



Teaching and learning policy

At the Wolds Federation we believe that our Christian Vision is also intrinsically our curriculum intent

Our Christian Vision is that our children will be agents for change in their own lives, in their local community and in their global community.

“The child Jesus grew and became strong; he was full of wisdom gaining favour with God and with people. “ Luke 2:54

We want all children to receive the very best education that they are reaching their full potential and be prepared for the next stage in learning. With that in mind this policy has been written to promote best practice and to establish consistency in Teaching and Learning across the whole federation. It aims to ensure that all children are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to a consistently high level of pupil achievement and attitude. Due to the varied nature of our three schools we do not specify a particular approach but we embrace and encourage the principles of adaptive teaching in all three schools.

At the Wolds Federation we believe in 6 key ideas that underpin effective teaching and learning.

1. A positive climate.

- The teacher is the greatest influence on the climate in the classroom. In order for all children to thrive every adult working with children must have the highest expectations of what the children can achieve. We have an unshakeable belief that all children can and will achieve with the right support and challenge. No child can be left behind and all children should be challenged to think deeply at all times.
- Each classroom must have a clear set of routines which facilitate learning. This includes transition times between activities and for moving to different places in the school building.
- Each classroom needs to have an environment conducive to learning. They must be tidy and well-ordered with resources stored and usefully labelled so that children can access them independently.
- Working walls must be current, used by children and not just printed posters from internet sites
- All displays in the classroom which are celebrations of children's work should be beautifully mounted and well presented. The children's names should be on the work. In addition there should be a brief explanation of what the activity was and the learning journey involved.

2. Review previous learning

- We know that learning theory tells us that children need to encounter a concept at least three times on separate occasions for the new learning to "stick"
- Therefore effective teaching and learning should have a recap on previous learning to activate prior knowledge before new learning begins.
- This is done in a variety of ways, through quick recaps at the beginnings of days or beginnings of lessons. It is done through the supportive learning environment such as working walls or displays. It may also be done through the use of stem sentences or simply by key vocabulary being clearly displayed. This must always be done in an age appropriate way for the children involved.

3. Reduce cognitive load

- Too much information can be overwhelming at any time so in planning activities care must be taken to plan to present information in small steps.
- To make sure the learner is not trying to learn too much at one time careful thought must be given to the way the information is presented and where at all possible it should be experiential first hand or concrete, the move to a pictorial representation and finally to an abstract experience.
- Worked examples, models and images to support learning are vital and should always be used.

4. Guide success

- Again the concrete, pictorial, abstract model is fundamental in guiding success for the children as they learn.
- In order for this to happen the staff must provide access to appropriate, supportive resources. This will act as a scaffold. Where other scaffold prompts are needed such as sentence stems, story maps etc. these are entirely appropriate.
- In our small classes we know that sometimes our children can go directly to the teacher or teaching assistant for support and it is vital our children become independent learners. We need to train children to work independently and scaffolding is part of that.
- The principle in general can be summed up in this phrase **“model, scaffold, let go”**

5. Check for understanding

- We believe that effective teaching and learning happens when teachers have very strong knowledge of their pupils.
- Teachers need to be aware of common misconception that children can have when learning a new concept or developing a new skill. This requires very good subject knowledge so therefore continuous professional development is a priority across the federation. We expect teachers to seek to improve their own understanding outside directed time so they can be the very best that they can be.
- Another hinge point in checking for understanding is a teacher's skill in questioning. Assessment for learning, open ended questions which encourage children to think deeply and justify their own answers is a key tool that we expect teachers to use in checking for children's understanding.

Asking questions such as why do you think and can you explain why are fundamental.

- Another vital way to check for understanding is the marking of pupils' work. We have a clear marking policy which we expect teachers to follow. In summary marking should be timely.

6. Feedback is impactful

- If teacher provide feedback through marking then it is essential that children are given the chance to respond to this marking and move their own learning forward. In line with our Christian Vision, we believe that children are agents for change in their own lives and this is a clear way that they are responsible for improving their own work and moving their learning forward.
- Responding to marking in their own books is not the only effective way in which children can learn from marking. We also use model texts and evaluate exemplar work so that the children can apply success criteria to these pieces of work.
- All work uses learning ladders so that the children know what the learning intention is. At the end of each session children are encouraged to consider these statements and self-assess against these. Again this gives an understanding of what the children can do and understand from their point of view.
- Children are also encouraged to work in pairs and small groups to mark pieces of work. This peer assessment is also a useful way to move learning forward.

These six key principles are fundamental to our understanding of effective teaching and learning and they underpin the long term, medium term and short term planning of learning.