

Yorke Mead Primary School

Teaching and Learning Policy

March 2023



Our School Vision Statement *BRINGING LEARNING to LIFE*

We are a school dedicated to creating an environment where children are able to grow into happy, well-rounded individuals with a love of learning through which they can achieve to the best of their abilities.

We want our pupils to enter the wider world as

- o Happy, positive individuals*
- o Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution*
- o Confident, resilient, healthy & life-long learners.*

DARE TO...

D - Determination

A - Ambition

R - Resilience

E – Enjoyment

T - Trust

O - Openness

Aims of this policy

By adopting a whole school approach to learning and teaching across our school we aim:

- to provide consistency in the same high standards across the whole school and agreement on expectations.
- to enable children to learn as efficiently as possible.
- to enable staff to teach and facilitate learning as efficiently as possible.
- to give children the skills they require to be life-long learners.
- to provide an inclusive environment for all children built on quality first teaching.
- to learn from each other, through the adoption of a collaborative enquiry based approach to teaching and learning, where good practice is shared.

All our teaching is underpinned by the confidence that every learner can improve and that being stuck or 'in the pit' is a necessary and natural phase of new learning.

There is no single recipe for improving learning and teaching in a school. However, this policy outlines some of the key elements, which at Yorke Mead we believe are key to raising standards in learning and teaching. We refer to this as 'The Yorke Mead Way'.

How we learn

*10% of what we READ
20% of what we HEAR
30% of what we SEE
50% of what we SEE and HEAR
70% of what is DISCUSSED with OTHERS
80% of what is EXPERIENCED PERSONALLY
95% of what we TEACH TO SOMEONE ELSE*

William Glasser

At Yorke Mead Primary School we use Active Learning Strategies and Creative Curriculum Approaches throughout our school.

We believe that all of our children can benefit from the methods and styles of teaching that stimulate and enable the development of higher order thinking skills and meta- cognition (learning to learn).

We seek to provide our children with open ended learning tasks with a focus on problem solving, discussion, collaboration and imaginative thinking that lead to the following learning behaviours:

- questioning and challenging
- envisaging what might be
- exploring ideas, keeping options open
- reflecting critically on ideas, actions and outcomes
- making connections and seeing relationships

Understanding about our brains, how we learn and being ready to learn

A key element of children's learning is recognising that children need to be *ready to learn*. As a key part of our teaching and learning we encourage children to learn about the main parts of their brains and how our emotions impact on the capacity of the brain to learn. As children learn about the different parts of the brain, the functions they perform and the way one part of the brain can stop another part working effectively when emotions are heightened, they are able to understand the importance of preparing the brain for learning and being emotionally settled. We use mindful practise through our core breathing exercises at least three times each day in order to support the brain to be *ready to learn*.

How our approaches to learning supports positive wellbeing and how positive wellbeing supports our children's learning

At Yorke Mead we understand that children must feel settled in order to learn, and that stress and anxiety reduce the capacity to learn effectively. Exercise and short breaks support children's learning and improve the growth of systems that support memory, attention and other aspects of cognitive function. Being physically healthy also improves emotional wellbeing. With this in mind we consider features such as the daily mile and brain breaks to be key features of our work to support children to be physically healthy, mentally healthy and effective learners.

Our approaches to teaching and learning are active in nature and encourage children to be 'doing'. This may be through a number of active strategies including talk, physical activity, practical activities etc.

The six DARE TO school values have been carefully selected as we believe these are key characteristics that will support our children's effective development as lifelong learners. The chosen values not only support academic learning but also help to support the maintenance of positive mental health.

Developing an enquiring mind

Our curriculum is based around children using the four styles of thinking evident in *Philosophy 4 Children (P4C)*

- Caring Thinking
- Collaborative Thinking
- Creative Thinking
- Critical Thinking

Explained simply each of these thinking styles involve the following:

Caring Thinking

This can be considered in two ways. On a personal level it is caring enough to do the best you can, persevering with a task and caring sufficiently about it to reach a solution. At a wider level caring thinking would include considering the impact of your thinking and actions on others.

Collaborative Thinking

This aspect focuses on people coming together to find a solution, working as a team or a community for the greater good.

Creative Thinking

At its simplest level creative thinking is about trying new approaches to find a solution - thinking outside the box. It may involve new approaches or simply tackling things from a different angle.

Critical Thinking

This is about reflecting on your learning, thinking or outcomes in order to consider how it could be improved or developed to make it even better – *if I was to do this again what might I change next time and what would I want to keep the same?*

Full enquiries within Philosophy for Children (P4C) sessions require a long session of around one hour and possibly longer. To ensure P4C is maintained as a key aspect of the children's learning, whilst still allowing time in a curriculum that already has high demand, full enquiries happen around every three weeks. In the weeks between full P4C enquiries children will participate in short activities to develop thinking skills such as conscience alley, philosopher's fruit salad, ordering words around a set concept according to extent of the language etc.

Key aspects of Learning and Teaching at our school

All lessons have ... ***Clear Learning Intentions.***

- Learning intentions are shared orally with the children and displayed on the wall/whiteboards. These learning intentions are recorded in children's books either by the individual children writing these or being provided to the child to be stuck into books.
- Learning intentions in English and maths, that are taught daily, build throughout the week so that children can understand their learning journey and see how their learning is building.

- Marking is linked to the key learning intentions (see feedback and marking policy).

To ensure learning intentions are shared effectively teachers will:

- use language such as '*By the end of today's lesson you will know.../be able to.../understand... or We are learning to...(WALT)*'.
- be written in child friendly language to ensure children understand the learning intentions.
- make learning intentions specific.
- ensure they share learning intentions at the start of the lesson but also refer to these mid lesson during 'pit stop' or mini plenary points and in the plenaries at the end of the lessons.
- develop steps to success/ success criteria with children in order to break the learning intentions down to support children's successful learning.

Success Criteria or Steps to Success

- enable children to be clear about how they will achieve the learning intentions.
- support children in achieving the learning intentions.
- may be displayed for or ideally drawn up with the children.
- enable children to self-assess their work or other pupils' work against the success criteria.

Lessons are clearly ...**Differentiated to enable all pupils to access learning.**

- All learners are appropriately challenged – this may be termed as **Super, Mega, Ultra** (and occasionally **Turbo**) with children given the options of choosing their appropriate level of challenge.
- **Pit Stops** are used to allow children to reflect and self- assess against the chosen level of challenge so that they may increase or drop down a level as appropriate.
- Planning shows clear differentiation – this may be in terms of the support offered to children or the expectations for a group.
- A range of learning styles are catered for through the VAK approach (visual, audio, kinaesthetic).
- Bloom's Taxonomy supports the differentiation of activities in Foundation Subjects allowing children to work at the appropriate level for their understanding as they progress through topics.

All pupils are ...**Actively engaged in learning and working co-operatively.**

- Pupils are actively engaged during all parts of the lesson- teachers take into account children's concentration span and ensure children are not sitting passively for long periods.
- Opportunities to talk are regular features of the lessons, and the use of **lolly sticks** to randomly pick contributors keeps all children ready to respond.
- Mini whiteboards/ card activities or use of practical resources to enable children to engage in '**show me**' activities for short bursts of activity keep children active and engaged.
- Visual artefacts and auditory input are all used creatively to enhance learning.

We believe that it is important for pupils to ...**Talk during lessons.**

When we talk we do more than simply articulate our current level of thinking. The very act of talking forces us to organize our thoughts and so deepens understanding. It is partly this reason why we remember so much what we teach to others.

At Yorke Mead we believe that **Talking** is **central to learning**. All lessons will include periods of both planned and unplanned opportunities to discuss questions, share ideas and extend thinking. **Think, pair, share** and **Talk Partner** activities feature regularly in lessons. Pupils are taught to think about and to use appropriate body language and understand that their talk is as valued as their written work.

Examples of Talk Partner Activities may include:

- Creating a list together
- Sharing you thinking or ideas
- Disagree with your partner
- Share a strategy
- Find out from your partner etc.

It is also an expectation at Yorke Mead that **children respond in full sentences** when they are talk in class. As children begin to talk in extended sentences assessment of their understanding is far greater

and they also develop better oracy skills which in turns leads to better written skills – a child will not write a sentence they cannot yet say.

The school has adopted the Pie Corbet **Talk for Writing** strategies to ensure children can orally retell a story before we expect them to write one. These are used most specifically with the youngest children (Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1) to support the effective and fluent writing skills.

Adults make..... **Effective use of questioning** pupils during talk sessions by:

- Using open ended questions
- Providing wait time (3-5 seconds) – pupils need time to formulate their responses before replying
- Returning to an individual or giving advance notice that a question is coming their way
- Allowing pupils to articulate and share their responses together in pairs or small groups so they are able to share with a response *we think that...*
- Ensuring pupils fully understand the question

Children regularly change their**Learning Partners**

Each week the children change their learning partners. These are randomly selected using the lolly stick. This means children are used to working with children of all different levels and also have opportunities to work with new people all the time. Where there is a particular need teachers may plan for this in terms of learning partners and seating plans.

Teachers ensure children are**Appropriately challenged** and at times feel **stuck**.

The Pit and 5B's

In order to learn children need to be challenged in their learning and therefore to be making mistakes. Children who do not learn to experience the feelings of being stuck may not learn to persevere when they eventually are challenged. Children may also have a tendency to become worried or feel anxious when they are 'stuck'.

To help children to relate to feeling stuck we use the analogy of "**The Pit**" as a symbol in the classroom. Children are taught that being '**in the pit**' is a good thing as they have a chance to learn something new. They are encouraged to discuss the feelings when they are first stuck and the normality of anxiety here and then the euphoria of succeeding and getting 'out of the pit'.

To help them get out of the pit we encourage the children to use the **5 B's**. These should be used in the following order in order for the children to work initially independently to work to a solution and then with a peer before seeking support from the adult. This is to encourage effective independent learning.

The 5B's are:

- **Brain** – Think it through. Try different ways.
- **Book** – Look in your books. Have you done something similar before that will help?
- **Board**- Use the displays/working wall around the classroom.
- **Buddy**- Talk to your learning partner. Can they help you or teach you.
- **Boss**- If all else fails ask the boss, talk to an adult in the class.

The Power of Yet

To encourage a **growth mind-set** we encourage children to use the **power of yet**; children are encouraged to not say "I can't join my handwriting" they say "I can't join my handwriting yet"!

Children are... **immersed in the learning through the use of creative experiences.**

In order to help children develop a full understanding of topics we aim as far as possible to use literature, drama, role play, art, music, real life problem solving etc. to bring the topics to life. Children experience the topics through these wide range of creative experiences combined with active learning strategies enabling them to appreciate the links across the curriculum and between areas of learning. The use of workshops and curriculum days enhances the learning experiences.

All pupils receive regular and clear**Feedback which enhances learning.**

- **Assessment for learning** is embedded in everyday practice and is used to inform teaching and learning.
- Pupils regularly meet with their teachers in **pupil teacher conferences** held during the main singing assembly to discuss their progress and next targets.
- Books are marked promptly using **pink and green marking**. Pink highlights areas of praise for children whilst green helps to identify areas for growth. Marking is related to the main learning intention.
- Pupils are given time to respond to marking – **purple pen time**, and to address any issues raised in the marking.
- Pupils are encouraged to self-reflect on the learning and to create a **dialogue** with their teacher about their learning and how they feel about this.
- Pupils may peer mark one another's work using the success criteria (see feedback and marking policy) and make use of 'book on book' strategies to reflect upon their own work alongside their learning partner to support effective learning against the specific criteria.

Learning is enhanced through the use of ...**Effective Behaviour Management**.

Our positive behaviour policy is centred on children taking responsibility for learning and agreed rewards for displaying positive learning behaviour or consequences for disturbing learning. For details please see the Yorke Mead Behaviour Policy.

Each half term there is a whole school PSHE focus that will feed into the learning behaviours and be part of a whole class focus. Classes may also have a focus according to their own particular need.

Learning is enhanced through the use of ...**Regular core breathing exercises and brain breaks**

Daily use of mindful practise through **core breathing** exercises happens at least three times a day in all year groups. Children's mindful practise is supported through mindful listening, breathing balls or visual stimuli to support their practise. **Brain breaks**, in various forms, are taken to support the children's thinking skills, attention and focus. These are used throughout the day and at least once during the longer afternoon session.

Learning is enhanced through ...**Bright, enabling and attractive learning environments**.

The environment will enable children to be immersed in the focus of the topic. Throughout the schools **displays** reflect the learning children have been working on and enable the learning to be shared by others. Quality and presentation are important in creating an environment people can be proud of. The use of Working **Walls** supports learning both in the classroom and in key working areas throughout the school.

Each classroom will have a working wall for core subjects and for the key themes for learning across the curriculum. These will reflect the current work focus and include children's questions, key aspects of learning, key vocabulary, visual stimuli and artefacts to stimulate thinking.

Resources are accessible, well organized and clearly labelled so that children can be independent in accessing the resources.

Children's learning is extended beyond the classroom ...**Learning Outdoors** is as equally valued as learning in the classroom.

Children learn through their experiences, and the opportunity to use the outdoors should be taken whenever this will enhance the experience for children. This may be the use of the outdoors for stimulation, exploring for natural resources, first- hand experience of simply taking the same learning that could happen indoors outdoors.

Forest School is a highly valued learning experience that all the children will have access to throughout the year. Forest School learning encourages children's risk taking and decision skills in a safe controlled environment. Children learn to value the natural world and benefit from time working in the fresh air developing essential skills, and at times those in danger of being lost, in a modern world.

The school has two Forest School areas and large gazebos to support outdoor learning in the school grounds, a large field and an orchard/woodland area/ local river/ canal network etc. on the doorstep which enables a wide variety of easily accessible learning areas.

Children will also have the opportunity to take at least one trip out of school to enhance the learning experience each year, and children in KS2 often experience a number of trips. In addition the children have the opportunity to experience two school journeys to outdoor activity centres – one in Year 5 and one in Year 6.

Children who may need additional support in learning

Not all children will be able to fully understand the key learning immediately and may need some additional support in order to achieve the differentiated learning intentions. All children may fall into this category at some time; some children may need more support than others. In addressing the needs of the children we make use of the following key strategies and interventions.

- **Quality first teaching strategies** are employed by teachers on a day to day basis. These are adopted according to the needs of the children with the aim being to make the learning accessible to all. These may include the use of task planners, vocabulary prompts, sentence starters, writing frames etc with the intention being these are accessible for all but also targeted for children with specific needs.
- **Pre-teach strategies** are used to enable children with SEND or language barriers to have access to the key vocabulary to be taught before it appears within the lesson. By directly teaching this key vocabulary and ensuring children understand it out of the lesson we can greatly improve their understanding within the lesson.
- **Immediate Interventions** allow the teachers to step in and offer more support prior to the next lesson so that any misconceptions are addressed as early as possible and learning can move forward effectively.
- **Double Dipping Time with an adult** allows children who are off target and need to make accelerated progress have additional time with an adult to support them to make the accelerated progress needed to close the gap in their learning. Teachers may also have **focus pupils** within lessons

Children with Special Educational Needs

Children with SEND are fully integrated into the learning alongside their peers and all reasonable adjustments are made to support their needs as they do so. Children may be provided with a 'safe space' within the classroom where they can work if their anxiety is raised, may have additional brain breaks to support their focus and attention or may have access to an adult who can record ideas, reinforce learning and break down instructions for them.

However, there are times when a child's specified need requires an intervention that cannot be delivered within the classroom. Examples of these include emotional needs which require a therapeutic intervention, a specific programme to address speech & language needs or specific needs such as dyslexia or dyscalculia. Some children with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs may even require a fully differentiated timetable for a period e.g. an autistic child who is struggling to maintain regulation.

Whilst we are acutely aware of the need to ensure the curriculum is not narrowed for SEND children, we recognise there are times when one need may be acutely impacting access to learning for that child. This may require an intervention that happens out of the classroom. Where possible teachers will ensure that no intervention results in a child missing a whole or another subject's lesson for the week or will manipulate timetables to avoid missing the same thing week on week. Exceptions to this may include counselling type interventions, which by their nature should ideally be delivered at the same time and in the same place each week.

All staff have been involved in developing this policy and approach to learning & teaching, and will continue to be involved as the process evolves.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Home Learning Policy.