



Curriculum Policy/ Teaching and Learning

Sections

1. Introduction
2. How we teach and how children learn
3. The organisation of children
 - 3.1 Additional needs
 - 3.2 Gifted and talented
4. The organisation and design of the curriculum
5. The organisation and design of classrooms
6. Assessment and target setting
7. Curriculum leadership
8. Teaching Assistants
9. Other adults in School
10. Parent Partnerships
11. Every Child Matters outcomes

Version 1.0

Created – March 2009

Discussed with Governors – tba

Review Cycle – three yearly

Next review – Spring 2011



Abraham Lincoln's letter to his son's teacher

He will have to learn, I know, that all men are not just, all men are not true.

*But teach him also that for every scoundrel there is a hero;
that for every selfish Politician, there is a dedicated leader...*

Teach him for every enemy there is a friend,

Steer him away from envy, if you can, teach him the secret of quiet laughter.

Let him learn early that the bullies are the easiest to lick...

Teach him, if you can, the wonder of books...

*But also give him quiet time to ponder the eternal mystery of birds in the sky,
bees in the sun, and the flowers on a green hillside.*

In the school teach him it is far more honourable to fail than to cheat...

Teach him to have faith in his own ideas, even if everyone tells him they are wrong...

Teach him to be gentle with gentle people, and tough with the tough.

Try to give my son the strength not to follow the crowd when everyone is getting on the band wagon...

*Teach him to listen to all men...but teach him also to filter all he hears on a screen of truth,
and take only the good that comes through.*

Teach him if you can, how to laugh when he is sad...

Teach him there is no shame in tears,

Teach him to scoff at cynics and to beware of too much sweetness...

*Teach him to sell his brawn and brain to the highest bidders
but never to put a price-tag on his heart and soul.*

Teach him to close his ears to a howling mob and to stand and fight if he thinks he's right.

Treat him gently, but do not cuddle him, because only the test of fire makes fine steel.

Let him have the courage to be impatient...let him have the patience to be brave.

Teach him always to have sublime faith in himself, because then he will have sublime faith in mankind.

This is a big order, but see what you can do...

He is such a fine little fellow, my son!



1. Introduction

We believe that every child is intelligent and that intelligence comes in many forms. We strive to provide such a breadth of opportunities that every child will experience significant success as well as learning to develop resilience and determination.

Effective teaching and learning is at the heart of all we do – how we do these things defines us as a school and as a nursery (hereinafter referred to as “the School”). This policy establishes the framework for how we approach children’s learning and fulfilment. We want children to be successful learners and for every child to:

- Love learning
- Seek challenges
- Value effort
- Persist in the face of difficulties
- Believe in self-efficacy

The details of this policy and the accompanying Teaching and Learning Handbook are regularly discussed, both formally and informally, during the course of the school year, leading to updates in the light of experiences, feedback and new initiatives.

*"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.
We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.
Your playing small doesn't serve the world.
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.
We are all meant to shine, as children do.
We are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.
It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone.
And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."*

Nelson Mandela

We want everyone at our school to shine.

2. How we teach and how children learn

Everyone involved in teaching our children understands that how a child feels affects how a child learns. Therefore, each child’s happiness, sense of belonging and self-esteem is important to our entire school community (additional information in our Pastoral policies).

Small class sizes, attention to individual children’s needs and careful assessment and monitoring of progress are fundamental to our children’s and teachers’ success (additional information in our Tracking, Marking and Assessment Policy).



Good teaching ensures that children are involved in each stage of their learning. To support this, the following elements will underpin teachers' delivery:

- *Establishing the big picture*
- *Making the new learning and its benefits clear*
- *Connecting new learning to what is already understood*
- *Using the new learning to solve new challenges*
- *Reviewing what has been learnt and using this to plot future progress*

The delivery of the content will reflect different learning styles (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic), and use a variety of resources and teaching techniques, in order to make the learning as accessible as possible to all children.

“Do not confine your children to your own learning, for they have been born in another time.”

Hebrew Proverb

3. The organisation of children

At Key Stage 2 (Forms 3, 4, 5 and 6), children are taught in discrete year groups for all subjects with the exceptions of Games (taught to single sex, two year mixed year groups), PE, Choir and RS.

At Key Stage 1 (Forms 1 and 2), children are taught in discrete year groups in the mornings when the core subjects are covered (Maths, English, Science, ICT) and are taught as a mixed year group some afternoons (for Choir, Art, Music, PE and Forest School).

At the Foundation Stage, children in Reception are taught as a discrete class at all times apart from Choir (when they sing with the other Lower School children and Music when they join with the Nursery's Rising Fives) and PE when they join with children in Key Stage 1. The Ladybirds, Caterpillars and Butterflies are taught as mixed groups in Nursery where appropriate, with individual and small group Special Time activities for the Butterflies.

We are a mixed ability school and children are taught in mixed ability groups. All teaching staff differentiate the tasks and activities for their children in order to match children's abilities. In a typical lesson, activities on the same topic are likely to be set at a minimum of three different ability levels. A range of differentiation methods are used from differentiation at outset, to providing additional support, to extending a challenge to differentiation by outcome. The method(s) used are included in teachers' planning.

3.1 Additional needs

All our children have their own, unique set of needs and in the majority of cases these needs will be met by our mainstream academic and pastoral support. However, there are also situations where a child will have additional needs that require specific intervention and support beyond our mainstream provision. These needs may be academic, social or personal. In these cases, the school's Learning Success Co-ordinator (LSC) will co-ordinate the production of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with those members of staff involved in leading the additional provision.



3.2 Gifted and talented

We believe that all our children are gifted and talented and one of our responsibilities as teachers is to help each child discover their particular talents and develop these. Our LSC co-ordinates the school's Gifted and Talented Register. The provision of G&T enrichment is overseen by the curriculum subject leader.

4. The organisation and design of the curriculum

We are preparing our children for an exciting new world. Exponential technological advances will shape our children's careers and lives in ways we cannot yet imagine. However, we can be certain that all our children will have to face and solve problems in their individual futures. Therefore, we have a responsibility to help equip them to be effective, confident and resilient problem-solvers. We believe that one of the most important building blocks in helping them to become good problem solvers is to develop their creativity in its widest sense.

Our children should be involved in:

- Questioning and challenging
- Making connections
- Seeing relationships
- Envisaging what might be
- Exploring ideas
- Keeping options open
- Reflecting critically on ideas, actions and outcomes

Creativity is far, far more than imaginative writing or creating a wonderful picture. Creativity is the ability to think, perceive and develop ideas in new and challenging ways.

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."

Albert Einstein

Creativity is as important to the Sciences as to the Arts.

Our timetable is organised so that our Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 children spend the vast majority of their time with their Nursery and Form teachers, developing close, caring relationships. Our Key Stage 2 children follow a traditional prep school timetable, where they are taught different subjects by different specialist teachers, but have the guidance and pastoral care of their Form Teacher (more information in our Pastoral policies). We take the National Curriculum and QCA guidance as our starting point and these provide the foundation for our schemes of work, but we strive to take our children's learning beyond these published curricula. In all cases, teachers endeavour to nurture all children's creativity and will use a variety of strategies. These will include:

- Developing curiosity (the best cure for boredom)
- Appreciating uncertainty as part of the learning journey
- Providing time for children to reflect, discuss, consider, think, etc.



- Limiting the stress/pressure (the importance of discovering *versus* the need to find the “right” answer) when questioning
- Encouraging and appreciating “Soft” thinking, making the most of insight and intuition (explaining one’s own rationale rather than “following the rule”)
- Tolerating ambiguity
- Providing a supportive community/environment

These skills are highly demanding and require superb professional judgement. However, they also require teachers who are prepared to take risks in planning and delivering lessons – something we value as a School and a great example to be modelling to our children.

5. The organisation and design of classrooms

Classrooms and other learning spaces should be organised to ensure that children feel supported and stimulated. While this depends greatly on positive teacher/pupil relationships (see section 2 above), creating and supporting the learning environment is critical in optimising learning opportunities. The layouts of rooms will change as required from class to class and subject to subject but teachers will always consider:

- Use of Teaching Assistants
- Use of space
- Use of and access to resources (including ICT)
- Pupil movement
- Display (including recent children’s work that is mounted, named and labelled appropriately)
- Lines of sight to the teacher
- Any specific needs of individual children

Classrooms should be left in an orderly and tidy state at the end of each day.

6. Assessment and target setting

Assessment is used in two ways. The first is to define levels of attainment once a unit of work has been completed and the second is to provide additional information on what a child can and cannot do, in order to plan the next stages of that child’s learning more precisely.

Teachers choose their own methods for assessing and recording children’s progress in different areas of the curriculum (and beyond). However, class set of school-wide data tracking spreadsheets are kept on the Staff Room computer (my documents/aaa-data tracking). These record each child’s progress in summative assessments and enable a longer term picture to be developed of each child’s strengths and areas for development across National Curriculum subjects, as well as for recording significant pastoral achievements (House Colours, etc.).

Children are assessed continuously by Teaching Staff. Often, these assessments will be informal but they serve a crucial role in building up a detailed picture of each child’s abilities, development and progress. As work is marked and discussed with children, as questions are answered in



discussions and as children complete weekly tests (e.g. spellings and tables), children are being assessed and steps for future progress planned.

Children are assessed formally at the end of the Foundation Stage in terms of Early Learning Goals and at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 against National Curriculum levels of attainment. Children in Forms 3 to 6 sit school exams in the spring and summer terms. In Maths, English and Science they are assessed against National Curriculum levels. In other subjects (History, Geography and RS), children assessed using in-house grades. Results of formal assessments are reported to parents in our Spring and Summer School Reports.

The assessment process is essential to our target setting. All our children have individual targets set according to ability and stages of development. Teachers choose their own methods for setting and monitoring these (e.g. target cards in English for Forms 3 to 6), but these processes are vital to ensuring the appropriate level of challenge for every child at our school.

7. Curriculum leadership

Each subject area has an identified leader. Curriculum Leaders' responsibilities include having an overview of how their subject is taught across the School, providing advice and support to colleagues on subject/curriculum matters, monitoring the progression of learning in their subject(s) across the School and managing the resources required to teach the subject effectively. Curriculum Leaders also keep medium term plans and samples of weekly plans for their subject(s), detailing how the teaching of each subject across the school.

8. Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistants and other classroom helpers (such as Learning Support Assistants) are a very important part of our teaching team. Teachers will incorporate TAs into their planning in order to make the best use of their expertise. The roles taken by TAs will vary according to the needs of each class and the talents of individual TAs. The relationships that TAs form with children are as important as any other teaching relationships.

9. Other adults in School

All adults in our School have an important role in caring for and educating our children. Our Beacons (see later section) apply to our entire School community. We are all carers, we are all teachers and we are all learners.

10. Parent Partnerships

As a School, we are at our most effective when the partnership between the children, the parents and the School is at its strongest. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning. Formal opportunities for parents to be involved are the annual Parents' Evening, the Spring and Summer School Reports, the curriculum planning for each year group (sent to parents each term) and the termly curriculum evenings. Other opportunities include our open door policy for



parents to see staff (after school) and for parents to arrange appointments through the School Office.

We are always keen to use parents' expertise in School, where appropriate, especially in teaching situations (e.g. in the classroom, sports coaching, Forest School, etc.).

11. Every Child Matters outcomes

Our School's aims for each child's success and fulfilment in all areas of life at our School match the Every Child Matters outcomes and are supported by our vision and values. Our ALPS work has helped us understand that how we feel is usually how we perform, so high self-esteem and the ability to engage are vital to everyone in our School.

Our vision is to nurture children who are...

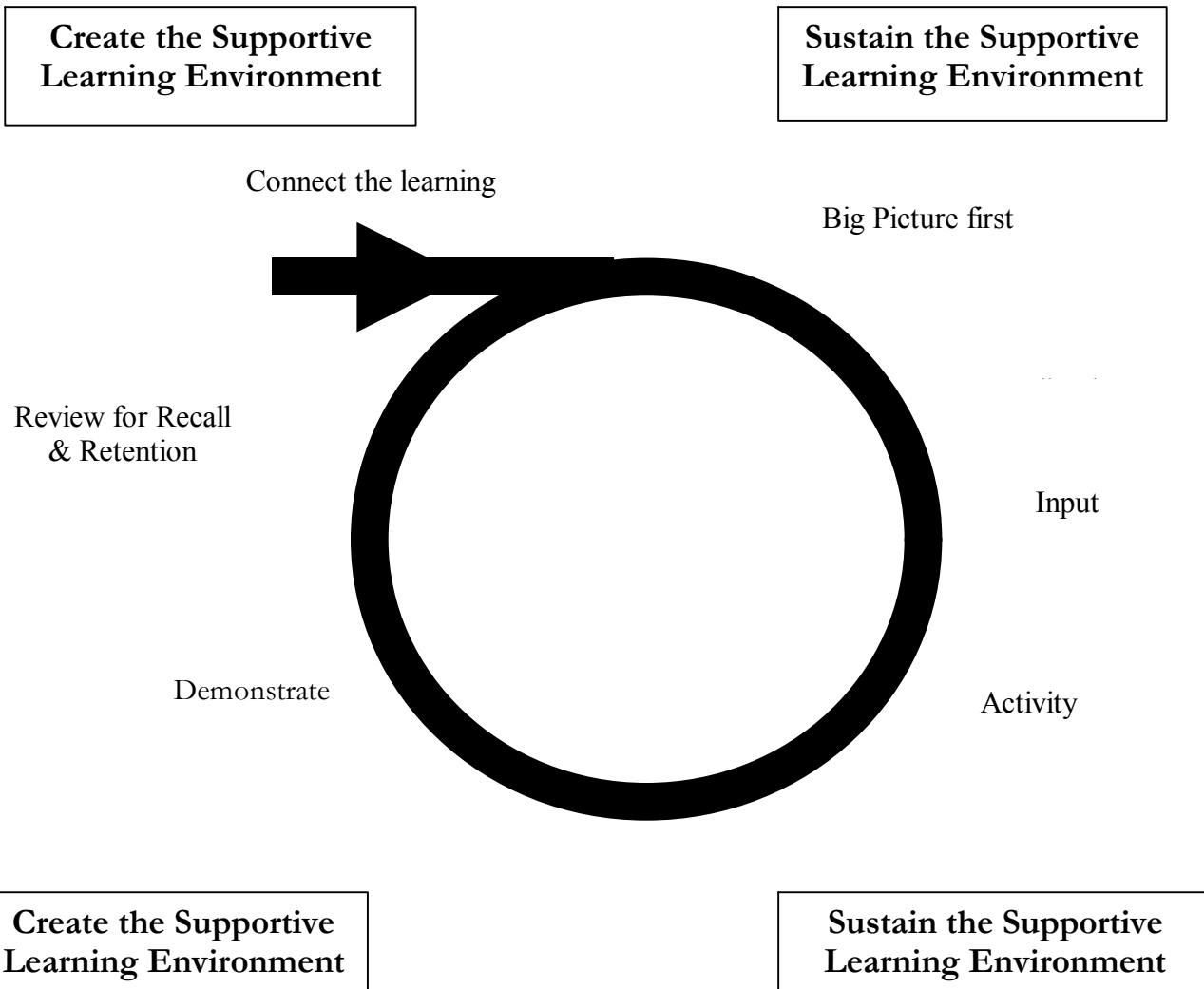
- *Confident yet humble in knowing they can and will succeed*
- *Resilient when faced with challenges and setbacks*
- *Happy in the world as it is while able to see the world as it should be*
- *Creative, open-minded and sensitive to the needs of others*
...allowed to be children.

Our Values:

- *We treat others as we like to be treated and we do all we can to make ourselves and others happy*
- *We have high, positive expectations and always do our best*
- *We are honest and do the right thing even when it's difficult*
- *We take responsibility for our own thoughts, words and actions*
- *We all understand and support each other because we know how we feel affects how well we learn*
- *We believe children's intelligence comes in many forms and that our school environment supports and reinforces independence and creativity*
- *We promote independence in learning and celebrate achievement because we are all teachers and we are all learners*
- *We feel proud to be part of our school family and work together to achieve our goals - The school works because the team works*



Appendix 1 – The ALPS model





Teaching and Learning Handbook

Sections

1. Introduction
2. Creating a learning culture
3. Assessment for learning
4. Effective questioning
5. The lesson structure
6. Purposeful plenaries

Additional sources of information

Appendix 1: Curriculum Planning at MHS

Version 1.0

Created – March 2009

Discussed with Governors – tba

Review Cycle – three yearly

Next review – Spring 2011



Source – AG



1. Introduction

This is a working document. It has been devised and updated after our INSET with Nick Austin (September 2008) and subsequent Teaching Staff Meetings. It will be reviewed regularly (minimum of every two years) and amended as required.

This document develops the principles and practice stated in our Teaching and Learning Policy. It contains a variety of guidance and examples to support you in delivering the highest quality teaching and to maximise learning for our children in our school.

The keys to successful learning are consistent, high quality teaching and high expectations. This booklet outlines the way we intend to deliver this. Our aim is that the majority of the lessons at our School will contain many of the features in this booklet, most of the time.

2. Creating a learning culture

Believe that all **can** succeed!

Aim to create the 'can do' classroom. In other words, create a place where children are:

- Challenged and encouraged and want to challenge themselves
- Encouraged to persevere even though it may be difficult
- Allowed to learn through taking their own risks in a safe environment (i.e. no fear of ridicule)
- Valued and respected, resulting in high self-esteem
- Confident to take the next steps in their learning
- All able to have a positive view of themselves as learners
- Encouraged to acknowledge and celebrate success

As teachers, we need to:

- Set suitable learning challenges incorporating relevant targets for groups and individuals
- Respond to the diverse learning needs of all children
- Vary our teaching style to accommodate the different learning styles
- Differentiate activities effectively
- Use writing frames where appropriate to support learning
- Plan open ended tasks that can be achieved at all levels
- Have high expectations of the learning and be ambitious for our children
- Create a positive atmosphere in our lessons
- Aim to offer three positives for each negative that we address with a child
- Motivate our children to be 'the best they can be'
- Encourage our children to see themselves as independent learners
- Work in partnership with the parents
- Seize opportunities to challenge children's thinking (developing robust discussion and articulation of ideas)
- Ensure that the messages given to learners are positive and show that learning is valued
- Have a positive word for each child every day



- Smile!

3. Assessment for learning

Principles for effective assessment are:

- Observe the children and assess what learning is happening
- Plan observation/assessment activities
- Make feedback specific to the particular qualities of each child's progress
- Ensure children are actively involved in self assessment
- Ensure that feedback helps the children know how to improve and that the feedback is used
- Ensure that feedback and marking are focused and linked to learning objectives and success criteria and that children are aware of these
- Provide effective oral feedback* (talk to individuals, groups and the whole class)
- Teach children to pole-bridge (to speak one's thoughts aloud and talk through their thinking)
- Give regular feedback during the learning process
- Use the RAP system for verbal praise: Recognition, Affirmation and Praise
- Allow children opportunities to revisit tasks to reflect on past experiences and improve their performance
- Make time for children to read and digest marking comments and make improvements
- Encourage children to be involved in their own assessment and assessment of peers

*The quality of dialogue in feedback is important and most research indicates that oral feedback is more effective than written feedback.' (QCA website: www.qca.org.uk from Shirley Clarke: Enriching Feedback in the Primary Classroom.)

4. Effective questioning

Just as the "best learners ask the best questions", so do the most effective teachers. To ensure that the questions in our activities are effective we will:

- Prepare key questions to ask
- Plan some challenging questions to extend children's thinking and probe their understanding
- Use appropriate language and content
- Challenge right answers, as well as wrong or underdeveloped answers
- Use talking partners to:
 - engage all pupils
 - promote speaking and listening
 - boost confidence of certain pupils
 - verbalise and clarify thoughts/ideas
- Encourage children to ask questions
- Target questions to a specific pupil/group of pupils ensuring distribution is equal
- Use a variety of questions e.g. open ended and hypothetical questions



- Use questions as a short term assessment tool throughout the lesson to review the learning

We will also:

- **Pause:**
Give more thinking time
Use the 'no hands up rule'
- **Prompt:**
Give cues
- **Praise:**
Give positive feedback
Listen, and acknowledge children's responses positively

5. The lesson structure

We follow good practice and we aim to:

- prepare and share planning in advance for other adults working in our room
- give time for children to respond to feedback from previous lesson and improve their work in relation to learning intention
- keep to a tight structure
- have our teaching materials ready before the lesson
- give frequent progress checks – mini plenaries, “where are we now?” questions
- give the children the big picture
- be clear about the learning intention
- ensure that the children know exactly what they are going to learn and what is expected of them by the end of the lesson
- be clear about our expected outcomes
- discuss how the objectives of the lesson are linked to previous learning
- ensure children take an active part
- use a balance of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities
- revisit the learning intention at the end of the lesson
- ask the children what they have learnt at the end of the lesson
- share the success criteria with children
- be brave and change the activity if it is not working!
- have smooth transitions within a lesson
- use precise language

6. Purposeful plenaries

Plenaries are used for many purposes. These include reviewing children's learning, helping them to consolidate their understanding and signalling where the learning will be developed in the next lesson, as well as setting homework.



In plenaries we ask:

- What have you learned today?
- What was the learning objective?
- What do you know now that you didn't know at the beginning of the lesson?

We re-emphasise teaching points and clarify misconceptions as appropriate, encouraging children to take an active part in the conclusion to the lesson.

Additional sources of information

INSET packs from Nick Austin's work at MHS (September 2008)

Effective Teaching in the Primary Classroom – Trevor Hawes (a copy has been provided for all teachers)

The ALPS Handbook – Alistair Smith (copy in Headmaster's Study)

The ALPS Resource Book – Alistair Smith (copy in Headmaster's Study)

Mind Mapping for Kids – Tony Buzan (copy in Headmaster's Study)

<http://www.acceleratedlearning.com/>

<http://www.acceleratedlearning.co.uk/>

<http://www.alite.co.uk/>

<http://www.happychild.org.uk/acc/tpr/index.htm>



Appendix 1: Curriculum Planning at MHS

In order for children's learning to be structured and guided, careful and clear planning is essential.

Plans serve many purposes. Good planning is needed to:

- identify clear learning objectives for skills
- map out children's progression
- provide a framework for considering differentiation (and requirements for SEN and G&T, as appropriate)
- provide an overview of the subject/topic for the teacher, the Subject Leader and the Headteacher
- help provide continuity
- ensure that time and other resources are used effectively
- show which teaching activities will be used
- identify the skills and knowledge that are being learnt
- identify how the skills and knowledge are to be taught
- identify the success criteria

Planning comes in many forms and these will vary from subject to subject and year group to year group. At our school we are not prescriptive and different teachers plan in different ways.

The level of detail in medium term plans and short term plans (weekly/daily/unit plans) will vary. Between the medium-term and short-term plans for each subject, the list above needs to be covered but the balance of information and detail will vary between teachers and subjects.

Agreed common features of medium term planning are:

- Weekly or topic outlines
- Learning objectives
- Brief details of activities (or sources of activities)
- Customised to suit the children's learning
-

Short term planning (by unit, by week or by day) will feature:

- Lesson objectives
- Differentiation
- Detailed activities
- Resources needed

Copies of medium term planning are stored on the staff computer (so they are accessible by all staff and subject leaders) and hard copies are also filed with the Headteacher at the beginning of each half-term.

Current unit/weekly/daily planning is to be available in classrooms at all times (in case of illness, etc.).

Curriculum leaders have an overview of their subject(s) across the school.



Appendix agreed: Teachers' Staff Meeting on 2 February 2009

Review: by February 2012