



Thorns Community



Infant School

Park Hill Thorns Federation

Learning, Teaching and Curriculum Policy

Revised: May 2025

Agreed by governors: June 2025

Next review: May 2026

PARK HILL THORNS FEDERATION

LEARNING, TEACHING and CURRICULUM POLICY

Aim of the Policy

To define what is meant by the curriculum of the Park Hill Thorns Federation and how the values and ethos of the federation are reflected in the curriculum for all learners.

To support staff who work in classrooms (teachers and teaching assistants) to utilise evidence informed practice when selecting teaching strategies. Learning is the purpose of the whole school community and is a shared commitment. This policy sets out the classroom organisation, structures and teaching strategies that will secure good learning for all children.

Purpose

- To state clearly, through the policy, the nature of the curriculum and the agreed teaching and learning processes that are evident throughout the school.
- To state clearly the agreed principles that will underpin all areas of the curriculum and be evident in the work of the school. This will include the learning that is taking place and the policy documentation relating to all aspects of school life.

This policy should be read alongside other key policies that support classroom practice e.g. SEND policy, assessment policy, Early Years Foundation Stage policy, homework policy.

CURRICULUM

At the Park Hill Thorns Federation, we aim to use our curriculum to:

- utilise our accurate knowledge of each child and teach to their assessed needs
- celebrate all achievements and recognise excellence whilst also, believing that everyone can and should be a successful learner
- create an atmosphere where the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, emotional and physical development of the child is developed
- prepare each child for an active role as a citizen; seeking to develop children's confidence, independence, cooperative and learning skills
- provide a range of learning experiences which plan for engagement, involvement, excitement, awe and wonder and which allow opportunity for child-initiated and child-led learning
- create a well-planned, stimulating environment, which nurtures curiosity, promotes learning and increases knowledge and skills.

The Nature and Shape of the School Curriculum

The national curriculum has the aim that the vast majority of children will achieve mastery of each subject. The mastery pedagogy has the principle that all learners will meet expectations, though this may require differing levels of effort and support, all are able to achieve the expectations. Great teaching alongside accurate assessment and teaching that closes any gaps are part of the mastery approach.

Learning in school is described as the 'curriculum'. The curriculum consists of all the activities within school, including the quality of the relationships and the values that are important in developing a child's sense of morality.

We aim to ensure that the school provides the optimum education for every child with a curriculum which makes it possible for all pupils to participate. We use a variety of teaching methods and strategies to enable all children to be successful learners. Continuous assessment of children's progress is built into the planning and evidence of such is stored and up-dated.

The primary curriculum is concerned with developing knowledge, skills, attitudes and concepts. The curriculum needs to be broad, balanced and relevant to the life of each child within the federation. We are committed to securing the best possible basic skills for all children. By basic skills, we mean the ability to read, write and speak in English and to use mathematics at a proficient level to facilitate learning across the curriculum. English and maths are given extra attention for the teaching of basic concepts during the daily lessons. Teachers plan *topics*, normally half a term long, and link some of the separate subjects together. Each topic has a clear start and a focus end point. This means that a start point is planned which provides children with a shared experience on which to build their learning. The end point is also planned (and often planned with learners) and is a way of demonstrating and sharing the learning which has taken place. Previous finishes have included inviting parent to a museum, a performance for peers or parents, an essay and display.

Planning the Curriculum

Whilst following the statutory national curriculum, we have three drivers which underpin our planning and which aim to help all children fulfil their potential.

These drivers are:

- Ensuring and increasing children's sense of and understanding of wellbeing
- Developing Core Learning Skills
- Encouraging children to be inquisitive and imaginative

The drivers shape our curriculum through how we teach every topic theme. We ensure that children have an understanding of physical and mental wellbeing and have regular opportunities to increase their knowledge of what this means. We follow three learning

skills which are returned to every year so that children can practise and improve. These are: learning with others; digital citizenship and metacognition. In addition to these three learning skills, we support the development of children's speaking and listening through three units of work based on an oracy approach. We also aim to develop children's inquisitiveness, hoping that they ask questions and develop a love of learning and the desire to find things out and to develop children's imagination both in their creativity and in their approach to problem solving.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) the three prime areas of learning are covered alongside the four specific areas. In Key Stage 1 and 2 (KS1/ 2) English and Maths are key skills which have priority and are taught using the National Curriculum and Little Wandle for Letters and Sounds for phonics teaching.

Our school curriculum is composed of:

- Seven areas of learning in EYFS (Reception year group) and National Curriculum subjects in KS1 and KS2
- RE following the Warwickshire agreed syllabus
- Swimming in EYFS, KS1 and Year 5 and 6
- Opportunities to work with specialists e.g. drama, French, cooking, PE
- Extra-curricular activities

In addition to the statutory curriculum we also set guarantees for all children who attend the federation throughout their entire primary school experience.

These guarantees were created through discussion with staff, parents and children and are:

- Visits to an art gallery and theatre
- A chance to participate in fundraising
- The chance to take part in a range of extra-curricular clubs
- Learning to play a musical instrument
- The opportunity to hear a range of live music performed
- A residential trip
- A responsibility within school
- The chance to represent our schools (through sport or other activities)
- Visits to places of worship from a range of faiths
- Visits to museums and events which foster and develop Scientific and Technological interest
- First-hand experience with, and observations of, the plants and animals in our school environment and in our country
- Experience in growing plants and preparing, cooking and eating the produce
- Participation in joint federation events
- The chance to discover Shakespeare and other great Warwickshire figures

Many subjects make use of a published scheme of work to support the school's long- and medium-term planning. This is the case for: phonics, grammar, spelling, maths, computing, music, PE, French, RE, geography and PSHE. In Science, history and design technology a published scheme has been adapted by the subject leader to better suit our school's intent. Where a scheme has been selected this is done to support subject leader and class teachers subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge and because they are in line with the school values and vision.

In some subjects the long- and medium-term plan has been designed specifically for our school context. This is the case for: Reading, Writing and Art and design.

Time Allocations for Each Subject

Curriculum time can be planned as continuous study throughout the year, or as blocks of study. Work will be planned using the whole school, long-term curriculum map. Teachers will follow the agreed Schemes of Work with reference to whole school planning to ensure that programmes of study are effectively covered.

Year group	Subjects/areas taught throughout the year	Subjects taught in blocks of time
Early Years (Reception)	Communication and Language Physical Development Personal Social and Emotional Literacy Mathematics Understanding the World Expressive Arts and Design	
KS1 (Years 1 and 2)	English Maths Physical Education (PE) Learning skills RE	Music Computing PSHE Swimming Science History Geography Design technology Art and design
KS2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6)	English Maths Physical Education (PE) Learning skills French PSHE (Years 3, 4 and 5) RE Music (Year 3) Computing (Year 3)	Music (Years 4, 5 and 6) Computing (Years 4, 5 and 6) Swimming (Year 6 and Year 5 catch up groups) Science History Geography Design technology Art and design PSHE (Year 6)

In addition to planning for time allocation in the medium-term consideration has also been given to time allocation during each day and each week. All KS1 classes and Reception classes are expected to have the following lessons each day: phonics, storytime, Maths, English/Literacy. All KS1 classes are expected to have the following lessons every week: 4 mastering number sessions (immediately after lunch and separate from the maths lesson), handwriting, PE, Learning skills, RE.

All KS2 classes are expected to have the following lessons each day: English, Maths, storytime, PE or daily mile. KS2 classes are expected to have the following lessons every week: Learning skills, RE, French, PSHE (Years 3, 4 and 5), Handwriting (Years 3 and 4). In addition, Year 3 and Year 4 classes have 4 sessions each week to learn times tables (these are immediately after lunch and separate from the maths lesson).

Planning

Plans are based on previous assessment data, children's needs and the expectations of each subject.

The school has a long-term plan which details the key subject areas covered by each year group.

Medium term plans have been created and sequenced for all year groups with reference to the Early Years Foundation Stage and National Curriculum 2014. These plans are reviewed each half term by year group staff. Medium term plans are saved in the staff area of the school computer network so that they are available to subject leaders and the senior leadership team.

Teachers will meet weekly in year group teams to produce short-term plans following the sequence detailed in the medium-term plans. Short term plans take the format of a weekly timetable with clear learning intentions indicated. Short term plans will be shared with Teaching Assistants; saved in the staff area of the school computer network so that they are available to others and made available to the senior leadership team when requested. Staff may choose to record short term plans in more detail if they wish.

Personal Learning Plans

Personal Learning Plans are created for all children who are on the SEND register. They detail the distinctive and different provision that needs to be made for these children in all or any subject. Personal Learning Plans are reviewed termly. See SEND policy for more detail.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND ORGANISATION

The classroom environment can be used to support good learning and effective teaching. The classroom will be organised to facilitate learning and the development of independence and this will look different in different classes.

Class Learning Forum

A Class Learning Forum is a class discussion which allows children to reflect on their learning together and influence actions taken by the class teacher to help meet their learning needs. The Forum is carried out for 15 minutes in place of an assembly time each fortnight. Class teachers record the discussion using the format provided and display these in the classroom. The record of the meeting is displayed in the classroom with old records being retained until the end of the school year.

In Reception the conversation considers two questions and these are linked to the Characteristics of Effective Learning (see EYFS Curriculum for more details). In KS1 and KS2 the discussion follows three questions: What has gone well with our learning this week?, What do we still need to work on?, What will we do about it next week? At the start of a forum a review of the previously agreed actions takes place. The class discussion must focus on learning and not behaviour, children are taught that this is not an appropriate context to name poor behaviour from individual peers.

Learning Environment

Class teachers will avoid having unnecessary furniture and/or equipment in classrooms to allow for free movement around the room. The classroom layout will be decided by each class teacher to facilitate the learning strategies they will deploy and being mindful of sightlines and access to resources.

Unused resources and clutter will be tidied away and the area around the interactive whiteboard will be kept clear of displays. Reducing interference in the environment enables children to focus their attention on learning and reduces cognitive load.

Drawers and resources will be labelled clearly and teachers will use the same names for equipment throughout the school. The resources in each room will be clearly labelled using communication friendly approaches with labels written in a clear font. Children will be involved in the maintenance and care of all equipment and resources. Care will be taken to ensure that resources reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of our society, and that all children have equality of access.

Book corners will be comfortable and attractive throughout our schools with an emphasis on a smaller well-curated choice of books in Key stage 2.

Phonic mats and key vocabulary should be readily available on the table to children in all classes from Year 1 to Year 4. Phonic mats should be made available to those children who

require this additional resource in Years 5 and 6. The phonics mats should be linked to Little Wandle.

EYFS and Year 1 classrooms also plan and manage their outdoor areas. These spaces allow for a different type of learning and provision from that which can be achieved indoors. Learning is planned for the outdoor space in the same way as learning that takes place in the classroom.

Teachers and Teaching Assistants should ensure that the learning environment they select is appropriate to the needs of the children. This is particularly important when working with a small group away from the classroom. The staffroom or entrance hall do not support children in concentrating and can cause distractions; they should be avoided whenever possible.

Classroom Relationships

Positive interactions and relationships between adults and children and between children are important enablers of good learning.

Adults in the classroom are responsible for setting the tone and conveying empathy and warmth towards children. Class teachers and other key adults spend time getting to know the individual needs of the children in their class, building relationships so that children feel safe and can respond positively to learning challenges. Adults avoid sarcasm, shouting and humiliation.

Research shows that classes where children respect each other increases learning as they feel safe to express their thoughts and views. Teachers promote this through the Learning With Others unit and by providing frequent opportunities for children to work with a partner or in a group. Oracy sessions teach children to listen to each other and disagree politely. **Displays**

Displays can be used to reinforce recent learning, showcase key vocabulary or to celebrate finished pieces of work. Whatever use is made, we aim to avoid displays becoming wallpaper and displays should always be in good order and well-presented.

At the start of the new school year a classroom has minimal display up so that these can be built over time. The class teacher will involve the children in this process and take opportunities to model the use of any learning display and resources e.g. numberlines, phonics charts, history timelines.

Every classroom should have the following displays:

- A visual timetable which is used through the day in all classes; things completed are removed or crossed out.
- Learning skills
- Maths learning wall which includes key vocabulary and images
- English learning wall which includes key vocabulary

- School rules adapted and exemplified with the class and a behaviour ladder
- Class Learning Forum Record
- A timeline (KS2 only)
- A seasons display for the class tree (YR and KS1 only)
- Phonics freeze and/or Grow the Code poster (Little Wandle) (KS1 and YR)
- A topic theme display – to include main subject drivers for the topic theme and key vocabulary

A range of fonts, including handwritten labels and vocabulary, can be used in displays.

Displays of children's completed work (celebrating the finished article) can be re-used and moved from a classroom to a corridor or other shared space for a wider audience to enjoy. Displays in shared areas should be no more than two terms out of date

Presentation of Work in Children's Books

Children should be encouraged to look after their books and take pride in the presentation of their work. Book covers should state the child's name, class and subject.

Worksheets should only be stuck into a book if they are key to the learning and must not hang over the edge of the book pages. Sheets should be trimmed and/or folded.

All work must have a title and a date. At KS2 the date and title are underlined with a ruler.

At KS1 and in Reception all work is completed in pencil.

At KS2 work in English and topic books can be completed in pencil or in pen, once a pen licence is awarded. Children in Year 6 may be awarded a fountain pen licence. The class teacher awards a pen licence. See handwriting policy for more details.

All work in maths books is to be done in pencil and all down the left-hand side of the page. Children are taught how to write one digit in each square in the squared paper books.

Children are taught that mistakes are a key part of the learning process. Rubbers are rarely used in children's books but may be used if an adult feels it would be helpful to erase the error. Errors should normally have one line drawn through them (if a long line this should be done with a ruler).

Talking Partners and PE Partners

Talk partners are allocated and used in all classes. Children are seated next to their talk partner at tables or on the carpet, depending on the class. In Reception partners are changed periodically at the discretion of the class teacher. In KS1 partners are changed at least every half term, they may be changed more frequently. At KS2 partners are changed at least every two weeks but may be changed more frequently.

In PE children are allocated a partner for a half term. This partner is not necessarily the same as their class talking partner.

Classroom Management

The children in the class will be managed in such a way as to facilitate different learning structures. These are likely to vary depending on the subject, age of the children and content of the learning.

Teaching assistants play a key role in the teaching team and are involved in planning, preparation, delivery and assessment. They work with learners of all abilities. The role of teaching assistants (TAs) is carefully considered by class teachers to ensure that they are used effectively and have a high impact on learning. Learning intentions and success criteria will always be shared with TAs and feedback sought after activities.

Terminology

Across the federation consistent terms are used in all classes to make clear to children what they are learning and how to complete this successfully. Each lesson has a **Learning Intention**. Each lesson also has Success criteria which are referred to as **Top Tips** in EYFS, KS1 and as **Success Criteria** Key Stage 2. Learning intentions and success criteria are shared with the children at the most appropriate point in a lesson and in the most effective way to help support learning, the decision about when and how being made by the class teacher.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

By using Quality First Teaching and Rosenshine Principles of Instruction we will engage and support the learning of all children at Thorns and Park Hill.

Quality First Teaching demands 100% participation from the pupils and sets high standards and realistic challenges. It does not spoon feed, it is challenging and demanding, it expects children to be able to articulate their ideas, understanding and thinking by actively promoting talk.

The key characteristics of Quality First Teaching are:

- Highly focussed lesson design with sharp objectives
- High levels of pupil involvement and engagement with their learning
- High levels of interaction for all pupils
- Appropriate use of questioning, modelling and explaining by the teacher (linked to Rosenshine's Principles)
- Regular opportunities for children to talk purposefully
- Children accepting responsibility for their own learning and working independently
- No ceiling for any individual on learning
- Marking and assessment that feeds forward and informs planning and the next lesson
- Regular use of encouragement and authentic praise, particularly focussed on effort, to engage and motivate children

Rosenshine (2010, 2012) summarised research on effective classroom strategies by a variety of academics, teachers and psychologists into a set of key principles. These maximise the impact of teaching and have been adapted to describe features of effective lessons.

- A **daily review** to allow connections between previous and current learning to be made, usually at the beginning of a lesson
- New learning is presented in **small steps**, with practice after each step
- **Questions** are asked to help children deepen their understanding with teachers allowing children time to think of their answer and/or rehearse their answer with a talk partner. Teachers may use cold calling or say it again better to help children refine their response.
- Teachers will **provide models** to help children understand a process or content. For example, write a paragraph/sentence on the board and discuss how each step is done as you go by thinking aloud. Use worked examples and talk them through then leave them on display whilst children practice.
- Children will be **guided** through some examples as they have a first go and/or work with partner. High levels of adult support from the class teacher and teaching assistant will be provided at this point of learning.
- Class teachers will **check children's understanding** by asking questions. They may use a hinge question (one that children should know at this point in the lesson) or ask several children the same questions to check the understanding of many before moving in. This helps to ensure a **high success rate (80%)** before moving on to the next stage of **independent practice**.
- Any children who require it will be provided with **scaffolding** and this may vary from lesson to lesson, subject to subject. Scaffolding will be carefully withdrawn over time as children's understanding grows.
- Children's learning will be consolidated through **weekly and monthly retrieval practice**.

ADAPTIVE TEACHING

Teachers will adapt the tasks as necessary for children in line with the expectations of quality first teaching. Tasks will be adapted through a range of strategies and these will be detailed in weekly planning and/or personal learning plans. Adaptation may be by: pace, scaffolding a task with different resources, adult support or a different starting point, providing pre-teaching.

Where possible, children may be provided with same day catch up, particularly in basic skills with the aim of keeping a class moving forward together and prevent any long-term gaps developing.

When adapting teaching, children may work with different adults and not always their allocated class teacher. This enables the school to make effective and efficient use of school resources. It is for the school team to decide which member of the staff team is best placed to work with an individual. If a child needs support from an external professional or agency permission is always sought from parents beforehand. See SEND policy for further details.

In rare circumstances, the teaching may be adapted by providing a different curriculum for a child. Examples of this include a child on the SEND register who is unable to engage with age-appropriate content or a newly arrived EAL child who may have additional English support instead of French at KS2.

Children with Special Educational Needs will be identified and Personal Learning Plans will be in place to meet individual needs. See SEND policy for further details.

In accordance with the school's Diversity Policy all children must be given full access to the National Curriculum. Staff will endeavour to help all children to reach their full potential irrespective of race, gender, age, economic circumstances, disability or ability.

When you walk into a classroom you should see:

- Enthusiastic children who are focussed on their learning
- Children confidently asking questions
- Children making connections between current learning and existing knowledge
- Children actively using prior learning to complete tasks
- Books that show a clear journey to an intended outcome
- Focussed and purposeful input from teachers, followed by carefully planned tasks to practice the skills taught
- Learning broken down into small steps with children demonstrating a high success rate in their books
- A purposeful environment where distractions are minimised
- Adults being proactive in their provision of scaffolds and reactive to constant assessment of children's needs during the lesson

RECORD KEEPING AND ASSESSMENT

Regular assessments are made of children's work in order to establish the level of attainment, and to inform future planning. Greater detail on summative record keeping and assessment procedures are defined in the Federation's Assessment and Feedback on Learning Policy.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Baseline and Profile is completed in the Reception classes. This is recorded and analysed to inform future planning and provision. Records are up-dated at least termly. Termly assessments are also used to form the basis for a pupil progress meeting each term between a member of the Senior Leadership Team and class teachers.

In Key Stage 1 children are assessed every 6 weeks in reading and phonics and every term in writing and maths. In Key Stage 2 children are assessed every term in reading, writing and maths. Results are also used to form the basis for subsequent planning and a termly pupil progress meeting between a member of the Senior Leadership Team and class teachers. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 ongoing assessments are made throughout the year in all subjects and assessments recorded against subject end points. Subject assessments are passed to subject leaders and the next class.

Year 1 children undertake the statutory phonics check, Year 2 children are tested in Maths, English and science using the Key Stage 1 Statutory Assessment Tests and Tasks, Year 4 complete the Multiplication Tables Check and Year 6 children are tested using Key Stage 2 Statutory Assessments.

All results from assessments will be analysed and used to inform future planning.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A monitoring and evaluation schedule is planned each year in line with the Improvement Plan and a three year cycle for foundation subjects. This plan is made available to all staff.

In each term there will be a learning review week during which monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is a focus. In addition, foundation subject leaders monitor provision for their subject each term. The Senior Leadership Team and subject leaders will carry out a wide range of monitoring activities (work trawls, interviews with children, staff surveys and interviews, planning review, lesson visits, display and learning environment, tracking data and assessment records). Outcomes from the monitoring will be shared with relevant staff and governors.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governors' Role

It is the governors' role to monitor and review the policy:

- To receive reports from the head teacher and subject leaders
- To promote and ensure at all times diversity in relation to race, gender, class and belief
- To promote and ensure at all times the practice of giving value and respect for all cultures and faiths

Parents' Role

Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning by trying to:

- See that their child goes to school regularly, on time and properly equipped.
- Make the school aware of any concerns or problems that might affect their child's work or behaviour.
- Support the school rules.
- Support their child's homework and learning using the information provided through the weekly information sheets and learning targets
- Attend parents' evenings and discussions about their child's progress.
- Encourage their children to come into school independently and remember their equipment for themselves.

Children's Role

Children are asked to try to:

- Remember everything they need for school each day.
- Try their best with all their school work.
- Be polite and helpful to others

- Keep the school tidy
- Remember our rules and school values.

Community Role

The community is invited to support the school by:

- Contributing to activities, such as assemblies, artistic events, specialist outings and clubs
- Presenting themselves as positive role models to be emulated
- Guiding children's behaviour as they play around the school and providing positive role models with regard to behaviour
- Support school events

The School's Role

In relation to each of the above areas both schools will reciprocate by trying to:

- Care for each child's safety and happiness.
- Ensure that every child achieves his/her full potential as a valued member of the school.
- Provide a balanced curriculum and meet the individual needs of the child.
- Achieve high standards of work and behaviour through building good relationships and developing a sense of responsibility.
- Provide engaging, well planned and factually accurate learning opportunities.
- Keep parents informed of general school matters, learning targets and weekly curriculum coverage.
- Be open and welcoming at all times and offer opportunities for parents to become involved in the daily life of the school.
- Promote a respect for each child, irrespective of cultural background and challenge sexism and racism wherever it occurs.
- Inform parents regularly about what we will aim to teach the children and about their child's progress.

FURTHER READING

(all books available in the school professional library)

Principles of Instruction by Barak Rosenshine 2012

Rosenshine's Principles in Action by Tom Sherrington 2019

Making Every Primary Lesson Count by Jo Payne and Mel Scott 2017

Retrieval Practice Resource Guide and Retrieval Practice 2 by Kate Jones 2021

What Every Teacher Needs To Know About Psychology by David Didau 2016

What Every Teacher Needs to Know by Jade Pearce 2022