriate criteria (i.e. ability, mixed ability);
- one to one teaching;
- collaborative learning in pairs or groups;
- independent learning.

Teaching Assistants: some classes have additional support from a Teaching Assistant for core and/or some foundation sessions. Our Teaching Assistants work alongside the class teacher and are deployed where the class teacher deems appropriate. Teaching Assistants are not expected to teach whole classes, but support learning for individuals and groups. Teaching Assistants are expected to provide feedback to children during lessons, so children know what they need to do to further improve their work.

Learning Environment: all areas of the learning environment will be planned for, including, where appropriate, the outside areas, in order to ensure opportunities for a range of practical activities, which will develop appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding.

The classroom will be organised to facilitate learning and the development of independence. For example:

- resources in each area will be grouped according to curriculum subject;
- calm spaces will be comfortable and attractive;
- areas for imaginative play will change regularly, in order to give opportunities for a range of play and role-play which will contribute to learning in a purposeful manner;
- pupils will be involved in the maintenance and care of all equipment and resources.

Classroom support is available in the form of both Teaching Assistants and volunteers. These are used at the discretion of the class teacher. Volunteer helpers assist with the many aspects of school life, including supporting reading and providing assistance with school visits. Student teachers from local universities and Teaching Schools have regular placements at Cirencester Primary School and are welcomed into school.

Adaptive teaching (Responding to the current needs of the class)

Adaptive teaching is an approach a teacher will use to continually assess the strengths and needs of learners and adapt their teaching accordingly to ensure all learners can meet expectations. Examples include reteaching content that hasn't been fully understood, moving onto new content quickly if prior learning is already secure, using flexible groupings and, ultimately, being responsive to how pupils are learning.

Homework

Homework is considered to be a valuable element of the learning process. (See Homework Policy). We believe that homework should be set:

- to involve parents in their children's learning;
- to encourage children to talk about their work to their parents and explain what they are doing and how;

- to extend the time for learning, thus enabling children to practise and consolidate their skills and knowledge and strategies;
- to prepare children for secondary school experiences of homework;
- to view learning as a life long process and not just restricted to school hours.

The school's agreed practice for homework is that:

- homework is set on a regular basis, for all years, in line with our homework policy;
- homework will generally follow on from work which has taken place in class but may take many different forms, including reading, spelling work and practising number work. It should not entail new ideas that require explanation from a teacher;
- children should understand exactly what they are expected to do, how to do it, and how long it should take;
- homework should sometimes involve the participation of the parents;
- children who have made insufficient effort during class time may be asked to complete work at home.

Assessment

Formal summative assessment is carried out at the end of each National Curriculum Key Stage (i.e. in Years 2 and 6) through the use of SATs and teacher assessment. Phonics are tested in Year 1 and re-tested where necessary in Year 2. Pupils in Year 4 take part in a times tables check in the summer term.

Suitable tasks for formative on-going teacher assessment include:

- group discussions;
- short tests in which pupils write answers;
- specific assignments for individual pupils;
- Knowledge Assessment tasks set by class teachers (children respond orally or in written form to set questions posed from an image or diagram stimulus)
- discussions in which children are encouraged to appraise their own work and progress;
- pupil observations;
- NFER Maths and NFER Reading Test Assessment papers. These assessments are undertaken by all pupils at the end of each long term.
- SATs practice papers.

Feedback to pupils about their own progress is achieved through discussion, marking of work and oral feedback or 'live marking' which is carried out in class during lessons.

Effective marking and feedback:

- helps children understand how to improve and comments aim to be positive and constructive;
- is mostly done while a task is being carried out through discussion between child and teacher;
- of written work is used sensitively and with discretion so that a child can assimilate a limited number of corrections at one time. This will vary according to the age, ability and task.

All results from assessments are analysed and used to inform future planning.

Reporting to parents occurs three times a year through face to face consultations and once through a written report at the end of the academic year. Parent consultations involve

discussions relating to: attendance, behaviour for learning, social behaviour and information relating to progress and attainment.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Pupils' work is monitored and moderated regularly in each of the core curriculum areas by Senior Leaders and subject leaders. A termly review of monitoring procedures is held with all members of the teaching staff in the form of Pupil Progress Meetings which includes discussions around our whole school priorities as set out in our School Development Plan and the impact of the interventions that are used. Subject leaders and SLT will regularly monitor children's books. The Headteacher will observe each class teacher in a specified curriculum area every term. The Performance Management cycle informs teaching and learning.

Teaching Strategies

In order to ensure equality of access and effective matching of tasks to needs, teachers will employ a variety of teaching strategies in any one session. This will include:

- provision of an integrated curriculum;
- teacher observation;
- discussion and questioning (open and closed as appropriate);
- previewing and reviewing work;
- didactic teaching;
- interactive teaching;
- conferencing;
- listening;
- brainstorming;
- providing opportunities for reflection by pupils;
- demonstrating high expectations;
- providing opportunities for repetition/reinforcement;
- providing encouragement, positive reinforcement and praise;
- making judgements and responding to individual need;
- intervening, as appropriate, in the learning process in order to encourage development;
- providing all children with opportunities for success;
- using a range of communication strategies – verbal and non-verbal.

Activities should show a balance in terms of individual, group and whole class work. The emphasis of our policy is on a good variety of experiences and we encourage children increasingly to take an active role in their own learning. Thus:

- investigative/inquiry work is used;
- children are encouraged to communicate findings in a variety of ways;
- opportunities are provided for children to become involved in decision making and to take responsibility, along with staff, for their own learning.

At Cirencester Primary School we recognise the importance of key skills. Opportunities will be made available across the curriculum to develop:

- application of number;
- communication;
- computing skills
- problem solving;
- working with others;

- improving own learning and performance.

Thinking skills will also be developed across the curriculum. This will include:

- creative thinking;
- inquiry;
- information processing;
- reasoning;
- evaluation.

At Cirencester Primary School we recognise the importance of formative assessment and the important role it has to play in creating a learning culture. We believe that formative assessment furthers and deepens learning and consists of four basic elements, underpinned by confidence that every child can improve and an awareness of the importance of children's high self-esteem. The four elements are: sharing learning goals; effective questioning; self and peer evaluation; effective feedback. Formative assessment carries with it the expectation that, when properly motivated and appropriately taught, all learners can reach a level of achievement which may currently appear beyond them. It provides a breadth of proven life-long learning skills based on an understanding of how we learn rather than what we ought to be learning. This includes:

- creating a positive learning environment;
- focusing all feedback on specific performance improvements which can be acted on;
- sharing an overview of content, process and benefits of the learning to come;
- engaging learners by posing problems and challenging thinking;
- providing opportunities for learners to meet the challenge in a variety of pairings and with multiple ways of representing their understanding;
- creating space for reflection and meaningful dialogue;
- reviewing what has been learned, how it was learned and how it will be used.

Learning Processes

Children enter school at different stages of development. Children learn in different ways and at different rates of progress. In the course of learning, children develop their skills through a variety of processes. These include:

- investigation;
- experimentation;
- listening;
- observation;
- talking and discussion;
- asking questions;
- child-initiated play;
- practical exploration and role play;
- retrieving information;
- imagining;
- repetition;
- problem-solving;
- making choices and decision-making.

At Cirencester Primary School opportunities are organised to allow pupils access to these processes, and for them to develop their own strategies to gain knowledge and skills. We aim to provide opportunities to develop a wide range of learning styles.

Planning will incorporate as many styles of working as possible. These styles include:

- individual learning;
- collaborative learning in small groups, or pairs;
- one to one learning with an adult, or more able pupil;
- whole class;
- independent learning.

Group work may include working with a variety of partners, matched ability, mixed ability, and appropriate to the activity. Collaborative learning is encouraged, although some periods of the day may be set aside for silent work.

Teachers at Cirencester Primary School feel that pupils learn best when:

- they are happy, healthy and alert – receptive and positive
- they are interested and involved – learning is relevant and stimulating
- the purpose of a task is understood – they understand why they are doing it
- they feel secure – in terms of environment, relationships and learning
- they feel valued – teachers and other adults care about their development as learners
- they have opportunities to explore and take risks
- they are actively involved, making choices and taking responsibility in their learning
- they have an element of control and can work with independence
- they receive positive feedback and praise for achievements
- the learning environment is well-organised and resources are easily accessed
- tasks are differentiated, matched to the child
- learning is built on existing knowledge and experience – clearly defined small steps
- they have opportunities to talk about their work, reflecting, discussing and sharing ideas
- the teacher is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and motivated
- they have clearly defined targets which they can successfully achieve eg appropriate time scale

Successful teaching takes account of children's prior learning and must ensure continuity and progression.

Linked to the above, successful teaching is:

- confident – teachers have a clear understanding of subject knowledge and setting objectives
- high expectation – there is optimism about, and high expectation of success
- well planned – there is differentiation with methods and organisation strategies which match curricular objectives and needs of all pupils
- interactive – pupil's contributions are encouraged, expected, extended
- characterised by high quality oral work
- well paced – there is a sense of urgency, driven by the need to make progress and succeed
- informed – by assessment outcomes

Resources

Classroom and central resources are the responsibility of classroom teachers and subject leaders who ensure that:

- there is a range of appropriate, accessible and labelled resources available for which pupils can select materials suitable to the task in hand;
- all children know where classroom resources are kept and the rules about their access and use;
- children are encouraged to act independently in choosing, collecting and returning resources where appropriate;
- the library is a valued resource and used appropriately;
- children work together to establish an attractive, welcoming and well organised environment engendering respect, care and value for all resources.

Each classroom will be equipped with a basic set of resources and books appropriate to the age range. Specialist resources will be stored in the appropriate curriculum resource cupboard/area, and will be regularly audited by the subject leaders. Consumables will be replenished as necessary. Staff may contact subject leaders with suggestions for specialist materials which may need ordering.

Pupils will be taught how to use all resources correctly and safely, with care and respect and with regard for Health and Safety and waste. Care will be taken to ensure that resources reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of our society, and that all pupils have equality of access.

At Cirencester Primary School the use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum is valued and these are used throughout the school to widen children's experiences and support learning across a range of subject areas.

Health and Safety issues are the responsibility of all who work in the school. Our Site Manager is our Health and Safety lead across the school.