



# Overview of Teaching and Learning at WPS

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*"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."*

*Marianne Williamson*

*This document forms part of our Teaching and Learning Handbook, which also contains detailed information on assessment, reporting, planning, differentiation, marking, homework, etc.*

## **1. Our aim is for everyone at our school to shine**

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. Our policies establish 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

The details of our policies and practice are regularly discussed, both formally and informally, during the course of the school year, leading to changes in practice in light of experiences, feedback and new initiatives.

## **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.

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. Good teaching ensures that children are involved in each stage of their learning.

To support this, the following elements 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*

The Teaching and Learning Handbook is a working document. It is reviewed regularly and

amended as required. 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. The Teaching and Learning Handbook 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.

### **3. Creating a learning culture**

We 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!

#### 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
- **Prompt:**  
Give cues
- **Praise:**  
Give positive feedback  
Listen, and acknowledge children’s responses positively

#### 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

## **5. 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.

## **6. 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, 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

## **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 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**

We welcome Parent Helpers into our school as well as other visitors who add to the breadth of experience of our children. Parent Helpers are an important part of our partnership with parents and receive appropriate Safeguarding training and guidance on their roles within our school.