



Learning and Teaching Policy

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RATIONALE: Curriculum Statement

Our **BeDifferent** curriculum has been designed to instil a love of learning in children, developing lifelong learners who are curious about the world around them, motivated to pursue their dreams and resilient when faced with challenges.

It is designed to nurture the growth and development of the whole child, equipping each individual with the knowledge and skills they need to support their physical and mental well-being. We strongly believe that children thrive when they feel safe, happy and valued.

Our philosophy that 'Strength Lies in Differences' underpins our celebration of everyone's individual cultural identities. We know that being different and celebrating our uniqueness provides an environment where each child can thrive.

Learning should be challenging, rewarding and meaningful, and we achieve this through teaching that is creative and passionate. We value and prioritise topics that are relevant to children's understanding of the world around them and the impact they can have upon it.

The topics selected are carefully chosen to ensure National Curriculum coverage as well as progression within children's knowledge and skills throughout their time with us. We teach children to think deeply, making connections between different areas of their learning and fully mastering new concepts before moving on.

AIMS

At the BeDifferent Federation we recognise that as individuals we learn best in different ways. In our schools we provide a rich and varied diet of learning experiences that allows all children to develop their skills and abilities to reach their full potential. Our Federation's ethos permeates all aspects of learning and teaching. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the children are provided with outstanding learning and teaching experiences that lead to consistently high levels of pupil engagement and achievement.

At the BeDifferent Federation children:





- become independent, confident learners who take increasing responsibility for their own learning
- become resilient, reflective, resourceful and reciprocal learners
- feel secure in school and are willing to take risks in their learning
- acquire the necessary skills for learning, now and in the future, by developing lively, enquiring minds and the ability to question, share ideas and work co-operatively
- make connections between the different areas of their knowledge
- develop excellent long-term memory strategies to enable them to build progressively upon their learning
- develop self-respect, understanding the ideas, attitudes and values of others, and are taught to respect other people's feelings
- access a rich, balanced and enquiry-based curriculum in a variety of ways
- use language and number effectively, as a foundation for learning, and to feel confident in all areas of the curriculum
- understand their community and feel valued as part of it
- develop an understanding of the core British Values of democracy, the rule of law, mutual respect, individual liberty and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- develop an understanding of other beliefs, cultural identity and ways of life and, in so doing, learn how to promote respectful engagement with everyone.
- develop an understanding of their local and wider environment, including an understanding of the importance of sustainability.





EFFECTIVE LEARNING

We understand that as individuals we learn in many different ways; we therefore employ a wide range of teaching strategies to address the needs of all of our learners and so retain their concentration, motivation and application.

We believe that children learn best when:

- they are interested and motivated
- they experience success
- they feel valued for who they are
- they are challenged and stimulated by our high expectations
- they are provided with tasks that take into account ability, interests and needs
- they are provided with opportunities to think independently, creatively, critically and collaboratively
- quality concrete and visual resources are provided
- they have opportunities to be physically active within sessions
- they feel secure and are aware of boundaries
- they are involved in assessing and measuring their own learning
- they are immersed in well-paced lessons
- presented with varied and flexible teaching styles, dependent on the task and the individual needs of the learner
- provided with a clear focus, through explicit learning intentions (WALT) and success criteria, which identify what learners' need to understand and be able to do in order to achieve
- we remove potential barriers to learning through careful differentiation, use of visual and concrete resources and personalised supportive strategies
- positive behaviour management strategies are used to motivate and encourage children to respond appropriately and help to create a climate for learning
- opportunities for self-evaluation and reflection are built in throughout the session





- they are involved in setting and reviewing personal targets
- a stimulating and purposeful learning environment is created
- learning builds on children's prior skills, knowledge and understanding
- a range of questions are used e.g. open questions and closed questions, and children's own questions are valued.

At the BeDifferent Federation, we offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways. We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved in reviewing the way they learn and to reflect on how they learn best.

Planned learning experiences include:

- Investigations and problem-solving;
- Research and discovery;
- Collaborative paired or group work;
- Asking and answering questions;
- Use of ICT, including the safe use of the Internet;
- Themed curriculum afternoons dedicated to exploring a subject in depth;
- Fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- Visitors with first-hand experience or expert knowledge;
- Family events that facilitate collaborative learning partnerships;
- Watching interactive clips and responding to music through movement;
- Debates, role-play and oral presentations;
- Designing and making things;
- Participation in regular physical activity.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We believe a positive, stimulating learning environment sets the climate for learning and enables all children to access the curriculum.

The learning environment should:

- be welcoming and inviting to children and adults by encouraging interaction as well as providing opportunities for good communication between home and school;





- reflect diversity and celebrates who we are as unique individuals;
- support and challenge learning by ensuring appropriate resources are accessible to the children, encouraging them to be independent in different areas of learning;
- remind children that they are working towards personal goals and targets in their learning;
- celebrate achievement and value effort in the display and presentation of children's current learning across the curriculum, in turn raising self-esteem;
- be stimulating and thought provoking with the use of interactive displays and resources and different areas within each classroom, which encourage children to explore, investigate and play;
- create an environment where children feel they belong and feel proud of;
- include key questions and knowledge outcome statements reminding children of their prior learning;
- be safe and hazard free;
- use concrete and visual resources to support learning in a sustainable way;
- promote positive mental health and well-being;
- include recycling and reusing systems that facilitate sustainable choices within the classroom;
- encourage co-operative and collaborative learning and good working relationships, through the flexible use of space and the ability to adapt to whole class, group and individual learning;
- promote an appropriate atmosphere for learning supported by the school's expectations, Code of Conduct and Pupil's choices;
- be well-organised, labelled and uncluttered.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Our teaching is focused on motivating all children, building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, ultimately enabling them to reach the highest





level of personal achievement. All adults generate high levels of enthusiasm for, participation in and commitment to learning. Teaching promotes children's high levels of resilience, confidence and independence when they tackle challenging activities.

Teachers have consistently high expectations of all children. Drawing on excellent subject knowledge, teachers plan astutely and set challenging tasks based on systematic, accurate assessment of children's prior skills, knowledge and understanding. They use well-judged and imaginative teaching strategies that, together with sharply focused and timely support and intervention, match individual needs accurately. They identify key vocabulary that will enable children to fully access a topic or text and plan activities to support children's understanding of these words.

Teachers make ongoing assessments of each child's progress and they use this information to plan the appropriate 'next steps' for learning, enabling them to take into account the abilities of all of their children. To support children's long-term memory, teachers use daily 'soundbytes' to revisit prior learning, as well as including memory checks at the beginning of all lessons.

Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge and skills of all of our children. 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 and Disabilities, we give due regard to information and targets contained in the children's individual Passports to Success or Educational Health Care Plans. Teachers also modify teaching and learning as appropriate for children with disabilities. We will strive to meet the needs of all our children, valuing each child as a unique individual, ensuring that we meet all statutory requirements related to matters of inclusion.

We identify children who are working at a greater depth within each class and adapt the learning experiences planned for them to ensure they are effectively challenged. We create an ethos where it is 'cool to be clever' and where gender stereotypes are dismantled and transcended – for example, boys are valued and accepted for being good at art and/or singing and girls are valued and accepted for being good at football.

Teachers systematically and effectively check children's understanding throughout lessons, anticipating where they may need to intervene and doing so with notable impact on the quality of learning. Lessons are 'chunked' so that different groups of children can receive differentiated inputs from adults. Appropriate and regular





homework contributes to children's learning in partnership with families. Marking and effective feedback strategies from teachers and other children occurs regularly, with a clear impact on children's success and progress. This feedback then provides the children with the personalised targets that they need to focus on next. Each half term we challenge the children to complete quizzes based on the identified knowledge outcomes for each topic. We use the assessment information gathered from these to inform our teaching, revisiting aspects that children may have found more difficult and planning to address them differently in the future.

Success and Challenge cards in reading, writing and Mathematics are used to inform planning and assess where the children have been successful and where they need to progress to next. These are shared with families during our Pupil Achievement Review days.

At the BeDifferent Federation, we strongly believe that lessons must be purposeful, making explicit links with other areas of the curriculum and identifying the transferable skills that children will use. They are planned with clear learning objectives which come from the 2014 National Curriculum. Learning objectives support our annual project themes (appendix 1). Each lesson has a clear, child-friendly objective in the form of a WALT (We Are Learning To) and Success Criteria, which break down the objective into core principles that must be understood. Plans are monitored by members of the Senior Leadership Team.

Teaching staff and teaching assistants establish and maintain excellent working relationships with all of 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 opportunities to take part in class activities. All of our teachers follow the school's Behaviour For Learning Policy with regard to discipline and classroom management. Each class works collaboratively to set out their code of conduct and we expect all children to comply with the rules that we jointly devise to promote the best learning opportunities for all. We praise children for their efforts and, in doing so, we help to build positive attitudes towards the school and learning in general.

Our classrooms are language-rich, dynamic learning environments. We adapt them to reflect our current learning projects, often transforming them into new worlds of learning, such as a tropical rainforest or Ancient Greece. We display the identified knowledge outcomes for each topic on our 'Font of all Knowledge' display, helping





children to acquire key information about the topic theme and to remember it. Learning prompts are positioned strategically around the room to support the children's understanding and vocabulary. Each class displays and develops a historical timeline to support children's understanding of chronology. We celebrate all children's work by displaying it regularly throughout the year and we ensure that the children's voice is an integral part of all displays, through the use of speech bubbles, questions, quotes and thinking key responses. All classrooms have a dedicated class library area with a selection of both fiction and non-fiction books.

All of our teaching staff are encouraged to regularly reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement and we plan their professional development accordingly. We do all that we can to support all of our teaching staff in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice.

OUR CURRICULUM

Through our innovative, personalised curriculum we aim to instil a love of learning in children, as well as developing lifelong enquiry skills to enable them to have a 'thirst for learning' in the future. We teach subjects discreetly, however we maximise opportunities to forge links between the different areas of learning where appropriate. Across the school we plan for progressive learning in the following key areas:

- English
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design
- Personal, Social, Citizenship and Health Education (including Relationships and Sex Education)
- Physical Development

We explore the core British Values with the children, such as democracy, the rule of law and mutual respect, and we weave these carefully into our topic choices, assemblies and extra-curricular events. We explore how beliefs, values and attitudes drive behaviours and develop an awareness of our own, and others', cultural heritage. We value diverse perspectives, understanding that all of us have a responsibility to learn, develop and grow in our understanding of others. We celebrate our differences through learning about each other's cultures including the role of influential people and how they have shaped our world today.





We know how important it is to capture children's interest and enthusiasm at the beginning of a new topic so we plan 'engage' events to promote this. These are usually practical learning experiences that give children a taster of what to expect during their project, encouraging them to ask lots of questions and to share what they would like to learn about through the topic. Additionally, we arrange trips and workshops linked to each topic designed to provide the children with further real-life learning experiences. As well as launching the topic in an engaging way, we also plan events for the children to express what they have learnt at the end of each project, showcasing their new knowledge and skills. These 'express' events include opportunities to share learning with other classes, family events and themed days.

Each half-termly project has a historical, geographical or scientific focus. For each of these, we have identified a key set of knowledge outcomes that we want the children to learn and remember. These are statements of knowledge that will equip the children to become well-rounded individuals, who know about our world and the history behind it. The children will revisit these facts as they progress through the school to help them remember.

In addition, the children enjoy regular themed curricular afternoons in Music, Art, Design and Technology, Religious Education and Citizenship. Our Citizenship curriculum includes themes designed to ensure that our children have a wider understanding of their our local, national and global community and their roles within them. It aims to support their personal development so that they are able to make informed, positive choices. Through this curriculum, we teach the children how to nurture their own mental wellbeing through Mental Fitness afternoons; they learn how to celebrate their own identity and value diversity through our Strength Lies in Difference themes; and they learn about the challenges our planet is facing and how we can all have an impact on its future, through dedicated BeDifferent Future themed afternoons.

Each curriculum themed afternoon has an over-arching theme across the Federation and these are differentiated to suit the needs of each year group. The day starts with a line of enquiry to explore and the knowledge and skills required to answer this line of enquiry will be taught throughout the day. Each afternoon is carefully planned to highly engage and inspire the children through varying activities that are practical and language focused.





THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS

Our Governing Body support, monitor and review the school's approach to learning and teaching through regular planned visits to the school and discussions with teaching staff; particularly the Subject Leader of their designated subject.

In particular they:

- attend School Improvement Planning and Review meetings;
- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
- ensure that the school buildings and premises are used optimally to support learning and teaching;
- check teaching methods in the light of health and safety regulations;
- seek to ensure that our staff development and our performance management both promote good quality teaching;
- monitor the effectiveness of the school's learning and teaching approaches through the school's self-evaluation systems, which include classroom visits and reports from the Chief Executive Headteacher, Heads of School, Deputy Headteacher and subject leaders.

THE ROLE OF FAMILIES

We believe that families have a fundamental role to play in helping their children to learn. Strong partnerships between home and school are used both to inform parents about what and how their children are learning, as well as encouraging active participation in collaborative learning experiences.

We develop these partnerships by -

- holding curriculum evenings and workshops to explain school strategies linked to all aspects of the curriculum;





- sending half-termly curriculum information to parents, which outlines the project theme and the key knowledge outcomes that the children will be learning at school;
- sustaining a managed learning environment and a regularly updated website to communicate information;
- sharing Success and Challenge cards;
- sharing and agreeing to a Partnership to Success expectation;
- sending parents annual reports in which we explain the progress made by their child, and indicating how their child can improve further;
- explaining to parents how they can support their child with homework, and suggesting, for example, regular shared reading and support with their projects and investigative work;
- operating an 'open door' policy, ensuring that both teachers and members of the Senior Leadership Team are available for informal discussions.

We believe that parents have a responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We therefore ask parents to:

- ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible;
- ensure that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and PE kit;
- do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
- inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect their child's learning;
- promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general.

Policy review: September 2025

