Thames Ditton
JUNIOR SCHOOL

Teaching and Learning Policy
January 2017

Review Date: January 2018
Statement of Principles
This policy provides a whole school framework for effective learning and teaching that directly contributes to raising the achievements of all within the school. It provides a guide for what children do, what teachers do, how time is managed, the organisation of the classroom and what the school does to create an effective and well-managed learning environment in which the individual needs of each child can be met.

We believe that children learn best when they:
- are happy;
- are interested and motivated;
- achieve success and gain approval;
- are given tasks which match their ability;
- clearly understand the task;
- are confident, feel secure and are aware of boundaries;
- are challenged and stimulated.

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.

We maintain 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 and objectives
Through our teaching we aim to:
- teach to the highest standards;
- have fun while we are learning;
- enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners;
- foster children’s self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people;
- develop children’s self-respect and encourage children to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others;
- show respect for all cultures and, in so doing, to promote positive attitudes towards other people;
- enable children to understand their community and help them feel valued as part of this community;
- help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.
- provide a range of experiences to enrich the learning children do.
Effective Learning and Teaching
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 Thames Ditton Junior School should be of the highest possible standard.

Effective learning takes place when pupils:
- Can work in a variety of ways as independent learners, or collaboratively in pairs or groups, supported by staff and each other;
- Enjoy and are interested in what they are doing and are well-motivated;
- Feel valued and have their achievements celebrated;
- Are able to work in a secure, attractive learning environment;
- Use their prior knowledge and interests as a basis for new learning;
- Are personally involved in their learning;
- Experience work appropriate to their ability that challenges but is not beyond reach;
- Can take risks without fear of making mistakes;
- Participate in active, practical and first hand experiences;
- Are asked open-ended, thought provoking, challenging questions and they are given thinking time before answering;
- Are encouraged to ask questions and/or report their findings to others;
- Participate in educational visits to reinforce and stimulate learning;
- Receive developmental feedback and constructive criticism of their work to enable them to review and reflect upon their learning thus enabling them to improve.

We offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways. These include:
- investigation and problem solving;
- research and finding out;
- paired and group work;
- independent work;
- whole-class work;
- asking and answering questions;
- use of the computer;
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- creative activities;
- watching videos/DVDs and responding to musical or tape-recorded material;
- debates, role-plays and oral presentations;
- designing and making things;
- making decisions;
- solving problems;
- discussing their ideas;
- developing social skills;
- participation in athletic or physical activities.
Effective teaching takes place when:

- teachers have high and consistent expectations of all pupils’ behaviour and attainment;
- teachers have good subject knowledge;
- teachers are thoroughly prepared;
- classroom management is appropriate to the teaching situation so that pupils are on task in an orderly atmosphere that is conducive to learning;
- teachers provide carefully structured activities matched sensitively to pupils’ needs;
- teacher/pupil relationships are positive and appropriate praise and constructive reinforcement are used and teaching is conducted in an atmosphere of trust and respect;
- homework is used effectively; particularly to reinforce and extend what is learned in school or to prepare for a new topic, thereby valuing the home/school partnership. (See separate homework policy);
- teachers are prepared to be innovative;
- there are shared learning objectives which are understood by the pupils and success criteria which help them to assess their own learning;
- all tasks and activities that the children do are safe and risk assessments are carried out where necessary;
- teaching assistants and other adult helpers are deployed effectively;
- extra-curricular activities support children’s learning across the curriculum.

Although children have a preferred style of learning they should be encouraged to develop a range of approaches. The teacher should provide a variety of activities within a session to better accommodate different styles of learning. It is also important to provide breaks in the lesson in order to sustain the attention of the class. Because they have been successful in a particular mode, teachers also have a preferred style of teaching and it is important that they make a conscious effort to accommodate the different learning styles in their class by using a variety of approaches in their teaching;

- visual learners prefer to see information and they can be sub-divided into those who prefer to see diagrams and pictures and those who like to read text;
- auditory learners prefer to hear information;
- kinaesthetic learners prefer to learn by touching, manipulating and doing.

Planning
Teachers take the learning objectives from the National Curriculum, Renewed Framework for Literacy and Numeracy and turn these into schemes of work for each half term, mapping out what needs to be done week by week in order to achieve these goals.

Consideration is given to creative cross-curricular links. The plans are reviewed each year to ensure they are current, exciting and meet the needs of all of the children. Teachers need to keep a copy of their Medium Term Planning on the school’s hard drive for use by others who may be covering lessons and for monitoring by Head, Deputy and team leaders.
Short term planning

Weekly Literacy and Numeracy planning is completed by the class teachers. The plans are referred to by the adults delivering lessons and also should be available to the Head Teacher and Deputy head teacher.

Our weekly plans for the foundation subjects form part of the medium-term plans and would include:

- learning activities that will take place including broadly differentiated activities;
- reference to SEN/ EAL/ pupils of differing abilities, as appropriate;
- ways in which any adult support will be used e.g. TAs/ LSA;s
- use of teacher’s time (e.g. to work with a particular group);
- success criteria so that children can be clear about what they need to do to be successful;
- use of ICT to support learning and relevant websites;
- resources required for the lesson;
- relevant questions to be asked.

The weekly plan should be kept in the teacher’s file and/ or on the Staff Shared drive for others to use as required.

The Learning Environment

A stimulating environment sets the climate for learning which takes place best in an environment which:

- is challenging and stimulating;
- is peaceful and calm;
- is happy and caring;
- is organised;
- is well resourced;
- makes learning accessible;
- is encouraging and appreciative;
- is welcoming;
- provides equal opportunities;
- provides a working atmosphere.

We enable learning to take place by providing:

- key vocabulary;
- a punctuation pyramid;
- interactive displays;
- appropriate resources to enable pupils to access learning, e.g. number lines, time lines, whiteboards and pens, crayons, scissors etc., clocks, number squares, high frequency word lists etc.
- physical layout of classrooms: bear in mind pupils’ Health and Safety, ease of working and flexibility;
- working Walls;
- interactive Whiteboard Flipcharts and PowerPoint presentations.

We encourage independence by:
• labelling resources to facilitate access;
• giving responsibility to monitors;
• providing word banks, dictionaries, thesaurus.

We ensure inclusive classrooms by:
• providing multi-cultural content and appropriate gender role models;
• ensuring access for all.

We ensure resources are:
• well-organised;
• good quality, clean, tidy, attractive and accessible to all;
• properly looked after by pupils ensuring that equipment is not misused, damaged or wasted.

Display in the school should be used to create an attractive and stimulating environment. The work displayed should be of a high standard and use both 2D and 3D in a variety of media and be changed regularly. It should include work on different aspects of the curriculum and reflect the individual child’s efforts as well as ability. Ideally, Mathematics and Science displays should stimulate discussion and be accompanied by children’s questions and answers. Sometimes they can be ‘interactive’.

The role of governors
Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school policies on teaching and learning. In particular they:
• support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
• ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning;
• monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations;
• monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment;
• make regular visits to oversee the delivery of their scheduled subject
• monitor the effectiveness of the school’s teaching and learning policies through the school self-review processes. These include reports from subject leaders and the termly headteacher’s report to governors as well as a review of the in-service training sessions attended by our staff.
The role of parents
We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:

- holding a ‘Meet the Teacher’ meeting at the beginning of each academic year and sending them information at the start of each term in which we outline the topics that the children will be studying;
- sending reports to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can improve further;
- explaining to parents how they can support their children with homework;
- organising curriculum evenings and coffee mornings to advise on current practices and develop the parents’ knowledge of the curriculum.

We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We would like parents to:

- ensure that their child arrives punctually and has the best attendance record possible and informing the school of reasons for their child’s absence;
- ensure that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and PE kit;
- do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
- inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child’s performance or behaviour at school;
- promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general;
- supporting their child by attending consultation evenings and other meetings;
- supporting their child and teacher by becoming actively involved in the operation of the Pathway Plan and any special educational needs & disability provision;
- agreeing to and supporting the school’s homework policy.

The role of subject leaders
Our subject leaders keep abreast of developments within their subject, introducing these to other members of staff during weekly staff meetings. Subject leaders create an annual action plan for development of their subject and are budget-holders for their curriculum area. They are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of their subject. This can include activities such as discussions with teachers or pupils, shared teaching, monitoring books and/or planning, and informal observations.

The role of teaching assistants
We deploy Teaching Assistants as effectively as possible. Sometimes they work with individual children or small groups - both inside and outside of the classroom depending upon the nature of the work involved.

The essence of the job is supporting children to learn under the guidance of a teacher. The sort of tasks will vary from child to child and even from teacher to teacher. The tasks could therefore include:

- supporting small groups in the classroom – especially literacy and numeracy;
- working with individuals or small groups outside the classroom when appropriate;
- preparing and modifying learning materials;
• supporting individuals to keep attention on the lesson – monitoring behaviour to help keep them “on task”.

The role of supply teachers
To ensure continuity, teachers should leave written guidance and suggested activities for all planned absences from the classroom. In the event of an unplanned absence the remaining teachers in the given year group will provide the work for the supply teacher. (there is a separate Guidance for Supply Teachers document which is available from the school office.)

The role of voluntary helpers
Voluntary helpers are a valuable resource and we should welcome their involvement in the classroom. They can help in many ways across the whole curriculum. Help can be on a regular basis or a specific event. In all cases it is very important that the teacher should take the time to ensure that the volunteer fully understands and is well prepared for the activity in which he or she is involved. Volunteers should be made to feel welcome in the school and if numbers permit should be offered refreshment from the staff room at break times. A Parent Helper leaflet is available from the office for further information.

Review
This teaching and learning policy has been approved by the staff and governors of Thames Ditton Junior School and will be reviewed annually.