



TEACHING AND LEARNING
POLICY

MAY 2021

Contents

	Page
> 1. Aims	3
> 2. Principles of teaching and learning	4
> 3. Teaching and learning – maximising impact	5
> 4. Curriculum	6
> 5. Curriculum and learning at Merrywood Education	7
> 6. Learning and learning styles	8
> 7. Learning – children learn best when	9
> 8. Learning environment	10
> 9. Teaching	11
> 10. Therapy	12
> 11. Assessment, recording and reporting	13
> 12. Target setting	14
> 13. Recording	15
> 14. Reporting	16
> 15. Visitors and trips	17
> 16. Parents and children	18
> 17. Continual professional development	19
> 18. Monitoring and evaluation	20

> 1. Aims

At Merrywood Education we are committed to high quality teaching and learning to raise standards of achievement for all children. Children with social, emotional and mental health needs must be given every opportunity to achieve their full potential academically and the quality of teaching and learning is crucial in supporting this.

> 2. Principles of Teaching and Learning

We are committed to our mission 'to educate children within a home-like environment where children with social, emotional and mental health needs will flourish'. In the course of their daily work, the staff will contribute to the development of this ethos through:

1. providing a supportive, positive, healthy, caring and safe environment, which has high expectations and values all members of the school community;
2. recognising the needs and aspirations of all individuals and provide opportunities for all children to make the best possible progress and attain the highest personal achievements;
3. providing a nurturing space for children to grow educationally, emotionally, morally and socially
4. ensuring children can develop as literate, numerate and technologically competent individuals, within a broad, balanced, exciting and challenging curriculum;
5. providing a curriculum which promotes spiritual, moral, social, cultural, physical, mental and emotional development
6. encouraging all children to be enthusiastic and committed learners, promoting their self-esteem, self-worth and emotional well-being;
7. developing children's confidence and capacity to learn and work independently and collaboratively;
8. prepare children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life;

> 3. Teaching and Learning - Maximising Impact

In order to maximise learning, three key areas need to be in place and effective: the curriculum and planning, the quality of teaching and the behaviour and attitudes of our children.

> 4. Curriculum

Children often arrive at Merrywood with a history of disrupted schooling. The school seeks to re-establish the concept of learning as a positive and enjoyable experience and ensure each child reaches their true potential. The Curriculum provided is broad based to ensure that each child takes part in the full National Curriculum, which is differentiated to meet individual needs. We aim to introduce children to a wide range of knowledge, skills and experiences. The Curriculum emphasises the need to acquire basic skills in literacy, numeracy and science and other core subjects and schemes of work are carefully planned to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum at a level appropriate to the children's ability

Core Subjects:

English, Maths, Science, PSHE (Includes Life Skills), Computing.

None Core:

P.E., Design and Technology.

History, Geography, Music, Art and Design and R.E.

Non-core subjects are allocated less time than the core and focus on depth of study rather subject coverage and will relate to the local environment where possible. Links between the subjects are identified, but it is important that children have some experience of the discreet subjects that they will meet after transferring to high school.

Some subjects have links to a range of NC subjects – e.g. PSHE – English, Science, Citizenship, R.E. Languages, P.E. History, Geography, DT, Forest School learning – Science, Maths, P.E., DT, Art,

> 5. Curriculum and Learning at Merrywood Education

All children joining the school will have an EHC plan identifying specific special needs and staff will review the records available in preparation. On entry, children are assessed in Reading, Writing and Maths and provided with an individual learning plan matched to their needs and delivered through intensive one to one teaching. Many children may have gaps in their learning due to irregular schooling and with intensive support will be able to catch up quickly so that they can perform at the age-related expectations for KS2. Those children who despite a period of intensive support, are not able to access the KS1 or KS2 curriculum, will be provided with a learning programme that meets their needs (the 'Equals' programme that provides curriculum opportunities for children working at P Standards 1 to 6).

Work is carefully differentiated in order to meet the individual needs of children and regular assessment ensures continuity and progression. Each child has individually tailored positive expectations for achievement. This ensures they are challenged appropriately and experience success frequently.

> 6. Learning and Learning Styles

The curriculum is designed to promote learning styles which reflect a practical and hands on approach which will support children's self-confidence, resilience, independence and personal emotional and social development. These include:

- Role play
- Problem solving
- Working individually, in pairs and in groups
- Learning through real life situations
- Practical activities
- Experimenting
- Creative thinking
- Repetition
- Visual/auditory learning
- Research
- Links to the local environment
- Use of ICT/digital resources as an integral aspect of everyday life.
- Projects/investigations
- Hot seating
- Physical activities
- Talking, discussing and asking questions
- Independent learning

Learning styles are personalised and customised to meet each individual's needs and all staff are involved in this process, ensuring that priority targets (e.g. communication, independence, sensory) are built in to planned activities

> 7. Learning – Children learn best when

- they are happy, healthy and alert – receptive and positive
- they are interested and involved – learning is relevant and stimulating
- the purpose of a task is understood – they understand why they are doing it
- they feel secure – in terms of environment, relationships and learning
- they feel valued – teachers and other adults care about their development as learners
- they have opportunities to explore and take risks
- they are actively involved, making choices and taking responsibility in their learning
- they have an element of control and can work with independence
- they receive positive feedback and praise for achievements
- their learning environment is well-organised, and resources are easily accessed
- their tasks are differentiated, matched to the child
- their learning is built on existing knowledge and experience – clearly defined small steps
- they have opportunities to talk about their work, reflecting, discussing and sharing ideas
- they have clearly defined targets which they can successfully achieve in a set time

> 8. Learning Environment

All areas of the learning environment will be planned for, including, where appropriate, the outside areas, in order to ensure opportunities for a range of practical activities, which will develop appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding. The school grounds are extensive, attractive and include a pond area and so provide a superb resource for teaching and learning in the school. Classrooms will be well resourced, provide a stimulating and purposeful learning environment, including thought provoking and stimulating displays and will be organised to facilitate learning and the development of independence.

In addition:

- resources will be easily accessible from a central area
- book corners will be comfortable and attractive;
- labels and posters should be used wherever possible/appropriate to reflect the language diversity in the school;
- areas for therapy and play/time out will be suitably resourced and familiar and available to children
- children will be involved in the maintenance and care of all equipment and resources.

Excellence is celebrated in display and performance. Each child is given an opportunity to have work displayed. Children are encouraged to believe that any exhibited work (performance or display) should represent their highest standards of personal achievement. Awards are given regularly to celebrate individual achievements behaviourally, socially and academically.

> 9. Teaching

Teachers will need to be creative, flexible and patient in their approach to teaching, using a range of strategies matched to individual needs. This will be facilitated by small teaching groups (typically 4) and teaching assistant support. Strategies will typically include discussion and questioning (open and closed as appropriate), positive reinforcement and praise, brainstorming, repetition/reinforcement, modelling, role play, hot seating, pausing for reflection and response. Successful teaching takes account of children's prior learning and must ensure continuity and progression. Successful teaching by teachers and Tas demonstrates:

- confidence – staff have a clear understanding of subject knowledge and setting objectives
- empathy – staff know individual children's emotional, social and behavioural needs and tailor their approach accordingly
- have good subject knowledge, enthusiasm and passion
- high expectations – there is optimism about, and high expectation of success
- effective planning – there is differentiation with methods and organisation strategies which match curricular objectives and needs of all children
- an interactive approach – children's contributions are encouraged, expected and extended
- high quality oral work
- good pace – there is a sense of urgency, driven by the need to make progress and succeed
- processes for feedback – through responses and assessment outcomes
- established a positive learning environment;
- focused all feedback on specific performance improvements which can be acted on;
- shared an overview of content, process and benefits of the learning to come;
- engaged learners by posing problems and challenging thinking;
- provided opportunities for learners to meet the challenge in a variety of pairings and with multiple ways of representing their understanding;
- created space for reflection and meaningful dialogue;
- reviewed what has been learned, how it was learned and how it will be used.

> 10. Therapy

Children will be offered a vast range of interventions both informal and formal therapy. Nurture is a given to all children and children are encouraged to work through any suppressed trauma, mental health crisis points and any other barriers that affect them from feeling happy, fulfilled and able to access the curriculum.

Some of the therapeutic interventions below:

- Wilderness therapy
- Pet therapy
- Forest school
- Psychotherapist
- Lego therapy
- Play therapy
- Music therapy
- Drama
- Walks and hikes in the local area
- Yoga
- Mindfulness
- Social eating times
- Off-site activities

We assess our children's emotional wellbeing on a daily basis, through an emotional check in system that we use. This enables children to identify how they are feeling and why, it also helps children to prepare for learning and set some targets for their lessons ahead.

In addition to the above we assess children using the Boxall questionnaire and behaviour analysis.

> 11. Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The school has a team approach: teachers, trusted adults, therapists, and other professionals are all involved in monitoring children progress using individual education and behaviour plans. Ongoing formative assessment is used to guide the progress of individual child through each lesson by identifying what each child has learned, supporting them to correct and improve and identifying the next stage in their learning.

Half termly teacher assessments are made in Reading, Writing, Maths and Science in order to establish the level of attainment and to inform future planning. Assessments are made at the end of each topic in the other subjects. Bsquared is used on an ongoing basis to record teacher judgements. Judgements are based on a number of sources including:

- Individual questioning, answers and discussions
- feedback through checking of written work and marking
- group discussions
- observations
- short rests and quizzes
- specific assignments for individual children;
- self and peer assessment

Formal summative assessments are carried out at the end of KS2 using SATs and teacher assessments. Standardised tests and reading tests are used to assess children termly to track progress. Children are assessed against P standards where appropriate (Working below KS1 expectations)

All results from assessments are analysed and used to inform future planning. (See Assessment Policy)

> 12. Target Setting

Based on formative, summative and regular teacher assessments, teachers set individual targets for IEPs. These are normally 3 or 4 in number and will include those for both behavioural & social and curriculum subjects (Maths and English). Targets are detailed, specific and time related. Targets should be shared with the child and parents to encourage partnerships in learning.

> 13. Recording

Records of progress kept for each child are updated continually using IEPs and supplementary information. Records will form the basis of written reports to parents at the end of each academic year. Records are retained throughout the child's time at the school and appropriate records passed on to other schools when children leave.

> 14. Reporting

Written reports are provided for parents at the end of each academic year. Parents are invited to attend their child's annual review as part of their EHCP once a year and this meeting can be extended and used to discuss their child's overall progress at the school. Interim reviews are held once a term or when necessary. As classes are small, teachers are in regular contact with parents during the year and updates can be given and plans adjusted during these times.

> 15. Visitors and Trips

The use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum is important as a means of enhancing teaching and learning. These occur throughout the school to widen children's experiences and support learning across a range of subject areas.

> 16. Parents and Children

Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning by:

- ensuring that their child arrives at school regularly and brings the necessary equipment;
- providing support for their child in consultation with school staff
- supporting their child with and work at home
- participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainment;
- ensuring early contact with school to discuss and issues that may arise

Children are encouraged to support the school's aims by:

- attending school regularly and punctually;
- coming to school with a positive attitude and a desire to learn
- conducting themselves thoughtfully and communicating any worries or concerns
- taking increased responsibility for their own learning.

> 17. Continual Professional Development

Merrywood is a small school and all staff work together collaboratively to develop policies and improve schemes of work, assessment processes, teaching and learning and resources. All staff support each other as part of continuing professional development in order to enhance the provision for children. A behaviour management programme is in place and is continually reviewed and staff training in the management of children with emotional and social needs is ongoing. Peer observations, performance management and formal monitoring are used to develop individual staff professional development plans. Senior staff coordinate CPD programmes and report in general terms about CPD requirements to the Advisory Board (See CPD Policy)

> 18. Monitoring and Evaluation

Formal monitoring by senior staff will take place at least once a term. This will involve classroom observations, book looks, child interviews/discussions and scrutiny of planning all in a range of subjects. It will also include therapy sessions. Children progress meetings will be held termly by senior staff with class teachers and TAs. The results of monitoring will be evaluated and used to inform improvements in teaching and learning within the school. A report of the findings and actions planned/taken will be presented to the Advisory Board (See Monitoring and Evaluation Policy).

Date: May 2021

Date of review: May 2022



The Old Pheasantry, Merrywood Grove, Tadworth KT20 7HF

01737 336352

admissions@merrywood.org.uk

merrywood.org.uk