



Staplehurst School

Teaching & Learning Policy

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Teaching & Learning Policy

“Memory is the residue of thought.”

Daniel T. Willingham

1 Introduction - Vision

Staplehurst is a school that is happy, purposeful and stimulating where each child's needs are viewed individually, by a staff of highly trained classroom practitioners who demonstrate excellence underpinned by high expectations and professionalism.

Our aim is to instil, in each unique pupil, a love of learning; develop their confidence in order to reach their full potential; and, underpinned by a body of powerful knowledge, cultivate the lifelong skills of independence, creative thinking, team work and effective participation.

We consider ourselves to be a knowledge-rich school, whereby children master a body of subject-specific knowledge defined by the school. Skills are generally an outcome of our curriculum, not its purpose. At Staplehurst, we emphasise big ideas and invaluable knowledge that we want our children to acquire.

2 Values and aims

The dispositions we aim to cultivate in both the classroom and throughout the whole school will be modelled by all staff. The children will then learn how to recognise these positive dispositions in themselves and how to develop them to become lifelong learners.

	Value	Definition	Aims
P	Positivity	being confident	ensure that children develop a self-image of themselves as confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners
R	Respect	showing regard or consideration for the views and contributions of others	- develop children's self-respect, encourage them to understand the ideas, attitudes and values of others - teach them to respect other people's feelings
I	Independence	being honest and having strong moral principles	- equip children with learning dispositions - help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens
D	Determination	coming to a decision and fixing on a purpose	- equip children with the key knowledge, skills and understanding - maximise their life chances and economic well-being in adulthood
E	Excellence	being outstanding or extremely good	- exhibit high expectations and aspirations - enable all children to reach their full potential
	PRIDE	Taking pleasure or satisfaction in something	nurture children's self-esteem and help them to build positive relationships with other people

3 Design for learning

- 3.1 We ensure the best possible environment for learning by developing a positive atmosphere in which:-
- pupils feel safe and feel they belong,
 - they enjoy being challenged and enjoy learning,
 - pupils feel that they will succeed, because the learning challenge will have been set at the right level.

We want children to feel a sense of 'ownership' of their own learning, and not to feel that education is something which is done to them.

- 3.2 We cater for all children at Staplehurst, and our provision includes those who are identified as '**more able**' academically. We ensure that these children are exposed to adequate depth and challenge within their study and also have opportunities to deepen learning through external workshops and activities. Within lessons, we encourage these children to, having reached a level of mastery, probe deeper into learning opportunities.

3. We aim to foster an environment where rich dialogue between teachers and pupils can flourish. Through carefully planned questioning, teachers can guide the children through their learning to achieve secure understanding. Therefore, learning sequences must be accurately matched to the needs of the children.

- 3.3 All teaching will be structured to maximise learning opportunities and will be planned in accordance with the following principles (Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction):

- **Daily Review** – an important component of instruction. It helps strengthen the connections of the material learned. Automatic recall frees working memory for problem solving and creativity.
- **New Material in Small Steps** – Our working memory is small, only handling a few bits of information at once. We aim to avoid its overload by presenting new material in small steps, proceeding when the first steps are mastered.
- **Ask Questions** – Questions allow us to determine how well the material is learned.
- **Provide Models** – Students need cognitive support to help them learn how to solve problems. Modelling worked examples and teacher thinking out loud help clarify the specific steps involved.
- **Guide Student Practice** – Students need additional time to rephrase, elaborate and summarise new material in order to store it in their long-term memory.
- **Check Student Understanding** – More successful teachers check with more questions all the time.
- **Obtain High Success Rate** – 80% has been found to be optimal, showing students are learning and also being challenged. Better teachers teach in small steps followed by practice.
- **Scaffolds For Difficult Tasks** – Scaffolds are temporary supports to assist learning. They can include modelling teaching thinking aloud, cue cards and checklists. Also the 'I do, we do, you do' model is key. Scaffolds are part of cognitive apprenticeship.
- **Independent Practice** – Independent practice produces 'overlearning' – a necessary process for new material to be recalled automatically. This ensures no overloading of students' working memory.
- **Weekly & Monthly Review** – The effort involved in recalling recently-learned material embeds it in long-term memory. And the more this happens, the easier it is to connect new material to such prior knowledge.

- 3.4 All of Rosenshine's principles based on his 2012 paper 'Principles of Instruction' are rooted in WALKTRHUS. This is a shared set of teaching and learning strategies that we use to ensure high-quality teaching and learning.

4 Planning and Assessment

- 4.1 Teachers make ongoing **formative assessments** of each child's progress, and they use this information when planning their lessons and learning experiences. It enables them to take into account the abilities of all their children. Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge and skills of all our children so they know and remember more. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability. When planning work for children with special educational needs, we give due regard to information and targets contained in any Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) or Provision Map. Teachers modify teaching and learning activities as appropriate for children with disabilities. We value each child as a unique individual, and teachers are familiar with the relevant equal opportunities legislation, covering race, gender and disability. We will strive to meet the needs of all our children, and to ensure that we meet all statutory requirements related to matters of inclusion.
- 4.2 We plan our lessons with **clear learning objectives**. We take these objectives from the Early Learning Goals of "Development Matters" in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the National Curriculum.
- These should be brief, clear, specific statements of what the learners will be able to do at the end of a lesson as a result of the instruction and learning that has taken place.
- 4.3 In our lessons, we ensure that the learning objectives are stated clearly.

5 Learning Behaviours

Classrooms must be learner centred.

Not	But
Teacher-centred classrooms where:-	Learner-centred classrooms where:-
The teacher is the "doer" for children.	The teacher is the "enabler", facilitating pupils in their learning.
The teacher spoon feeds the children.	The children take responsibility for their own learning.
The children are seen as passive recipients of knowledge.	The children are seen as active and participatory learners.
The children compete with each other.	The children collaborate in their learning.
The children want to have their own say.	The children actively listen to the opinions of others and respond appropriately.

- 5.1 Pupils' talk plays a central role in learning behaviours and helps develop social skills and lifelong learning. Talk should be purposeful and questions for talk should be **open** and **challenging** for children. Learning tasks should be designed to be addressed together, and there should be sharing of ideas and consideration of alternative viewpoints. As a school, we use 'Cold Calling' whereby children are selected by the teacher (without hands up) to respond. This is done in a caring way, fostering the confidence of the child – teachers create an atmosphere whereby this is the norm and everyday practice.
- 5.2 Positive attitudes, a strong sense of self, a clear purpose and a sense of belonging are prerequisites of effective learning. Our learning environments should not only stimulate and engage, but also engender a sense of purpose and identity, enabling learning.

Behaviour for learning is characterised by the following six elements, evident in all classes.

- Concentration and engagement
- Respect for others
- Good listening
- Commitment to effort and quality
- Calm and quiet talking
- Questioning

5.3 Each of our teachers makes a special effort to establish **positive relationships** with all the children in the class. We treat the children with kindness and respect. We recognise that they are all individuals with different needs, but we treat them fairly, and give them equal opportunity to take part in class activities. When everyone feels safe and ready, knowing all contributions will be valued and celebrated, it promotes the best learning opportunities for all. We praise children for their efforts when appropriate and, by so doing, we help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general.

5.4 We deploy **HLTAs. Teaching Assistants** and other adult helpers as effectively as possible. Sometimes, they work with individual children, and sometimes they work with small groups.

6 Monitoring and review

6.1 Senior leaders and the governing body monitor the school's Teaching & Learning Policy, and review it regularly, so that we can take account of new initiatives and research, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. We will therefore review this policy regularly.