

The Rydal Academy

Teaching and Learning Policy

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Introduction

At The Rydal Academy we define learning as: The process of acquiring the essential knowledge, skills, understanding and behaviours required for deep understanding.

Our role as teachers is to plan and adapt our teaching to ensure that learning is maximised for all pupils within our classrooms.

Our Teaching and Learning guidelines are organised into 3 main sections below:

- Teaching and learning statements
- Developing the learning environment
- Developing the teaching environment

**We also have an appendix which contains specific information about our current curriculum provision.*

Teaching and learning statements

All teachers are individuals who bring a wide range of skills, knowledge, talents and experiences to teaching, which includes different styles of delivery. At our school we promote and encourage staff to be individuals working within agreed professional frameworks at all times.

As a school we will:

- Plan, organise, facilitate and evaluate an outstanding curriculum built specifically for the children in our school.
- Set high, but realistic standards in learning and behaviour.
- Organise teaching and groups in such a way that it supports effective learning; taking into account the full range of needs within our classrooms.
- Work with all relevant parties to ensure that every child receives their full entitlement
- Provide a framework of professional support and development for all staff
- Share information with relevant partners which leads to a greater understanding of children's needs and achievements
- Use all available information to monitor and evaluate the success of our work
- Have a clear agenda and programme for school improvement

As teachers we will:

- Plan and be prepared to adapt effectively for all groups and individuals.
- Deliver purposeful lessons which are linked to real life situations and prepare children for their futures.
- Identify and build on links with other subjects where relevant.
- Use effective questioning techniques in every lesson to ensure that children are challenged in their thinking.
- Deliver lessons that are interesting, thought provoking and relevant to our children.
- Deliver lessons which have rigour, challenge and pace.
- Enlist the support of other professionals and external agencies to help every child to learn.
- Assess learning continually and use this to identify, plan and share next steps.

- Share and celebrate successes of every child.
- Allow time for children to understand and consolidate what they have learnt.
- Use marking, self and peer assessment to fully establish where children are in their learning.

As learners we will:

- Participate fully in all lessons and activities; including using active listening, answering and asking questions and following instructions.
- Take responsibility for our own learning and actions.
- Complete work at home and in school to the very best of our ability.
- Complete tasks in the time that we have been given.
- Feel confident in asking for help when we are unsure.
- Assess and comment on our own work and the work of others.
- Support others in their learning.

Developing the learning environment

The school's collective and individual learning environment is crucial in improving the range, quality and number of learning opportunities. An environment which is based on a positive inclusive approach through recognition and equal opportunity will best achieve our aims.

We will help to improve the range, quality and number of learning opportunities:

- Through linked units
 1. Relating work to real life
 2. Enhancing inter-subject understanding
 3. Providing stimulating and inspiring projects
- With parents/carers
 1. Setting high quality out of school learning opportunities.
 2. Providing parents information letters detailing curriculum focuses, activities and general class information each term
 3. Holding parents meetings once each term to report on individual progress including levels of attainment and targets for improvement
 4. Running curriculum workshops & family learning sessions where relevant
 5. Allowing access to curriculum work books each term
 6. Providing an annual written report on attainment and progress in each curriculum area
- Through our displays
 1. Providing scaffolding displays to support learning in each classroom
 2. Building engaging and interactive displays in the corridors and hall
 3. Displaying examples of pupils work and evidence of extended learning
- Through visits and visitors
 1. All year groups to have at least three visits and/or visitors linked to a unit of work across the year
 2. All pupils to have opportunity during their time in school to experience a residential visit
- Through a variety of learning styles
 1. Regular individual, paired and group work opportunities
 2. Written, practical, facilitated, child directed, open and closed activities
 3. Encouraging problem solving and creative thinking skills
 4. The opportunity to access the outdoor learning environment
- Through planning and evaluation
 1. Objectives, activities, differentiation and support clearly identified in planning
 2. Target groups identified and progress analysed on a regular basis
 3. Lessons evaluated and used to inform further learning

- Using assessment
 1. Evidence of continuous assessment in all lessons which informs next steps and planning
 2. Regular discussion with children including formal termly meeting to review achievements
 3. Individual targets reviewed and set each term
 4. Marking which makes use of comments from teacher, pupil and peer group
 5. Marking which is informative and helps to move children on
 6. Time for reflection and discussion of 'working levels' and 'next steps'
 7. Opportunity to reflect and discuss learning strategies
 8. End of topic/ year assessments which indicate National Curriculum standards
- Through homework and extension activities
 1. That help to consolidate and extend curricular learning
 2. Which allow opportunity for family learning
 3. Which encourage independent research and choice of activity focus
 4. That will be used as evidence to inform teacher assessment
- Through extra curricular activities
 1. That reflect the children's interests
 2. That enrich or extend the curriculum
 3. That engage children in a range of healthy activities to encourage a healthy lifestyle
 4. That emphasise enjoyment and well-being

Developing the teaching environment

Teaching is a demanding job which requires clear knowledge and understanding by every member of staff. Meeting the challenge of balancing planning, teaching, assessment, behaviour management, reporting and many other duties requires skilful management of time throughout the year and is one which cannot be accomplished alone. Being a good teacher and staying a good teacher requires staff to be part of and work in a professional framework at all times. By doing so we can ensure that we achieve appropriate work/life balance whilst remaining focussed on the quality of and opportunities for teaching and learning throughout school.

We will continue to work on improving the quality of and opportunities for teaching through:

- Providing support for teachers to meet their performance management objectives
 1. INSET courses
 2. Resources
 3. Advice from colleagues (Internal and external)
 4. Non contact time
- Providing professional development opportunities
 1. INSET courses
 2. Local Authority and externally provided training
 3. Secondments
 4. Networking
 5. Mentoring opportunities
- Ensuring the necessary resources are readily available
 1. To support subjects/topics/units
 2. To support classroom management
 3. To support independent learning
 4. To support preparation and planning
 5. To support the assessment process
- Protecting the work – life balance for teachers and support staff
 1. Monitoring of the number and duration of meetings
 2. Where possible meetings to be planned in advance with clear agendas

3. Use of IT to reduce workload
 4. Creative use of INSET
 5. Monitoring of number of observations
 6. Planned programme of school developments (School Improvement Plan)
 7. Careful, balanced timing of events during the year (School Self-review map)
- Ensuring that Planning Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time takes place
 1. Agreed timetable for all staff
 2. Fully resourced room
 3. Agreed methods of planning, recording and reporting
 - Teaching and learning time
 1. Agreed contact time
 2. Agreed processes of communication
 3. Agreed procedures for collecting and recording money eg. trip money
 4. Agreed ground rules for when it is reasonable to disrupt a lesson
 - Providing an exciting and stimulating curriculum map
 1. Develop the curriculum through discussion with all partners to consider what is best
 2. Follow an agreed approach to delivering the curriculum
 3. Monitor and evaluate the curriculum
 - Policies, planning and assessment data
 1. Completing and requesting only necessary documentation
 2. Shared access to all appropriate documents
 3. Agreed approach to recording information
 4. Agreed approach to completing plans, forms and input of data
 5. Use of non contact time to complete tasks
 - Providing additional support when necessary
 1. Focus on the needs of the child
 2. Flexibility in deployment
 3. Matching individual skills to individual/groups of children
 4. Support staff to be fully involved in the planning process
 5. Support staff to work in class/out of class
 6. Support staff to use full range of teaching strategies

Links

Our policy for teaching and learning is supported by policies such as our SEND policy, Assessment policy, Marking policy, Behaviour policy and Accessibility plan.

Monitoring and review

We will monitor and measure the success of this policy by:

- Engaging all partners in regular discussion
- Using questionnaires
- Formal and informal observations
- Scrutiny of work, planning scrutiny and analysis of achievement including test results

Appendix

Curriculum details

Early Years

The Early Years curriculum is planned around pupil interests and identified themes. The majority of time across the day is child-initiated learning in both Nursery and Reception phases. Within each daily Nursery session pupils will also receive whole class adult led sessions for phonics/early reading and mathematics.

Reception pupils receive whole class adult led session in phonics/early reading, writing and mathematics on a daily basis. Learning activities are based around objectives from Development Matters in The Early Years non-statutory guidance materials.

** See Early Years Foundation Stage Policy*

Key Stage 1 and 2

Our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of our own unique school community. It is underpinned by the 2014 National Curriculum. The following key areas of learning are embedded in our provision across the curriculum: social development, basic skills (reading, writing, calculating), communication skills, positive learning attitudes and resilience, computing skills, self-esteem building, problem solving and enquiry, independence and life skills, wider real life experiences, aspiration of both staff and pupils, physical and mental health and development of pupils' specific talents and interests.

Classes across the school are made up of three parallel mixed ability groups within a cohort. Setting is only used for specific specialist subject areas e.g. phonics.

The vast majority of pupils access all core subject sessions and Magic Monday immersive days with their class teacher. A small proportion of identified pupils with significant levels of need are taught their foundation subjects (Magic Monday's) in their base class and then work Tuesday-Friday in a specialist classroom with a higher level of staffing to support their learning in the core subjects.

Teachers adjust timetables flexibly to fit around pupils learning needs and lesson design. Pupils who require further support or extension may access further adult support in the class or be withdrawn for intervention activities.

Teachers produce a parents' information letter at the start of each term to inform parents of curriculum coverage over the term as well as arrangements for homework, school trips, tips on how to support your child at home and equipment required.

Subjects are taught as discrete lessons, through topics or thematically. Wherever relevant cross – curricular links are made between subjects.

**See cohort plans published on the school website, Teaching and Learning policy and termly parent information letters.*

Magic Mondays (Terrific Tuesdays, Wicked Wednesdays)

The aim of Magic Mondays is to inspire pupils at the start the week through an intensive and immersive unit of work focussing on the curriculum areas of: Science, Music, Art and Design, Design Technology, History, Geography or RE. Themes from the Magic Monday focuses are then pulled through into Core subjects during the rest of the week, e.g. If the Magic Monday theme is World War 2 pupils may then study Anne Frank's diary in Literacy and create their own diary in English during the rest of the week.

Core subjects (Tuesday to Friday)

Pupils will access activities grouped in to six core subjects each day, objectives from these core subjects will also link into Magic Monday activities. We feel continued exposure to these core areas of learning will help to embed the basic skills that our pupils will need to prepare them for their future.

The core subjects are made up of:

Phonics / Reading

In Key Stage 1 pupils will be grouped by ability for phonics sessions. Once pupils are confident readers they will access reading sessions rather than phonics sessions. Reading activities will focus mainly on independent reading, comprehension activities, guided reading and follow up tasks. Letters and Sounds phonics programme is currently used to develop phonics knowledge and reading skills, pupils then progress on to the Accelerated Reader scheme when they are reading at an appropriate level.

English

English sessions will focus mainly around writing composition, spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting. Sessions will build towards one piece of extended writing per fortnight which will be quality marked by the class teacher and then used to feedback to pupils before they edit and improve their work.

** Spoken language will be evidenced and assessed across all subjects.*

Calculations

Calculation sessions will cover number skills including calculations, number and place value, fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils are also encouraged to make use of the schools subscription to the Mathletics website both in and out of school to practice their calculation skills.

Maths

Maths sessions will cover measurements, geometry and shapes, statistics, ratio, proportion and algebra
** Calculations and Maths sessions will build towards one piece of extended work (usually enquiry based) per week which will be quality marked by the class teacher and then used to feedback to pupils before they edit and improve their work.*

PE

PE sessions will take place two out of every three days. PE sessions will include a variety of sports and physical activities while educating pupils around physical health and the impact of exercise on their body. Children have opportunities to participate in intra-school competitions, inter-school competitions, cluster, town and regional competitions. Swimming provision is available to children from Year 1 to Year 6.

PE Kit

Children should wear a PE t-shirt and sports shorts. Children who do not bring kit on designated PE days will be provided with spare kit for them to access the PE curriculum. It is advised that shoulder length hair should be tied back and jewellery should not be worn. Should ear-rings not be able to be removed, they should be covered with tape or plasters. Appropriate footwear such as trainers should be worn outdoors, ankle boots are not suitable. Swim wear should be a one-piece swimsuit for girls and trunks for boys. All children with shoulder length hair should wear a swimming cap.

Computing

Computing sessions will run every third day and be designed around the computing curricular objectives, while various forms of IT will be used across all curricular subjects to further pupils understanding of the uses of IT and to extend learning within those specific subject areas.

Information Technology has a high profile in our school for pupils and staff. Our laptop banks, tablets, digital cameras, video recorders, sound recorders, visualisers and Smartboards in every class means that children have access to a wide range of technology and that we can deliver an exciting curriculum.

Social Development

Social Development sessions will focus on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development activities whilst also including community contribution activities and team building sessions.

Languages

Key Stage 2 pupils will access a Modern Foreign Languages session once per week for 30 minutes. Children begin learning French in Year 3 and continue to develop their French throughout Key Stage 2. After-school Languages club allows children further opportunities to develop their knowledge of languages.

Further Curriculum Information

Religious Education

At The Rydal Academy we currently use the Darlington Agreed Syllabus for RE. In accordance with statutory requirements collective worship is held daily.

**Parents are entitled to withdraw their children from RE and collective worship and should inform the Headteacher in writing should they wish to do so.*

Sex and Relationships Education

The curriculum for sex and relationships education is taught through Social development and Science. Year 5 & 6 children take part in a talk on puberty and relationships which is delivered by our School Nurse. Issues relating to puberty and sexuality are discussed as and when appropriate. Teaching is complementary and supportive to the role of parents.

Homework

All pupils take a reading book home every night and Year 2 – 6 receive weekly spellings. We have a wealth of other optional homework for children and parents to access. **Please see the Homework Policy.*

Extended learning

Optional activities including: curriculum extension grids, Athletics, Developing Experts, workbooks, talk boxes are all available on request. **Please see the Homework Policy.*

Extra-curricular activities

We provide an extremely wide range of extra-curricular activities, which take place at the end of every school day. We have at least ten clubs per night which are all free and run by school staff. Extra-curricular timetables are published on the school website annually. Clubs are accessible to pupils from Reception to Year 6 depending on the activity. Sign up letters are available from the office.