



Teaching and Learning Policy

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Purpose

The purpose of this Teaching and Learning Policy is to provide a clear framework for all staff at Diamond Wood Community Academy to ensure high-quality teaching and effective learning for all pupils. This policy serves as a guiding document to establish consistent practices across the school, promoting an engaging, inclusive, and aspirational learning environment.

Overview and Rationale

At Diamond Wood Community Academy, we strive for excellence in every aspect of our teaching and learning. As a large infant and nursery school serving children from Nursery, Reception, Year 1, and Year 2, we embrace our diverse pupil body, where around 80% speak English as an additional language and experience high mobility. Our commitment to improving outcomes for all pupils across the curriculum and wider curriculum is unwavering.

We recognise that effective teaching and learning are foundational to our pupils' success, and we implement strategies to cater to the needs of all learners, including those with varying levels of prior knowledge and experiences. Guided by educational research and evidence, we heavily invest in continuous professional development (CPD) for our staff. This policy reflects our dedication to continuous improvement, collaboration, and evidence-based practices, ensuring that every pupil achieves their full potential. We are on a journey with the aspiration to become an Ofsted rated outstanding school, embedding significant improvements in our teaching practices to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- **Provide Clarity:** Establish clear expectations for teaching and learning practices across the school.
- **Enhance Engagement:** Foster a stimulating and enjoyable learning environment where all pupils feel motivated to learn.
- **Support Inclusivity:** Implement strategies to ensure that all pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), are fully included and supported in their learning.

- **Promote Mastery Learning:** Encourage mastery of key concepts and skills through structured learning pathways that build on prior knowledge.
- **Encourage Professional Development:** Foster a culture of ongoing professional development for all staff to enhance their teaching practices based on current educational research.
- **Improve Outcomes:** Ensure high standards of academic achievement and personal development for all pupils.

Our Curriculum: Golden Threads

At Diamond Wood Community Academy, our **Golden Thread** principle is integral to our teaching and learning strategy, promoting coherence, progression, and deep understanding across subjects. By establishing clearly defined concepts, we ensure our curriculum is structured rather than a collection of disparate topics. Teachers connect prior, current, and future learning, enhancing pupil transitions and building on existing knowledge and skills.

We explicitly teach subjects linked to distinct disciplines, mapping substantive and disciplinary knowledge to ensure continuity in learning. Key "sticky knowledge" is identified to reinforce retention, alongside essential vocabulary that supports comprehension and language development. Additionally, we align the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) areas for development with specific subjects, such as linking "Understanding the World" to Geography, providing a solid foundation for advanced learning in later years.

Our core values—friendship, respect, honesty, cooperation, and responsibility—serve as an ethical framework guiding our teaching and learning. These values are essential for all learners, particularly in our multicultural context, fostering social and moral development. We embed these values throughout school life, promoting a collaborative environment where staff, pupils, and family's model and reinforce them together.

We design our curriculum around key themes that support holistic development and prepare pupils for their futures. These themes enhance not only academic learning but also social, emotional, and cultural understanding, tailored to our school community's needs. Our overarching topics create a cohesive learning experience for EYFS and KS1 pupils, facilitating cross-curricular connections while ensuring subjects are taught explicitly and in depth. Our spiral curriculum deepens

understanding as pupils progress from Nursery to Year 2, facilitating smooth transitions to the feeder junior school's curriculum.

With over 80% of our pupils being EAL learners, our curriculum emphasises language acquisition and cultural integration. By providing a consistent framework, we minimise disruption from pupil mobility and reinforce a connected curriculum, ensuring that all pupils thrive in a rigorous and inclusive learning environment. For detailed rationales on subject-specific concepts, please refer to the individual subject documentation.

Three-Phased Approach to Teaching and Learning

Our teaching and learning is structured around a three-phased approach designed to support all learners effectively. This approach includes:

- **Phase 1: Quality First Teaching**
This foundational phase involves implementing high-quality teaching practices, where teachers deliver well-planned lessons tailored to meet the diverse needs of all pupils. The focus is on engaging and interactive methods, ensuring that all pupils are actively involved in their learning.
- **Phase 2: Personalised Response**
In this phase, targeted interventions are implemented for pupils who require additional support. This may include small group work, one-on-one tutoring, or specialised programmes designed to address specific learning gaps. The effectiveness of these interventions is closely monitored to ensure that pupils make progress.
- **Phase 3: Seeking Additional Support**
This final phase involves identifying pupils who need further assistance and seeking additional support from external professionals, such as speech and language therapists and educational psychologists. Collaborating with these specialists allows us to implement targeted strategies and interventions for pupils facing more significant challenges, ensuring that all learners have the resources they need to succeed.

Teaching and Learning Model

We believe that effective teaching and learning are rooted in a structured approach that emphasises clarity, engagement, and active participation. Our Teaching and Learning Model comprises the following components:

Category	Details
1. Clarity of Learning	<p>Learning Intentions: Clearly defined objectives communicated to pupils at the start of each lesson.</p> <p>Success Criteria: Indicators that help pupils self-assess their understanding of the learning intentions.</p>
2. Engaging Explanations	<p>Concise and Engaging Explanations: New content is presented in a clear, interactive manner using visual aids and storytelling.</p> <p>Identifying Misconceptions and Responding: Teachers actively check for understanding and clarify misconceptions immediately.</p> <p>Wrestling with New Learning: Pupils engage in discussions and problem-solving to deepen their understanding and encode information in long-term memory.</p>
3. Getting and Giving Feedback	<p>Timely Feedback: Immediate and specific feedback provided during lessons to reinforce learning.</p> <p>Peer and Self-Assessment: Opportunities for pupils to evaluate each other's work and reflect on their own understanding against success criteria.</p>
4. Teaching Structures	<p>My Turn, Our Turn, Your Turn: Gradual release of responsibility in skill practice.</p> <p>Small Steps: Breaking instruction into manageable chunks to build confidence.</p> <p>Metacognition: Encouraging pupils to reflect on their thinking and learning processes.</p> <p>Models and Vocabulary: Providing clear models and relevant vocabulary to build understanding.</p> <p>Mini Whiteboards or Non-Verbal Signs: Used for real-time demonstration of understanding, allowing for immediate assessment by teachers.</p>

Category	Details
5. Scaffolding Techniques	<p>Worked Examples: Presenting examples to demonstrate problem-solving strategies.</p> <p>Scaffolds: Various supports like graphic organisers and sentence starters are provided.</p> <p>Whole Class, Peer, Group, Individual Support: Differentiated support based on pupil needs through whole class instruction, peer interactions, group activities, and one-on-one assistance.</p>
6. Pedagogical Structures	<p>Clarity: Ensuring focus on learning objectives throughout the lesson.</p> <p>Explanation: Providing detailed and coherent explanations for new concepts.</p> <p>Check for Understanding: Regular checks through questioning and formative assessments.</p> <p>Practice: Integrating opportunities for practice into lessons.</p> <p>Feedback: Continuous feedback loops for guiding pupils' next steps.</p>
7. Learning Structures	<p>Experience It, Watch It, Read It, Write It, Listen and Record It: Various modes of engagement tailored to different learning styles.</p> <p>True or False, Matching, Multiple Choice, Complete It, Ordering: Interactive assessment activities to reinforce learning.</p> <p>Draw, Copy, Summarise, Annotate: Creative tasks to express understanding.</p> <p>Sorting, Answering, Roleplay: Engaging methods to deepen comprehension.</p>

Category	Details
8. Fundamental Foundations	<p>Cold Calling: Asking pupils to answer questions without raising hands to ensure engagement.</p> <p>Retrieval Practice: Regularly revisiting learned material to strengthen memory.</p> <p>Think-Pair-Share: Think for yourself first, talk with your partner, share with the group.</p> <p>Talk To Your Partner: Peer discussions to verbalise thoughts and reinforce learning.</p> <p>Ratio: Maintaining optimal teacher-to-pupil interaction.</p> <p>Routines: Establishing consistent classroom structures.</p> <p>Clarity of Instruction: Providing clear instructions to minimise confusion.</p> <p>Teacher Radar: Monitoring pupil engagement and comprehension.</p> <p>Whole Class Reset: Pausing lessons to refocus the class.</p> <p>Wait Time: Allowing time for pupils to think before responding.</p> <p>Narrate the Positive: Highlighting positive behaviours and efforts to reinforce a constructive learning environment.</p>

Metacognition and Cognitive Overload Considerations

At Diamond Wood Community Academy, we recognise the critical role that metacognition and an understanding of cognitive overload play in effective teaching and learning. Our approach is designed to empower pupils to become more aware of their own learning processes, enabling them to develop strategies for managing their learning more effectively.

Metacognition:

- **Promoting Self-Regulated Learning:** We actively teach pupils to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning. By encouraging self-reflection, we help pupils understand their strengths and areas for improvement, fostering a growth mindset.
- **Explicit Teaching of Learning Strategies:** Teachers integrate metacognitive strategies into lessons, such as thinking aloud, modelling problem-solving techniques, and encouraging pupils to articulate their thought processes. This helps pupils develop a toolkit of strategies they can apply across different subjects and tasks.
- **Scaffolding for Independence:** Initially, teachers provide structured support to help pupils develop metacognitive skills. Over time, this support is gradually withdrawn, encouraging pupils to take greater ownership of their learning and become independent, self-regulated learners.

Cognitive Overload:

- **Structured and Sequenced Learning:** Lessons are carefully planned to ensure that content is introduced in manageable chunks. We prioritise a clear progression of knowledge and skills, avoiding overwhelming pupils with too much new information at once.
- **Dual Coding and Retrieval Practice:** We utilise dual coding (combining verbal and visual information) and regular retrieval practice to help pupils consolidate their learning and transfer information from short-term to long-term memory, thereby reducing cognitive load.
- **Minimising Distractions:** Classroom environments are designed to minimise distractions and promote focused learning. Teachers are mindful of reducing extraneous cognitive load by presenting information clearly and avoiding unnecessary complexity.
- **Checkpoints for Understanding:** Regular formative assessments and checks for understanding are embedded in lessons. This allows teachers to identify when pupils may be experiencing cognitive overload and adjust the pace or approach to ensure comprehension before moving on.

By integrating metacognitive strategies and being mindful of cognitive overload, we aim to enhance pupil learning, ensuring that all pupils can engage with the curriculum effectively and achieve their full potential.

Learning Environment

We strive to create a learning environment that is both physically and emotionally supportive. Effective classroom management strategies will be implemented to maintain a positive atmosphere conducive to learning. Classrooms will be designed to be inclusive, allowing all pupils to participate fully in their education. We will prioritise creating safe spaces where pupils can express themselves, take risks, and engage with their learning.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

We acknowledge the importance of mental health and wellbeing in creating a positive learning environment. Strategies to support pupil wellbeing include:

- Implementing social-emotional learning programmes that promote self-awareness, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills.
- Providing access to external services and mental health resources for pupils if required.
- Creating a supportive school culture through initiatives that promote kindness, inclusivity, and respect.

Cultural Competence and Global Citizenship

Teaching cultural competence and global citizenship is essential for preparing pupils to be responsible and empathetic individuals. Initiatives to promote this include:

- Integrating lessons that explore diverse cultures and perspectives, fostering appreciation for global diversity.
- Encouraging pupils to participate in community service and global initiatives, promoting awareness of social issues and civic responsibility.
- Providing opportunities for pupils to engage with other communities, enhancing their understanding of interconnectedness.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Extra-curricular activities play a vital role in supporting the curriculum and providing pupils with opportunities to develop a broader set of skills and interests. We will:

- Offer a range of clubs and activities that cater to diverse interests, including sports, arts, and academic enrichment.
- Encourage pupils to participate in events that promote teamwork, leadership, and personal growth.

- Provide opportunities for pupils to showcase their talents and achievements within the school community.

Sustainability and Environmental Awareness

We are committed to promoting sustainability and environmental awareness as part of our curriculum. This includes:

- Integrating environmental education into lessons, teaching pupils about their responsibilities toward the planet.
- Encouraging eco-friendly practices within the school, such as recycling and energy conservation.
- Engaging pupils in projects that support local environmental initiatives, fostering a sense of stewardship.

Digital Citizenship, Online Safety, and Technology in Teaching and Learning

As technology becomes increasingly integrated into education, Diamond Wood Community Academy is committed to promoting responsible digital citizenship and ensuring the safe use of technology among our pupils. We teach pupils how to navigate the digital landscape responsibly, focusing on online behaviour, privacy, and critical thinking in evaluating information. Staff will receive training to effectively guide pupils in these areas.

Technology plays a crucial role in enhancing teaching and learning by supporting the curriculum and promoting digital literacy. We utilise various technological tools across all stages of learning to create engaging and personalised experiences:

- **Interactive Whiteboards:** Enhance lessons with multimedia content, fostering active participation.
- **Tablets and Laptops:** Support personalised learning, allowing pupils to work at their own pace.
- **Educational Software:** Reinforce key concepts through interactive, gamified experiences.
- **Online Platforms:** Facilitate blended learning with access to materials and feedback.
- **Digital Storytelling:** Boost creativity through multimedia projects.
- **Coding and Robotics:** Introduce problem-solving and computational thinking.

To ensure technology effectively enhances learning, we focus on:

- **Pupil Engagement:** Monitoring participation and interaction.

- **Learning Outcomes:** Analysing assessments to measure progress.
- **Feedback:** Collecting insights from teachers and pupils to evaluate impact.
- **Digital Literacy:** Tracking progress to ensure competency development.
- **Review:** Regularly updating our approach based on assessment data.

Through these strategies, we aim to create a dynamic, tech-enabled learning environment that equips pupils with the skills needed for the future while promoting safe and responsible digital practices.

Equality and Diversity

Our commitment to equality and diversity is fundamental to our educational philosophy. We ensure that all pupils, regardless of their background, have equal opportunities and representation in our curriculum and teaching practices. We actively seek to include diverse perspectives in learning materials and promote an inclusive environment where every pupil feels respected and valued. Training for staff will be provided to enhance awareness and understanding of equality and diversity issues.

Pupil Progression and Next Steps

Diamond Wood Community Academy is dedicated to supporting pupils as they transition beyond Year 2. This includes:

- Implementing preparatory activities that facilitate smooth transitions to Key Stage 2, such as collaborative projects with local junior schools.
- Providing information sessions for parents/ carers about the transition process and what to expect.
- Offering individual support for pupils to set goals and plan for their next steps in education.

Parent/ Carer and Community Engagement

Engaging parents, carers, and the wider community is vital for enhancing pupils' educational experiences and outcomes. We are committed to fostering active involvement from families in their children's learning through effective communication and collaborative partnerships. Our strategies include:

- **Regular Communication:** Keeping families informed and engaged through newsletters, meetings, and workshops.
- **Partnerships with Local Organisations:** Collaborating with community organisations to provide additional resources and support for pupils.
- **Community Events:** Hosting events that encourage family participation in school activities, building strong connections between home and school.
- **Volunteer Opportunities:** Offering ways for parents and carers to contribute to the school community, fostering a sense of ownership and collaboration.

By strengthening these partnerships, we aim to create a supportive educational environment that benefits both pupils and the community.

Collaboration and Professional Development

At Diamond Wood Community Academy, we are deeply committed to the ongoing professional development of our staff. We believe that continuous learning and collaboration are essential to maintaining high standards of teaching and ensuring the best outcomes for our pupils. To support this commitment, we actively engage in a range of CPD activities, including:

- **Networking and Collaboration:** Our staff regularly attend networking events with colleagues from our Academy Trust schools, participate in national hub meetings, and engage with subject associations. These opportunities allow us to exchange ideas, stay connected with current educational trends, and adopt best practices across our school community.
- **Staying Informed on Research and Evidence:** We prioritise keeping up to date with the latest research and evidence in education. This knowledge informs our teaching strategies, curriculum design, and intervention approaches, ensuring that our practices are both innovative and effective.
- **Dedicated Staff Meetings:** A significant portion of our staff meeting time is dedicated to reviewing, adapting, and training staff on curriculum and pedagogy. We also provide structured time for teachers to share planning and resources, ensuring consistency and quality assurance across the school.

By investing in these professional development opportunities, we aim to create a dynamic and supportive environment where our teachers can grow, collaborate, and deliver exceptional education to our pupils.

Evaluating the Impact of Our Teaching and Learning Strategy

At Diamond Wood Community Academy, evaluating the effectiveness of our teaching and learning strategy is integral to our commitment to continuous improvement. We employ a comprehensive and systematic approach to monitor and assess the impact of our strategies on pupil outcomes, staff development, and overall school performance.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework:

- **Data-Driven Analysis:** We regularly collect and analyse data on pupil progress and attainment across all subjects and year groups. This includes both formative and summative assessments, as well as pupil engagement and participation metrics.
- **Lesson Observations and Learning Walks:** Senior leaders, year group leaders, and subject leaders conduct regular lesson observations and learning walks to evaluate the quality of teaching and its alignment with our curriculum intent. Feedback is provided to teachers to support professional growth and improve instructional practices.
- **Pupil Voice:** We actively seek feedback from pupils through surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews to gain insights into their learning experiences. This helps us understand the impact of our teaching strategies from the learner's perspective and make necessary adjustments.
- **Teacher Reflection and Self-Evaluation:** Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their practices through regular self-evaluation and peer collaboration. This reflection is supported by our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), where staff can share insights and discuss the effectiveness of various teaching approaches.
- **External Support and Review:** We engage with external experts, including educational consultants, speech and language therapists, and educational psychologists, to provide additional perspectives on our teaching practices and their impact on pupil learning. Periodic reviews from our Academy Trust and involvement in national hubs and subject associations also contribute to an external evaluation of our strategy.

Roles and Responsibilities:

All teaching staff are expected to adhere to the Teachers' Standards and engage in continuous professional development. We uphold high professional standards, encouraging staff to reflect on their practice and

seek opportunities for improvement. Staff members are expected to align their work with the school's ethos and policies, contributing to a collaborative and high-performing educational community.

- **Senior Leadership Team (SLT):** The SLT oversees the overall evaluation process, ensuring that data is collected, analysed, and acted upon. They are responsible for setting the strategic direction for teaching and learning and ensuring alignment with school improvement plans.
- **Middle Leaders:** Year group leaders and subject leaders play a key role in monitoring the implementation of the teaching and learning strategy within their areas. They provide support and guidance to teachers, ensuring consistency and high standards across the school.
- **Teachers:** All teaching staff are responsible for evaluating the impact of their own teaching on pupil outcomes. They are expected to engage in professional development, self-reflection, and collaborative discussions to continuously refine their practice.
- **Governors:** The governing body receives regular reports on the effectiveness of the teaching and learning strategy, providing oversight and ensuring that the school's objectives are being met.

Impact Assessment:

- **Pupil Progress and Achievement:** We measure the impact of our teaching and learning strategy by tracking pupil progress and attainment over time. This includes analysing gaps between different groups of pupils, such as those with EAL or SEND, to ensure equity in educational outcomes.
- **Staff Development and Satisfaction:** The effectiveness of our CPD program is evaluated through staff surveys, feedback from PLCs, and retention rates. We assess whether staff feel confident and supported in implementing our teaching and learning strategy.
- **Curriculum Outcomes:** We regularly review curriculum coverage, ensuring that pupils are meeting the intended learning outcomes and that the curriculum remains relevant and challenging. Adjustments are made based on evaluation data to enhance curriculum delivery.

Continuous Improvement: The findings from our evaluation processes are used to inform our school development plan, guiding future improvements in teaching and learning. We remain committed to adapting our strategies based on evidence and feedback, ensuring that we provide the highest quality education for all pupils. By rigorously evaluating the impact of our teaching and learning strategy, we ensure

that our practices are effective, equitable, and aligned with our mission to foster the academic and personal growth of every pupil at Diamond Wood Community Academy.

Staff Wellbeing

We recognise that the wellbeing of our staff is crucial to fostering a positive educational environment that enhances teaching and learning. By prioritising staff wellbeing, we aim to create a supportive culture that directly impacts pupil outcomes. To support our staff, we will implement initiatives focused on enhancing mental health, promoting work-life balance, and providing access to resources essential for personal and professional growth. This includes regular wellbeing workshops, mental health days, and confidential counselling services. We believe that when staff feel valued and empowered, they are better equipped to inspire and engage pupils, ultimately contributing to a more effective and nurturing learning environment.

Emergency and Crisis Management

In the event of emergencies or crises, we have established protocols to ensure continuity in teaching and learning. This includes plans for transitioning to remote learning when necessary, as well as communication strategies to keep staff, pupils, and parents/ carers informed. Regular drills and training will be conducted to prepare staff and pupils for various scenarios, ensuring safety and minimal disruption to education.

Links to Other Policies

This Teaching and Learning Policy is interconnected with several other key school policies that collectively support our educational objectives. These include:

- **Behaviour Policy:** Establishes expectations for pupil conduct, supporting a positive and respectful learning environment conducive to effective teaching.
- **Safeguarding Policy:** Ensures the safety and well-being of all pupils, creating a secure environment where learning can thrive.
- **Inclusion Policy and SEND Policy:** Promotes inclusive practices that cater to the diverse needs of all learners, ensuring equal access to the curriculum and support.
- **Assessment, Recording, and Reporting Policy:** Provides a framework for evaluating pupil progress, ensuring that assessment is integrated into teaching and learning, with clear procedures for recording and reporting outcomes.

- **Marking and Feedback Policy:** Outlines our approach to providing constructive feedback, emphasising the importance of timely, specific, and actionable feedback to support pupil progress and learning.
- **Curriculum Policy:** Ensures a broad, balanced curriculum that supports effective teaching and meets the needs of all learners.
- **Learning Environment Policy:** Establishes standards for safe, welcoming, and well-equipped spaces that enhance learning and engagement.

These policies work in harmony to create a comprehensive and cohesive approach to education at Diamond Wood Community Academy, ensuring that every aspect of our teaching and learning strategy is supported by clear, aligned practices.

References

Our policy is informed by a range of educational research and evidence, including:

- The Education Inspection Framework (Ofsted)
- Ofsted Subject Specific Review Series and Reports
- Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)
- Subject associations and leading educational experts
- Insights into metacognition and cognitive science.