'Knowing each child, growing each child, in God's love'

Tonwell St Mary's CE Primary School

Teaching and Learning Policy

1 John 4:16
And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.
God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

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1. Introduction/Philosophy

At Tonwell St Mary's, we believe in the concept of lifelong learning, and the idea that both adults and children should learn new things to help them to flourish in their lives. Through our teaching, we equip children with the skills, knowledge, resilience and independence to be able to make informed decisions about important things in their lives and become lifelong learners themselves.
Our philosophy for learning is based on certain cognitive principles. As a school, we believe that:

'Memory is the residue of thought' which is the idea that what children ***think carefully*** about is what they will remember in their long term memory and therefore have learned.

'We understand things in the context of what we already know' which is why our curriculum is designed so that children can ***revisit and build upon knowledge*** across series of lessons, across each year and across the school.

'It is virtually impossible to become proficient at a mental task without extended practise' which is the idea that practice enables automaticity and learning to be stored in the long term memory, so opportunities are planned in each series of lessons to ***practise skills with the language of Growth Mindset.***

2. Aims and Vision

Our vision 'Knowing each child, Growing each child, in God's love' sets out our school aims of ensuring that each adult and child is valued as an individual, challenged to be the best they can be – growing both academically and spiritually, and encouraged to live out key Christian values with a focus on love, respect and forgiveness.
We aim to help each child:

- Develop a love, resilience and independence for learning
- Live life to its fullness and try new experiences respecting Christian and British values
- Be friendly and inclusive to all
- Contribute to our school and wider community
- Choose a lifestyle with healthy bodies and minds

3. Our philosophy and pedagogy

<u>Curriculum</u>

We value the importance of a broad and balanced curriculum where basic skills in English and maths are promoted across the curriculum. We ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum (2014), The EYFS Framework, Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus for RE. English and maths are taught daily across the school. Phonics is taught daily in EYFS and KS1 using the Letters and Sounds programme. Other subjects are taught weekly over a half term or full term.
Due to the unique size and mixed-age class structure, our curriculum is organised on a rolling programme. This allows a 'spiral' organisation with key knowledge, vocabulary and skills being revisited and built upon across the school. Our curriculum is designed using a question-based approach to encourage and develop thinking carefully and problem solving. Our focus is to secure learning and development in the three prime areas of learning- personal, social and emotional

development; communication and language; and physical development as well as begin teaching children through the four specific areas of learning- literacy; mathematics; expressive arts and design; and understanding the world.

Growth Mindset

We use a 'Growth Mindset' approach to their learning, where effort, practice and determination are valued. This approach has been chosen to develop resilience in our children. Staff regularly model language such as 'I can't do it…yet' and 'marvellous mistake' with children. The message of Growth Mindset is reinforced with the whole school community at the beginning of the school year.

Independence

We teach children skills to help them to be more independent. Every classroom has age-appropriate, accessible working walls and reference areas. Classes have resources to support children to self-check their work, including reusable checklists and the gold standard for writing. Children are also encouraged to develop their independence beyond the academic, for example: joining school council, sports ambassadors, class jobs. Adults challenge children to be independent by stepping back and encouraging them to use resources and strategies available to them.

Structure of lessons

We share learning objectives with children and where appropriate give them the 'big picture' of the lesson or series of lessons. We ensure children understand success criteria. Staff connect the learning to previous lessons and review what has been learned. In line with our philosophy, across each series of lessons, children are supported to think carefully, practice skills with the language of Growth Mindset, revisit and build upon knowledge. Children are encouraged to have a balance of adult-led and independent activities throughout the day participating in whole class, group, paired and individual work. Whenever possible, we plan opportunities for children to ask questions, investigate, reason and solve problems, research and discover, debate, role-play and present.

Reading

Learning to read is one of the most important things children will learn at our school. We want children to love reading – and to want to read for themselves. This is why we work hard to make sure children develop a love of books as well as learning to read. Across the school, children have opportunities to read individually, in guided groups and as a whole class. Staff support children to make appropriate choices of texts and model themselves as readers.

Learning environment

At our school we provide a safe, rich and well-organised learning environment that allows children to develop their skills both inside and outdoors. Children's safety is at the forefront of everything we do. We ensure that safeguarding procedures and policies are followed and risk assessments are in place. We ensure the best possible environment for learning by developing a positive atmosphere where pupils feel safe, enjoy being challenged, are set high expectations for behaviour, display is engaging with a balance of celebrating children's work and resources to support learning. All children have the opportunity to take part in Forest School activities weekly.

Enrichment

We organise and value regular visitors, in school workshops and trips to complement classroom learning. This approach is important because it gives our children access to information, experiences and cultural capital (the best of what has been thought and said) they may not be able to access outside of school. Where possible, this is organised at the start or end of a unit of learning to either build up knowledge or to revisit and think more deeply about knowledge already learned. Children almost always show a positive emotional response to these experiences and remember them.

Assessment

Formative and summative assessment are an integral part of school life. Teachers make ongoing assessments of each child's progress and use this to inform planning, to provide feedback celebrating successes and to support progress. Our approach is set out in our Feedback for Learning policy. Assessment is used to highlight any children who may be at risk of SEND, are disadvantaged or who are highly able. These children are discussed at pupil progress meetings and relevant support planned. Aspirational targets are set at the start of each academic year and monitored termly.

Differentiation and challenge

We strive to ensure that all children are supported and challenged at an appropriate level and to ensure we meet all statutory requirements related to inclusion. Research shows that children learn most effectively when activities are pitched carefully, in order to challenge them to think hard but not to overwhelm them. Children are encouraged to challenge themselves and sometimes have the chance to choose their own level of work, whilst sometimes being guided by the teacher. When planning work for children with SEND or Looked After Children, we give due regard to information and targets from their Learning Plan or PEP. We recognise that children may have different levels of attainment across subjects and that some children are highly able. When planning lessons, teachers consider core, support and challenge for learners.

Inclusion

We utilise a variety of strategies to support and challenge children with SEND across all subjects. This can include: use of resources, scaffolding (e.g. writing frame, speaking frame, word banks), paired or group work, adult support, pre-teaching, visuals and picture cues, breaking tasks down into smaller chunks, recording learning in different ways (e.g. not always having a written outcome), personalised tasks, use of external professional advice.

More-able learners

We recognise these children as those who have a secure knowledge of the objectives for their year group and are working at a greater depth. We employ a range of approaches to support and challenge more-able children. This can include: use of questioning, application of their learning into different contexts, differentiated success criteria, supporting a peer, teaching others, use of resources, pace of learning, personalised tasks.

Deployment of other adults

We deploy teaching assistants and volunteers as effectively as possible. They work 1:1 and in small groups with pupils, make observations and assessments of pupils

and meet with external experts to learn to deliver specialist programmes for SEND or pupil premium pupils.

Equal opportunities

We value each child as a unique individual regardless of background and treat them fairly. Staff are familiar with the relevant equal opportunities legislation e.g. gender, race, disability, sexuality, religion, SEN.

4. Role of Governors

Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school's approach to teaching and learning. In particular they:

- Ensure safeguarding is robust and procedures followed correctly;
- Support the use of particular teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
- Ensure school premises are used optimally to support teaching and learning;
- Seek to ensure staff performance management and development both promote good quality teaching;
- Monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning approaches through the school's self-evaluation process, Headteacher's reports to governors, the school development plan and governor visits.

5. Role of parents

We believe that parents/carers have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform then about what and how they are learning by:

- Holding meetings at the start of each year for parents to meet the teacher and share information about topics and age related expectations;
- Updating information on the school's website to share curriculum information and news about children's learning;
- Sending written interim reports in Autumn and Spring term as part of parent consultation evenings explaining progress, celebrating successes, setting targets and explaining ways parents can help at home;
- Sending and end of year written report sharing attainment and progress information;
- Inviting parents to talks about school curriculum e.g. Relationships education, how phonics is taught;
- Setting weekly homework from Year 1 to Year 6 and sending home a regular newsletter for EYFS with ways to support at home.

We believe parents/carers have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies and asked them to read and sign the Home School Agreement.