TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

This policy is applicable to all pupils, including those in the EYFS. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Early Years Foundation Stage Policy.

1. Rationale

At The Rowans School we believe that learning is a lifelong process. Learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun. Through our teaching we aim to equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives.

2. Aims

The Rowans School aims to provide a broad, balanced, challenging and inspiring curriculum in keeping with National Curriculum requirements yet also tailored to our needs as a Pre- Preparatory School with high academic standards, committed to preparing children for their future schools at 7+. Typically we expect our children to be ahead of the National Curriculum progression at Key Stage 1. As well as the academic aims, we strive to develop Art, Music, Sports and the creative aspects to a high standard. The social development of each child is as important as the academic and is considered to be essential to the school ethos.

We aim to:

- enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring, creative and independent learners;
- foster children's self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with others, both peers and adults;
- develop children's self-respect and encourage children to respect ideas, attitudes, beliefs, values and feelings of others;
- set suitable challenges so that each child can experience success and progression in their learning;
- foster a growth mindset in children, where challenges are relished and mistakes are seen as learning opportunities;
- show respect for all cultures and in doing so promote positive attitudes towards other people;
- enable children to understand their community and help them feel valued as part of this community;
- help children take pride in their work and the work of others;
- ensure effective planning, delivery and evaluation of the curriculum.

In the event of a full or partial closure of school, we have a renewed aim to equip children and families with the skills needed to access and use online learning platforms as part of our whole school curriculum. Please see the Curriculum Policy for more detail.

3. Expectations

We expect teachers to:

- be positive role models;
- ensure that learning is progressive and continuous;
- provide a challenging and stimulating programme of study to all the children in their care;
- recognise and plan for the individual needs of each child;
- model a growth mindset in their own learning, and through their teaching;

- uphold professional standards, including being punctual, well-prepared and organised;
- work collaboratively and share expertise.

We expect the children to:
- attend school regularly and be punctual;
- behave appropriately;
- take increasing responsibility for their own learning;
- strive to achieve their best;
- support others in their learning;
- have a positive attitude towards school life.

4. Approaches to teaching and learning
Each class has a full-time teacher and a teaching assistant. Sometimes the assistant works alone with individual children and sometimes with groups. On occasions, they may direct the whole class for specific periods of time.

Every classroom is an attractive learning environment. Displays are changed at least half-termly to ensure that they are valuable to the learning taking place within the class and reflect the broad curriculum. Please see the Display Policy for more details here.

Effective Teaching
When teaching, we focus on motivating the children and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum so that they can reach the highest level of personal achievement. We use schemes of work to guide our teaching in each subject area.

Every teacher should be constantly seeking ways to develop his/her professional role and to keep abreast of wider educational thinking. The aim of the teacher is to facilitate an environment which maximises the potential for learning. Individual teaching style is encouraged and supported where it embraces the following criteria:
- lessons should have clear learning intentions which are shared with pupils;
- children should collaborate in identifying success criteria for each lesson;
- lessons should reflect on previous learning
- and these should incorporate high expectations;
- lessons should incorporate a variety of experiences;
- lessons should allow for children to prepare and present their own work with guidance;
- lessons should be tailored to the various ability levels;
- lessons should aim to draw out the children's verbal, written, artistic or physical capabilities and then seek to extend them;
- lessons should be designed to sustain children interest and therefore must contain flexibility in the lesson plan;
- lessons should be carried out in a disciplined and structured way which enhances and does not suppress children development;
- lessons should be carried out in an environment of mutual respect.

In order to implement the above criteria and to meet demands of the curriculum, it is important that the teacher employs a range of strategies. A professional approach is required so that the teacher can respond flexibly to a range of demands within a lesson and yet also follow their plan for that lesson. The strategies used should encourage the children to work to their full potential. These could include:
- questioning;
- explaining;
- instructing;
- observing;
- assessing;
- target-setting;

- recording;
- listening;
- giving verbal feedback;
- marking work;
- providing first-hand experiences – visits, visiting speakers, etc.

Classes are organised in a variety of ways to allow the children to work individually, in small groups or contributing to whole class activities. The children are encouraged to work collaboratively, co-operatively and independently.

We offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways. These include:
- investigating and problem solving;
- research and finding out;
- group work;
- paired work;
- independent work;
- whole-class work;
- asking and answering questions;
- outings to places of educational interest;
- creative activities;
- watching media, responding to musical and audio material;
- designing and making things;
- participation in athletic or physical activity;
- extra-curricular clubs;
- guest visitors and performers;
- access to relevant resources.

5. Planning
Please see the Planning Policy.

6. Lesson execution
The teacher should have a clear understanding of what s/he intends to deliver for each lesson. The following sorts of questions should be uppermost in a teacher's mind at the beginning of a lesson:

What is the objective/aim for this lesson?
How will I introduce the lesson?
Will I need to recap from the previous lesson?
What learning activities will take place within the lesson?
How much time will be devoted to each activity?
Is there a need for extension work?
What forms of assessment will I include in the lesson?
How will I know that I have achieved my objectives at the end of the lesson?

A teacher should be aware of the ways in which they are expecting their pupils to respond in a lesson and the strategies for achieving this should vary.

For instance:
Are the children expected to contribute or simply listen?
In what ways are they expected to contribute?
Are the children to work alone or in groups?
Are the children to demonstrate what they have learned in the lesson?
If so, in what way will they do this?

It is important that the children know what the teacher is expecting of them at any particular time.

7. Teaching skills

The skills a teacher uses when executing a lesson underpins all the other elements. Like all skills, a teacher can constantly seek ways to develop and improve their skills. Key skills for the teacher in any lesson are:

a) Communication

- A clear voice, modulated, calm, of sufficient volume and with a varied tone;
- Clear explanations are helpful, keeping instructions succinct and keeping the 'talk' to a minimum;
- Suitable questioning techniques which vary from closed to open-ended questions;
- Expressiveness with movement around the room, change in body position, eye contact with the whole class, pauses and facial expression;
- Well-timed and well-placed humour and the ability to laugh at oneself when appropriate.

b) Facilitation and differentiation

- Introducing a lesson, recapping from a previous lesson, stating the aim and preparing the pupil for a new topic or concept;
- Organising tasks effectively and without fuss;
- Varying the pace and forms of stimulus within a lesson;
- Drawing each child into the lesson in an appropriate way;
- Creating a sense of expectation and purpose;
- Effective closure: summing-up a lesson and creating a sense of achievement;
- Creating opportunities for the less able to access the learning;
- Creating opportunities for the gifted and talented or more able to extend their learning.

c) Control (please refer to the Behaviour Management Policy for more details)

- Creating a safe, low stress environment for all children where they can learn most effectively;
- Creating a sense of mutual respect by establishing clear boundaries and modes of behaviour;
- Reinforcing and modelling desirable behaviour;
- Eradicating undesirable behaviour in the least disruptive way possible to enable the lesson to resume smoothly;
- Creating a sense that the teacher has a clear idea of where they are taking the class and how they intend to do so.

7.1 Learning Approaches

Teachers should:

- set suitable challenges so that each child has the opportunity to experience success in their learning and achieve the highest possible standards;
- respond to the variety of learning needs within a group of children, with a range of expectations and demands.
- recognise that a change of style can make a great deal of difference to stimulating the learning of children.
  a) Teacher-centred learning: The teacher explains a new idea/concept or demonstrates a skill. The teacher is the presenter and expects the focus to be on him/herself.
  b) Discussion: The teacher draws information and thoughts from the children using a discussion basis with a series of questions, some open-ended and some straightforward answers.
  c) Child-centered learning with constraints: The teacher sets a task and the children work individually or in pairs/small groups. This works well for practical activities or to solve problems. This allows the teacher to make valuable observations. The teacher is the director and maintains a strong influence over the activities of the children.
  d) Child-centered learning with independent planning: The teacher outlines a task and provides necessary impetus, such as guidelines or an initial discussion. The children work independently either as individuals or in pairs/small groups. The teacher acts as the

facilitator, offering timely advice and providing amenities and resources but not directing the children.

e) Group task including the teacher: The teacher is in overall charge of the group but works within a group, directing only where necessary. This setting is fluid and allows for creativity and encourages a large group or class to work together to a common aim.

f) Set work: The teacher oversees the group and may provide help only when it is needed. This allows the children to work silently and individually on a set task. This is often the way a test is organised.

It is up to the individual teacher to decide which format is most appropriate according to the demands of the task and more importantly, the needs of the children at that time. Flexibility is the key and good practice should involve a variety of approaches.

7.2. Learner Needs

A teacher should use a variety of approaches to allow the children the opportunity to express their needs and to demonstrate their progress.

Children should be encouraged to:

- talk about and share their learning with teachers, both in a verbal and written form;
- talk to each other about their learning;
- use different techniques to consolidate their learning;
- access tasks in a variety of ways to maintain their attention and interest;
- understand where they are understanding or achieving well;
- understand what they can do to improve;
- express their confusion when they do not understand;
- be proud of their achievements and share them with others.

8. Assessment and Self-Assessment

Teachers make on-going assessments of each child's progress and they use this information when planning their lessons. It enables them to take into account the abilities of all the children. Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge and skills of all our children. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability. In Kindergarten and Reception, teachers work from the Early Years Foundation Stage Development Matters and Early Learning Goals. In Years 1 and 2, teachers keep on-going records to plan for future teaching to ensure that each child is working at the correct level.

Children should be given opportunities to assess their own work and decide how they might make improvements. This can be done in discussion with other children, with the teacher or through shared marking.

Please refer to the Assessment Policy for more details.

9. The Learning Environment

The learning environment should be:

- stimulating and interesting;
- have display materials which reflect the standards and expectations of the children;
- clean, have up-to-date attractive workbooks and other written resources;
- have texts and resources which are accessible and readable;
- be free of any materials which have a gender or ethnic bias.

10. Creating Independent Learners

In order to foster independent learning, the curriculum is carefully planned and demonstrates a range of learning experiences. Children must have the opportunity to:

- acquire and practice basic skills in literacy and numeracy;
- acquire questioning and reasoning skills through a variety of tasks;

- develop a constructive approach to criticism of their work;
- develop methods of improving their work as part of the learning process;
- acquire skills of concentration and persistence;
- acquire the ability to contribute to some learning tasks with their own thoughts and plans;
- produce work in a variety of forms;
- work as individuals and cooperate within groups;
- communicate what they have learned in different ways;
- understand what is necessary for the successful completion of a task;
- have as much hands-on practical experience as possible.

In order to enable the children to develop independence in learning, teachers need to offer opportunities for children to:

- organise their own equipment;
- organise their written materials in a meaningful way;
- decide on resources and have access to them;
- set learning targets which may be task-based or based upon acquiring a particular skill;
- aim for and achieve rewards for success;
- consider why failure happened in a positive way and develop plans to rectify the situation in future;
- develop a strong sense of confidence and high self-esteem.

A teacher will need to plan carefully for these areas and will need to reflect upon their own approaches continually.
Teachers need to ensure that the children:

- know exactly what is required of them;
- know what they are allowed to do, for a given task, including any areas they can develop themselves;
- know what resources or equipment are available;
- know where to find resources;
- know how to use resources.

The resources must therefore be well organised, readily available, sufficient in number and appropriate to the age and ability of the children, as well as the task.

11. Differentiation and Extension Work

Any well-planned learning opportunity will include elements of the following:

- work which is accessible to all ability levels;
- clarity as to which areas of understanding or skill development are essential to all levels of learner and which are suitable for those who are more able;
- extension opportunities for the more able and gifted or talented.

Differentiation should be considered by:

- input;
- outcome;
- setting of extension tasks for some children.

Extension work should not be a repeat of work already done. It should extend thinking skills and be broadening and deepening as well as challenging for the learner. Many extension tasks are open-ended and may include project work, a research challenge or a brainteaser. Clear objectives should be set and time should be given to achieve the task.

12. Homework

Homework is set from Reception through to Year 2. Homework is seen primarily as a reinforcement activity. Homework should:

- Be manageable;

- Have a clear objective;
- Not exceed the allotted time.

Please refer to the Homework Policy for more details.

13. Lesson Allocations

The core subjects of Maths and Literacy are taught daily, with Science being taught weekly. The children also study Music, Art/DT, Drama, French, Religious Education, PSHE, Physical Education, as well as History and Geography through topic work. ICT lessons are taught discreetly across the school, as well as being incorporated across the curriculum where appropriate. Time allocation per subject area can be found for each year group in 2b 'Curriculum Plan by Year Groups'.

14. Celebrating Effort and Achievements

We believe in celebrating the efforts and achievements of individuals. We do this through:

- displays in the classrooms and around the school;
- performances of the children's work – Christmas plays, class assemblies etc.;
- house points;
- stickers;
- show and tell;
- showing work to the Head or another teacher/member of the SLT;
- weekly Celebration Assembly;
- informing parents of good work and effort through the Weekly Newsletter or face-to-face discussions.

This document will be reviewed annually
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