



The Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Schools Federation



Teaching & Learning Policy

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1. Teaching For Learning

1.1 Learning

Our policy and practice is based on what we know about how our brains learn most effectively. Our teaching strategies are 'brain-friendly' and provide children with what they need for optimal cognitive functioning. We focus on providing a safe and nourishing environment where children feel accepted, included and able to take on new challenges. With this in place, we know that we can instill a love of learning in our children.

We are committed to developing lifelong learners who value and exhibit qualities such as:

- Resilience
- Aspiration
- Imagination
- Confidence
- Collaboration

Skills such as:

- **Reasoning skills:** These enable children to give reasons for opinions and actions, to draw inferences and make deductions, use precise language to explain what they think, and make judgments and decisions informed by reasons or evidence
- **Enquiry skills:** These enable children to ask relevant questions, to pose and define problems, to plan what to do and how to research, to predict outcomes and anticipate consequences, to test conclusions and improve ideas:
- **Creative thinking skills:** These enable children to generate and extend ideas, to suggest hypotheses, to apply imagination, and to look for alternative innovative outcomes
- **Evaluative skills:** Having located and collected relevant information, these enable pupils to develop criteria for judging the value of their own and other's work.

1.2 How Learning Is Taught

We believe in the creation of a classroom culture in which difficulty is seen not just as normal but as beneficial - where mistakes are seen as valuable. A mistake is another learning opportunity and children know that their classrooms are safe places to try new things.

Fundamental to our approach in this area is the use of KAGAN cooperative Learning Strategies.

1.2.1 KAGAN

There are four basic principles of cooperative learning (PIES) which we thread through every aspect of teaching and learning:

- Positive Interdependence: tasks are structured so that children work together to achieve a common goal. They feel like they are on the same side. This results in encouragement, coaching, positive feedback and safety.
- Individual Accountability: Each child is accountable for their performance; there is nowhere to hide. This boosts motivation and effort.
- Equal Participation: students participate equally. This results in active engagement by all students.
- Simultaneous Interaction: interaction is going on in each pair or team at the same time. This maximizes student engagement.

1.3. Assessment For Learning (Shirley Clarke, Outstanding Formative Assessment [2014])

We promote a learning culture, where children and teachers have a growth mindset, self-belief, meta-cognitive skills and a belief that all can succeed. We do this by

- A continual quest to find out how far children are understanding their learning, so that individual and class feedback and the direction of the lesson can be adjusted appropriately.
- Collaborative learning, including talk partners, where children are resources for one another and all can be included in class discussion.
- Mixed-ability learning, with personalised choices.
- Clear learning objectives shared with pupils, not necessarily at the beginning of a lesson, but sometimes after the interest has been captured.
- Co-constructed success criteria e.g. toolkits for writing and maths.
- Effective questioning, especially at the beginning of lessons, to establish current understanding and prior knowledge.
- Examples of excellence analysed and shared, before children produce their own 'product.'
- Feedback from peers and teachers which focuses on successes, where the excellence is and where improvements are needed.
- Cooperative peer feedback in which examples of improvement are modelled so that feedback and improvement-making is immediate and part of a lesson.
- Effective ends to lessons, where learning is summarized and reflected upon and next steps are discussed.

1.4. Inclusion – Ensuring Challenge And Support

We are committed to fair and equal access to the curriculum for all children, regardless of their starting points and taking into account any additional needs they may have. We are highly aspirational for all of our children and we do whatever it takes to enable them to overcome barriers to their learning. In many cases we have to think 'outside the box' if we are to ensure that a child maximises their potential. We work together to do what it takes, and we don't give up. This includes:

- Quality first teaching for all children.
- The use of formative and summative assessment to give us constant feedback on a child's knowledge and understanding.
- Identifying specific gaps and taking rapid and appropriate action to close them.
- Personalising the learning – strategies include Tr/TA working with target group, range of resources, differentiated support through feedback, pre-teaching, follow up teaching.
- Grouping children in a fluid and flexible way. Children get the chance to work in ability groups and mixed ability groups as appropriate. All groupings are regularly reviewed; they are not fixed. Children are used to working with a variety of their peers and are taught the benefits of building learning partnerships with all of their classmates.
- Setting, as appropriate. It can be used for Phonics teaching or Literacy and Numeracy with older children.
- Teachers/ Teaching Assistants building Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, ASD and EAL strategies into day to day learning
- Targeted interventions for children with a specific need. It is crucial that the class teacher builds on these in day to day teaching so that they have maximum impact.

1.5. Our Curriculum

We want our children to be inspired and engaged by a curriculum which reflects the world in which they live. They should feel that they have ownership of their own learning and that their interests and questions are reflected in the curriculum planned for them. We do this through:

- Planning a rich and diverse curriculum which is underpinned by the acquiring of knowledge and the development of skills.
- Delivering the curriculum through a wide range of experiences and opportunities, linking learning across the curriculum areas.
- Wide use of visits and visitors to promote excitement and engagement.
- Seeing Feedback/ Marking as a dialogue. This conversation can occur within plenaries, in a conference situation or as part of the ongoing dialogue within a class.

1.5.1 Pupils' Contribution To The Curriculum – Pupil Voice

Children have an active role in the planning and reviewing of curriculum topics. This is to ensure that they feel real ownership of their learning.

Before teachers plan the context for learning, quality time is given to the children to introduce the area to them, to find out what they know already, what they would like to know and how they would like to learn it. This information influences medium term plans.

After an initial introduction to the topic, the children are given the opportunity to discuss how things are going and, based on this, make any necessary changes to their original plans. Clear outcomes are agreed and the adapted plans are implemented.

At the end of each context for learning the children are given quality time to review their learning and the outcomes. Their comments are recorded and used to amend the curriculum map for future year groups.

1.5.2 Recording And Celebrating Learning And Progress

We have a range of ways to do this, including:

- Class Learning Journals. These evidence and celebrate the learning. Each journal demonstrates the progression in skills and knowledge covered by each topic throughout the year.
- Mind maps. These are used to demonstrate the progress of each individual child at the end of a topic, compared to their starting point.
- Year group/class assemblies
- Sketch Books/DT Process Booklets
- Cross federation work e.g. debates, quizzes
- Classroom and communal displays
- Year Group/class museums and exhibitions
- Food festivals and cafes

Parents make a valuable contribution to our curriculum, sharing their experience, skills and knowledge in many different ways. Curriculum events for parents are an integral part of our curriculum and they are extremely well attended.

1.5.3 Home/School Learning

The school has a home learning policy which supports the learning that is going on in the school. Home learning always includes reading at home and talking about books. Our websites also provide useful links and activities.

Home learning builds incrementally in terms of amount and expectation.

Parents/carers are informed of the home learning that will be provided, the day it will be given out and when it is to be returned. Home learning is usually linked to current learning, and is often used as a starting point for lessons.

2. Assessment

2.1 Formative Assessment

The most powerful educational tool for raising achievement and preparing children to be lifelong learners, in any context, is formative assessment

Shirley Clarke, Outstanding Formative Assessment (2014)

Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Schools Federation recognise that high quality formative assessment – also referred to as Assessment for Learning (AfL) - is at the very heart of good teaching. (Please see Section 1.3, page 3)

Formative assessment is intended to inform teaching and learning. It will be recorded through annotations on planning, through marking, on class displays and on assessment guidelines. The recording of formative assessment should not be an onerous task, which distracts from teaching and learning, so recordings are likely to be bulleted and brief.

2.2 Summative Assessment

During a two-week period, timetabled towards the end of each term, children in Years 2 to 6 are tested in Reading, Maths and GPS. In writing, teachers highlight evidence built up over the course of a term and recorded on the assessment frameworks for writing to make summative judgements. In Year 1, teacher assessments determine attainment figures for Reading, Writing and Maths. For children in Year 1, and those who need to be retested in Year 2 and 3, phonics tests are administered and scored on a termly basis.

Currently, the Federation utilises Rising Stars Optional Tests (Set A and, new for 2016/17, Set B), Testbase Optional SATs and the sample tests published by the DfE.

The principles of assessment apply to all pupils, including those with SEND. However, where appropriate, assessments may be adapted or modified to meet the needs of a child. Refer to the SEN policy for more information.

To ensure teachers are able to conduct assessments competently and confidently, the Federation:

- Provides CPD opportunities (for example, INSET, Professional Development Meetings (PDMs), induction for NQTs, bespoke in-house training for groups or individuals and, where appropriate, external courses)
- Provides frequent opportunities for the moderation of work, across the Federation and across years groups within school
- Seeks opportunities for the moderation of work across the borough
- Is subject to LA monitoring visits (for Reception, Year 1 Phonics, Year 2 and Year 6)

2.2.1 EYFS

An in-house baseline assessment is conducted within the first four weeks of the new academic year. The children are judged against the school's EYFS standards (see 2.2.4 End of year expectations). Towards the end of each term, their attainment is judged against the EYFS standards, which build on the best practice from Development Matters and end of year expected levels (GLD).

2.2.2 Y1 - 6 Reading, Mathematics and GPS:

	Autumn			Spring			Summer		
	R	M	GPS	R	M	GPS	R	M	GPS
1	Teacher Assessment tasks <i>No GPS</i>			Teacher Assessment tasks <i>No GPS</i>			Teacher Assessment tasks <i>No GPS</i>		
2	SATs Paper (past paper)			SATs Paper (past paper)			Year 2 SATs (actual paper)		
3	Rising Stars Optional Tests Set A			Rising Stars Optional Tests Set B			Testbase Optional Test		
4	Rising Stars Optional Tests Set A			Rising Stars Optional Tests Set B			Testbase Optional Test		
5	Rising Stars Optional Tests Set A			Rising Stars Optional Tests Set B			Testbase Optional Test		
6	SATs Paper (past paper)			SATs Paper (past paper)			Year 6 SATs (actual paper)		

Writing tasks, which contribute to the termly summative judgement, are agreed across the Federation at joint planning in advance of Assessment Fortnight.

2.2.3 Standards Tracker and data analysis

The data is collected at the end of the two-week assessment period, and is inputted on the Standard Tracker for further scrutiny. The Head of School, Deputy Headteachers, Assistant Headteachers (with Phase responsibility) and teachers use this information to monitor and support pupils' progress, attainment and wider outcomes. Year group teams, along with the Head of School and/or Deputy Headteacher for Curriculum and Assessment, discuss the data in more detail, review against the end of year projections and identify and/or revise target groups in Pupil Progress meetings at the start of each term. At the senior leaders' discretion, Pupil Progress Meetings are held more frequently.

The information collected from local in-house summative assessment provides a picture of each child's attainment and progress (for example, how secure a pupil was in their knowledge of the previous year's curriculum and how ready they are for progression). It supports teachers in differentiating support given to pupils in the class to achieve 'secure'. Outcomes for attainment and progress are communicated to parents on a termly basis and in the End of Year Records.

2.2.4 End Of Year Expectations In Reading, Writing, Mathematics And GPS

The point scores allocated to each 'stage' and the end of year expectations are detailed in the table below.

		PS	
Standard 6	6+	32	← Secure with greater depth in Year 6
	6.3	31	← End of Year 6 expectation
	6.2	30	
	6.1	29	
Standard 5	5+	28	← Secure with greater depth in Year 5
	5.3	27	← End of Year 5 expectation
	5.2	26	
	5.1	25	
Standard 4	4+	24	← Secure with greater depth in Year 4
	4.3	23	← End of Year 4 expectation
	4.2	22	
	4.1	21	
Standard 3	3+	20	← Secure with greater depth in Year 3
	3.3	19	← End of Year 3 expectation
	3.2	18	
	3.1	17	
Standard 2	2+	16	← Secure with greater depth in Year 2
	2.3	15	← End of Year 2 expectation
	2.2	14	
	2.1	13	
Standard 1	1+	12	← Secure with greater depth in Year 1
	1.3	11	← End of Year 1 expectation
	1.2	10	
	1.1	9	
EYFS Standards	E3	9	
	E2.3	8	
	E2.2	7	← End of Reception expectation
	E2.1	6	
	E1.3	5	} Reception Baseline measures
	E1.2	4	
E1.1	3		

2.2.5 Secure with greater depth (+)

Children who achieve Secure before the Summer Term will be extended and challenged through enrichment and deepening of the age-appropriate Standard, rather than acceleration into the next Standard. This was one of the rationales behind the Government's removal of Levels. Research has shown that acceleration is likely to promote superficial understanding, rather than the true depth and rigour of knowledge that provides a foundation for future learning. A child who demonstrates this deeper learning within the Standard will be recorded as 'Secure with greater depth'.

2.3 Feedback and Marking

Please see: [Appendix 1 – Underlying Principles for Feedback and Marking \(includes EYFS, Years 1-6, Literacy and Maths guidance and Scaffolding\)](#) and [Appendix 2 – Feedback and Marking for Spelling](#).

2.4 Target Setting

The aim of target setting is to ensure that all children achieve the highest possible standard. Our expectations are high and are reflected in the challenging targets that we set.

Targets are set at many levels, from strategic to individual. They are informed by the school expectations, and the national expectations for Year 2 and 6. School data analysis and on-going formative assessment also contribute to the shaping of these targets.

The target for all children, in Year 1-6, is to achieve 'secure' (.3) within their year group expectations. The Federation award 'secure with greater depth' to those children who demonstrate attainment beyond 'secure' – children who show breadth and depth within the expected standard.

Targets are used in day-to-day teaching as part of Quality First Teaching. However, each term, we send home Achievement Ladders which outline your child's current attainment and a range of activities for home which link to key target areas for that term.

Additional targets are set for children who require additional support and for those with SEND. These are detailed in the Additional support section of the Achievement Ladder. Refer to SEN policy for more information.

3. Other Aspects

3.1. The Role Of Teaching Assistants And Learning Support Assistants

Teaching Assistants communicate regularly and effectively with the teachers to ensure that they are actively and purposefully involved in teaching and supporting the children.

All classes have a Teaching Assistant. These adults are trained to support children with their learning. They do this in a variety of ways e.g. leading groups such as guided reading, phonics and mental maths; running Additional Teaching Sessions (ATS); working with individual pupils; working with the majority of the class so that the teacher can focus on a small group.

Teaching Assistants play an important role in supporting learning through developing and maintaining the classroom environment: ensuring that equipment is well maintained and available; preparing resources and putting up displays.

Learning Support Assistants usually work with individual children or small groups (often children with SEN). They may lead groups, but more often they work alongside the child(ren) within the lesson supporting them to access the curriculum.

3.2. Learning Mentors

The teaching and learning aspect of the Learning Mentor's role is to secure access to the curriculum and wider opportunities for our most vulnerable pupils. This is done initially through focussing on attendance and punctuality. A wide range of strategies for supporting pupils in the classroom and playground is then used, depending on the needs of individual pupils. The Learning Mentor has the freedom to develop innovative and personalised actions and programmes both to support and to challenge pupils and their families.

3.3. The Role Of Parents / Carers

We try at all times to work in partnership with parents / carers. They are the child's first teacher and can clearly influence their child's attitude to learning. Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning by:

- ensuring that their child comes to school punctually and regularly;
- ensuring that their child comes to school feeling positive and confident;
- celebrating success and praising achievement;
- ensuring that the child arrives at school wearing clothing which follows the school dress code and with a suitable PE kit;
- sharing with the teacher any problems in school that their child is experiencing;
- supporting the child by attending open mornings and parents' evenings;
- supporting the child through becoming actively involved in any collaborative working, for example with SEN professionals;
- responding to any letters or communication from the school;
- informing the school of any significant matters at home which may affect their child's progress, happiness or behavior; and
- supporting extracurricular activities.

We try to keep parents / carers informed at all times so that small problems do not become large ones.

Parents sign a home school agreement on enrolment.

To promote an effective partnership, the school:

- keeps parents / carers informed of what is going on in the school through our websites, regular news letters, class letters, txt messages, termly learning ladders and end of year reports;
- has reading records/journals for parents to complete;
- invites parents to open mornings and parent's evening appointments once each term;
- holds events such as themed curriculum weeks or celebrations, performances, class assemblies, dads' breakfasts;
- actively supports the parents/friends association; and
- meets with parents both formally and informally – members of staff are outside the school building at the beginning and end of each school day to liaise with parents on a number of issues, staff meet with parents and meetings are set up to discuss individual issues as and when they arise. Runs a range of home school learning opportunities.

3.4. The Role of Governors

The schools' governors determine (based on advice from staff), support, monitor and review the school policies on teaching for learning. In particular they:

- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
- ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning;
- monitor how effective teaching for learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment;
- work with SLT to set challenging targets for the end of KS1 and 2;
- ensure that CPD and performance management policies promote good quality teaching; and
- monitor the effectiveness of the schools' teaching for learning policies through the school self-review processes: these include reports from subject leaders and the termly Head teacher's report to governors.

3.5. Equal Opportunities

In accordance with the schools' equal opportunities and inclusion policies all children at Gordonbrock and Eliot Bank Schools will be given full access to the National Curriculum. Staff will endeavor through a wide range of strategies to help children to reach their full potential irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, age or ability.

3.6. Monitoring and Evaluation of Teaching for Learning

The school has a comprehensive policy which promotes self-evaluation. See School Improvement Plan and Monitoring and Evaluation cycle.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 [Appendix 1 – Underlying Principles of Feedback and Marking \(includes EYFS, Years 1-6, Literacy and Maths guidance and Scaffolding\)](#)
- Appendix 2 [Appendix 2 – Feedback and Marking for Spelling](#)