



Essendine Primary School

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy

Policy Aims

This policy aims to embed a consistent approach to the teaching and learning at Essendine that is supported by a broad and balanced curriculum. It describes the theory and practices underpinning:

- **What** we teach (curriculum and personal development)
- **How** we teach (teaching styles and practices)
- **How** the children engage with the teaching (learning)

School Vision and Values

Essendine is committed to its mission statement: *Working Together, Growing Together*. The core aim is for Essendine to become the premier 'first choice' school at the heart of the community.

Our vision for Essendine is to build a community that:

- Places our children firmly at the heart of everything we do;
- Instils a love of learning which lasts a lifetime;
- Personalises the learning journey for all children.

Above all else, we strive to ensure that every child has a strong sense of belonging, a secure sense of self and the courage to use their voice to make a difference. This is reflected in our shared values:



Our Curriculum Aims

Our curriculum is the totality of planned student experiences that occur during their time at Essendine. This is informed by the mandated National Curriculum (2014), specifically the individual subject programmes of study.

Our curriculum is designed to inspire inquisitive, resourceful and knowledgeable global citizens, and is representative of the modern society our children are growing up in. We aim to develop cultural capital and to underpin academic success through real-life, relevant experiences and a broad and balanced provision. We encourage personal growth through independent enquiry, discussion and reflection. We promote inclusivity through a balanced global perspective.



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Curriculum design and teaching combine a systematic approach to identified concepts with wide-ranging opportunities for incidental learning. Teacher questioning probes and deepens thinking about concepts taught. Pupils are encouraged to develop a 'growth mind set'. A growing mind thrives on challenge, so is not limited in any way by what we perceive our ability to be. Fear of failure is the biggest barrier to achievement. Therefore, we inspire pupils to become risk takers through problem-solving, to question wherever possible and to challenge themselves wherever they can. Alongside this, 'attitudes for learning' are embedded and used for setting targets to move pupils on and to become more reflective in their own learning.

Learning with longevity

At Essendine, we want all our children to understand themselves as learners and to have the skills of self-regulation, self-awareness and resilience to enjoy being a learner. Therefore, we employ the principles of metacognition, experiential learning and resilience to teaching and learning. Children are taught to understand how they learn best through planning, monitoring and evaluating their own learning through a 3-step check and through PSHE lessons, discussing how to best tackle challenges and difficulties. They become familiar with their own strengths and areas for development through timely teacher feedback and reflection, opportunities for which are woven into and throughout our curriculum.

Children develop cognitive and metacognitive strategies both for general approaches to learning and around the specific concepts being taught. Teaching staff use approaches and resources to help children assimilate new knowledge into long term memory and make connections for enduring understanding. Lessons present a challenge that engages and motivates children whilst not overloading their cognitive processes. Therefore, learning is broken into small steps so that children's working memory is not encumbered by processing too much content. Where possible, extraneous load is reduced through techniques such as signalling and careful presentation of new information. To ensure learning is impactful and children can apply this in a spiral curriculum, lessons and topics begin with explicit links to prior learning. Retrieval practice has shown to have significant benefits to securing learning. It ensures learning has moved to the long term memory and supports understanding as well as recall. The school additionally uses effective assessments across the academic year to practise children's ability to retrieve information and ensure gaps in learning are filled (see the assessment policy).

Quality First Teaching

Quality First Teaching emphasises high quality, inclusive teaching for all children in a class. It includes differentiated learning, effective pedagogical strategies, including those to support children with SEND and on-going formative assessment. Alongside this, we take a mastery approach to teaching and learning in all subjects, keeping ambitious outcomes fixed for individuals with carefully planned scaffolding and challenge for each child to achieve this. Metacognition is an embedded part of our teaching activities. Teachers explicitly instruct children in metacognitive and cognitive strategies relevant to the task (appendix 1). Sequences of teaching are planned around a series of steps, beginning with activating prior knowledge and leading to independent practice before ending in structured reflection to consolidate, challenge and deepen understanding. Children are an active part in planning and evaluating their own learning. To support children's thinking and strategy building, adults model thinking by verbalising how they first approach a task and how they work through it. In many cases this is context specific. Such modelling develops children's cognitive and



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metacognitive skills supporting them to articulate their understanding whilst not requiring too many demands of their mental resources.

Learning objectives are clear and purposeful providing a focus for the lesson which enables children to self-assess against as well as receive targeted feedback. These differ from the broader aims of the learning by being measurable. We view the aims for the learning as the overall strategy towards a broader goal and the objective for the lesson as one tactic in a sequence to achieve these overall aims. Therefore, children should see the point of the learning for the lesson as well as a part of the bigger picture. These must be fully explained and understood by children.

Teachers are clear about the outcomes for the children leading to the most appropriate verb choices, evaluating what level they want children to gain new knowledge and understanding, skills or attitudes. These should be active verbs rather than 'To know' or 'To understand' and should progress in the degree of fluency, depth and independence required (appendix 2).

Learning objective verb examples

Knowledge and understanding	Skills (more active verbs)	Attitude
Recite/recall	Demonstrate	Collaborate
Identify	Use	Influence
Classify	Enact	Challenge
Infer	Compute	Accept
Explain	Design	Evaluate
Review	Assemble	Model
Compare	Adjust	Specify
Define	Draw	Adopt
Estimate	Practice	Characterise
Discuss	Locate	Formulate
Analyse	Collect	Persuade
Describe	Measure	Value
Interpret	Operate	Advocate
Name	Organise	Choose
Select	Illustrate	Judge
Evaluate	Perform	Recommend
Solve	Employ	Approve
Calculate	Establish	Criticise
Label	Rearrange	Justify
Plan	Imitate	Resolve
Group		Empathise
Record		Assess
List		Defend
Match		Manage
Give examples		Select

Success criteria are provided or developed with children to support them in working towards the learning objectives. These are a set of features that should be seen in the children's work with. They present increasing cognitive challenge but also encourage children to think carefully about how they plan their work and reflect on how well they have achieved in that lesson.



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Learning groups

There is no fixed grouping for subjects of lessons mandated at Essendine. Research suggests that there is value to flexibility in grouping. We do not set or stream at Essendine as this has been evidenced to have little impact. However, children may be seated and grouped each lesson for differing reasons outlined here:

- **A shared gap in learning** A teacher may identify a common area for development and group children for targeted attention based on this.
- **Mixed attainment** Groups may be formed by mixing children with different attainment levels for that subject
- **Attainment** Children may sometimes have tasks with differing scaffolds according to their attainment stage and grouping is matched to this.

Targeted Teaching

A part of what makes Quality First Teaching effective are the 'waves of intervention' that the teacher and the school put in place to ensure all children are learning effectively. Timely interventions include daily scaffolds and differentiation for children within lessons as a universal provision. Some children may require additional interventions to close gaps in learning or to meet individual needs. These additional interventions are planned for and provided within the teaching team for that year group, within the lesson or in appropriate times outside of the classroom. We also provide a third tier of specialist intervention that targets specific and more complex need that require evidence based programs or specialist training to deliver. More details can be found in our SEND policy and Local offer on the website.

Classroom Environment

There is plenty of evidence around the importance of creating a language-rich environment for children to learn in. Our work with speech and language specialists, as well as support around 'Attachment Theory' and using a 'Trauma Informed Approach' has led to the development of guidance for communication friendly and calm classrooms. This guidance ensures the environment is a tool for learning and self-regulation that does not over stimulate and is flexible enough to meet the needs of individual lessons and children.

The Roles of the Essendine community

Governors

Governors have a key role in reviewing the school's teaching, learning and curriculum policy and statutory obligations in relation to the National Curriculum. The Governors are concerned with monitoring school, local and national performance data, in order to evaluate achievement and analyse the performance of different pupil groups and subjects taught in school. Where the school receives special grants to support teaching and learning, governors are responsible for monitoring their effectiveness.



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Senior Leadership

The senior leadership must ensure the teaching and learning is ambitious and offers all learners the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. This is achieved through rigorous monitoring and timely support at all stages of the teaching cycle. It is their responsibility to ensure teachers receive timely and appropriate professional development as required.

Subject Leader

The subject leader role is to ensure teachers have sound subject knowledge and provide effective support where necessary to confidently teach all areas of the curriculum. This is achieved through a rigorous monitoring and support cycle as well as their own subject expertise.

Teacher

Deliver a coherent and sequenced curriculum, assessing learners' understanding to provide feedback and inform their teaching.

Parents

Contribute to the extensive parental engagement program to enhance parents' ability to engage with their child's learning such as topic launches, lesson observations, subject specific presentations and parents evening. Support the children in accessing home learning via Microsoft Teams and/or the school website.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Teaching and learning is monitored and moderated regularly by Senior Leadership Team. A termly review of learning is facilitated with teachers in the form of Pupil Progress Review meetings. A variety of planned monitoring arrangements take place throughout the year to provide a snapshot of the quality of teaching and learning overtime. The Appraisal cycle informs learning and teaching.

Relevant policies

Assessment policy

Behaviour policy

Homework Policy

Reading policy

Most Able policy

SEND policy



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Appendix 1

Cognitive and Metacognitive strategy examples

Strategy	How to Use	When to Use	What is it for?
Skim/Survey	Search for headings, highlighted words, previews, and summaries.	Before you read a long piece of text.	Gives an overview of the key concepts, helps you to focus on the important points.
Slow Down	Stop, read and think about information.	When information seems important. If you realize you don't understand what you have just read.	Improves your focus on important information.
Activate Prior Knowledge	Stop and think about what you already know about a topic.	Before you read something or do an unfamiliar task.	Makes new information easier to remember and allows you to see links between subjects. Information is less daunting if you already know something about the topic.
Fit Ideas Together	Relate main ideas to one another. Look for themes that connect the main ideas, or a conclusion.	When thinking about complex information, when deep understanding is needed.	Once you know how ideas are related they are easier to remember than learning as if they are separate facts. Also helps to understand them more deeply.
Draw Diagrams	Identify main ideas, connect them, classify ideas, decide which information is most important and which is supporting	When there is a lot of factual information that is interrelated.	Helps to identify main ideas and organize them into categories. Reduces memory load. May be easier to visualize.

- Self-questioning
- Reflection (consciously reviewing)
- Identifying of strengths and weaknesses
- Mnemonic aids
- Thinking aloud
- Graphic organisers e.g. flow charts, mind-maps, spider diagrams
- Checklists (success criteria?)
- Reciprocal teaching (summarising, questioning each other to ensure comprehension)
- A journal / planner
 - to record ideas from a lesson, film, presentation, etc.
 - to make predictions about what will happen next
 - to record questions
 - to summarise and restate the main ideas of a book, film, etc.
 - to reflect upon and connect the ideas presented to other domains of knowledge.



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Appendix 2

Working towards mastery and greater depth

Cognitive domain	Type of thinking	Types of activities	Predominant type of teaching
Basic	Low level cognitive demand. Involves following instructions.	Name, describe, follow instructions or methods, complete tasks, recall information, ask basic questions, use, match, report, measure, list, illustrate, label, recognise, tell, repeat, arrange, define, memorise.	Modelling Steps to success.
Advancing	Higher-level cognitive demand beyond recall. Requires application involving some degree of decision making.	Apply skills to solve problems, explain methods, classify, infer, categorise, identify patterns, organise, modify, predict, interpret, summarise, make observations, estimate, compare.	Application led lessons Review.
Deep	Cognitive demand involves non-standard, non-routine, inter-connected, multi-step thinking in problems with more than one possible solution. Requires reasoning and justification.	Solve non-routine problems, appraise, explain concepts, hypothesise, investigate, cite evidence, design, create, prove.	Coaching Reasoning, debate and justification.