

Teaching and Learning Policy

Last Review February 2026	Next Review February 2028	Co-ordinator Head Teacher	Nominated Trustee Chair of EC&T Committee
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Our guiding principles

Children who come to The Mulberry Bush School almost always have negative prior experiences of education and view the classroom with fear and shame. We believe that all children who come to our school have a right to be educated, and we will use the therapeutic milieu of the school to support them to engage in learning and to increasingly see themselves as learners. We will work within the context of the treatment team model to ensure that each child's holistic developmental needs are being met, including their educational needs.

Children learn best at our school when they:

- Have established secure, trusting relationships with adults
- Know and understand the routines within which they learn
- Feel secure, safe and valued
- Feel a sense of belonging to the group
- Can see the relevance of what they are doing
- Can trust that the activity is achievable
- Know exactly what outcome is intended
- Understand the task
- Have access to the necessary materials
- Are not disrupted or distracted by others
- Are guided, taught or helped in appropriate ways at appropriate times
- Can practise what they are learning
- Can apply the learning in both familiar and new contexts
- Can persevere when learning is hard
- Can accept support to manage their emotions if things are not going well

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain how we'll create an environment at our school where children learn best and are prepared for the next stage in their education
- Summarise expectations to make sure everyone can achieve a consistent approach to teaching and learning across our school
- Promote high expectations and raising standards of achievement for all children in our school
- Involve children, their networks and the wider school community in children's learning and development

References:-

National Curriculum in England: Framework for KS1–4
Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
SEND Code of Practice 0–25
Behaviour and Discipline in Schools: Guide for Governing Bodies
Working Together to Improve School Attendance
Alternative Provision Statutory Guidance (2025)
Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework & changes from 2025
Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance (2026) –
Teachers' Standards (professional expectations for teaching)
Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Criteria 2025–26

Roles and responsibilities

Teaching and learning in our school is a shared responsibility, and everyone in our school community has an important role to play. We value the treatment team model and recognise our responsibility to bring the child's educational needs into the thinking about each child.

This is how we will create the above conditions for children's learning at all times:

Teachers at our school will:

- Follow the expectations for teaching and professional conduct as set out in the Teachers' Standards
- Actively engage Group Living (care) staff in each child's learning via daily handovers and by providing manageable home learning where appropriate
- Actively engage families and networks in each child's learning by attending review meetings
- Update parents/carers on children's progress at least termly by contributing to the child's placement reports

- Meet the expectations set out in the Curriculum Policy; Assessment, Recording & Reporting Policy; Behaviour Policy
- Actively engage in the reflective work of the school, which enables staff to provide therapeutic support.

Support staff at our school will:

- Know children well and differentiate support to meet their individual learning needs
- Support teaching and learning with flexibility and resourcefulness
- Use agreed assessment for learning strategies
- Use effective marking and feedback as required
- Engage in providing effective lessons and learning opportunities
- Feedback observations of children to teachers
- Ask questions to make sure they've understood expectations for learning
- Identify and use resources to support learning
- Have high expectations and celebrate achievement
- Demonstrate and model themselves as learners
- Meet the expectations set out in the Curriculum Policy; Assessment, Recording & Reporting Policy; Behaviour Policy.
- Actively engage in the reflective work of the school, which enables staff to provide therapeutic support

Subject leaders will:

- Help to create well-sequenced, broad and balanced curriculum plans that build knowledge and skills
- Support teachers to sequence lessons in a way that allows children to make good progress from their starting points
- Resource their subject, providing teachers with necessary resources for learning
- Drive improvement in their subject/phase, working with teachers to identify any challenges
- Timetable their subject to allocate time for children to:
 - Achieve breadth and depth
 - Fully understand the topic

- Monitor and moderate progress across their subject/phase by, for example, systematically reviewing progress against a range of evidence and reviewing qualitative and quantitative performance data
- Improve on weaknesses identified in their monitoring activities
- Create and share clear intentions for their subject
- Encourage teachers to share ideas, resources and good practice
- Promote their subject across the whole school community, including considering induction and training needs for care staff where appropriate
- Meet the expectations set out in the Curriculum Policy; Assessment, Recording & Reporting Policy; Behaviour Policy.

Senior leaders will:

- Have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education to all
- Celebrate achievement and have high expectations for everyone
- Hold staff and children to account for their teaching and learning
- Plan and evaluate strategies to secure high-quality teaching and learning across the school
- Manage resources to support high-quality teaching and learning
- Provide support and guidance to other staff through coaching and mentoring
- Input and monitor the impact of continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to improve staff's practice and subject knowledge
- Promote team working at all levels, for example by buddying teachers up to support one another where appropriate
- Address underachievement and intervene promptly
- Meet the expectations set out in the Curriculum Policy; Assessment, Recording & Reporting Policy; Behaviour Policy; Equality & Diversity Policy; Disability Access Plan.

Children will be supported to:

- Attend class on time every day
- Accept help from adults in order to engage in learning
- Respect their right, and the rights of other children, to learn
- Be curious, ambitious, engaged and confident learners
- Know their targets and how to improve

- Put maximum effort into their work
- Complete home learning activities as required

Group Living (care) staff, parents and carers will:

- Value learning
- Encourage their child as a learner
- Make sure their child is ready and able to learn every day
- Support good attendance
- Participate in discussions about their child's progress and attainment
- Encourage their child to take responsibility for their own learning
- Support and give importance to home learning

Trustees will:

- Monitor that resources and funding are allocated effectively to support the school's approach to teaching and learning
- Monitor the impact of teaching and learning strategies on children's progress and attainment
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation
- Make sure other school policies promote high-quality teaching, and that these are being implemented

Planning

The schemes of work used, and the details of the long-term plan, are set out in the Curriculum Policy. Teachers should produce medium-term and weekly planning that supports them to plan sequentially based on their knowledge and assessment of the children in their class. These plans can be personalised to the needs of the teacher as long as they provide clear intentions about children's learning, and can be shared clearly with support staff.

Lessons will be planned well to ensure good short-, medium- and long-term progress for individual children, taking into account their targets. The SENCO will support class teachers to develop learning pathways.

Learning environment

Teachers should plan to make maximum use of spaces that support children's learning and self-regulation. These spaces will be kept safe, clean and ready for children to use them. As the majority of the children who attend the school have

had negative experiences of education, we aim to help them build trust and confidence in the classroom environment – it is therefore important that they learn that learning happens in the classroom and that they need to be there to engage in learning. However, we also recognise that learning can and will take place in classrooms and class gardens, the library, the Environmental Area, and other spaces on the school site, and that these opportunities should be maximised.

The learning environment will be arranged to promote learning through:

- Comfortable, calm and organised learning areas
- Well-labelled resources that children can access independently as far as possible
- Displays that celebrate and support children's learning
- Displays that reflect the children in the class
- Accessible resources for learning such as books, concrete resources and other equipment

Differentiation

Teaching and learning at our school will take the backgrounds, needs and abilities of all children into account. All children at the school have special educational needs and all are disadvantaged by their prior experience. We will plan individually for children, with the support of the SENCO, considering their emotional presentation as well as their academic progress. Teachers will work closely with each child's treatment team to ensure that children's whole experience and presentation is taken into account when planning.

For more information, please see the SEN Information Report.

Homework

Children are also expected to read their familiar reading book with an adult in their house at weekends. Other homework may be provided to help children to prepare for future learning in Education. For example, projects researching a particular topic, or visiting a place of interest, may be completed optionally but will help to underpin future learning. In general, homework is kept to a minimum as we believe that the time away from the classroom should be used as far as possible to maximise children's opportunities for broad experiences, and for play and social time.

Marking and feedback

Feedback will clearly explain to children what they are doing well and what they need to do next to continue to improve their work. We believe that marking is most meaningful when it is done alongside the child, and we value verbal feedback 'in the moment'. We believe that marking should be quick for the adult and easily accessible for the child.

The following codes will be used in written marking:

	You did this well - 'green for go'
	Look at this again - 'pink for think'
	Learning objective partially met / making progress
VF	Verbal feedback given
(I)	Independent work
(GQ)	Guided questioning. The child could have accessed this independently but benefited from some prompting or guidance from an adult.
(S)	Supported...
(T)	...by a teacher
(TA)	...by a teaching assistant
	The child could not have achieved this independently.
SC	Self-corrected.

All marking should be initialled.

The learning objective should be highlighted in green (achieved), orange (partially achieved) or pink (not achieved).

Marking should be encouraging and motivating, giving children an opportunity to secure their learning. It should be specific to the learning objective and the child's next steps.

Assessment, recording and reporting

We track children's progress using a combination of formative and summative assessment. For detailed information, please see the Assessment, Recording & Reporting Policy.

We provide termly targets for children, based on our summative assessments, and contribute to termly Placement Reports.

Monitoring and evaluation

We monitor teaching and learning in our school to make sure that all of our children make the best possible progress from their starting points.

School leaders, the Education Management Team, and subject leaders, monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching on children's learning through:

- learning walks, lesson observations, 'book looks', discussions with teachers, support staff and children
- Termly pupil progress meetings

- Gathering input from the school council

We also recognise the value of peer observation, which provides opportunities for both peers to learn. We encourage Teaching Assistants and Teachers to observe practice in other classrooms and across departments.

The format for all observations and monitoring is:

- Likes
- Feelings
- Questions

This format enables honest but constructive feedback and discussion that encourages positivity and learning.

We also welcome and encourage monitoring and feedback from people from the wider community, including:

- Trustees
- SEMH Peer Review colleagues
- School Improvement Partner
- Director and CEO

All members of staff are supported to develop their practice through regular supervision, based on annual targets set through the performance management process. More information is available in the Supervision Policy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head Teacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the EC&T Committee of the Trustees.

Links with other policies

This policy links with the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour policy
- Curriculum policy
- SEN information report
- Assessment, recording & reporting policy