SHERBORNE PREP

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy

Approving body: Education Committee
Owner: Senior Deputy Head Academic
Author: Senior Deputy Head Academic

Executive Summary

This policy outlines the school's framework for delivering education from Nursery to Year 8. It sets principles and aims to foster a stimulating, rigorous curriculum that promotes intellectual curiosity, core skills development, and partnership with parents. This policy is reviewed annually.

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Rationale

The policy serves as the overarching framework that represents the why, what, how and when of teaching and learning at Sherborne Prep.

This policy establishes principles against which other policies and procedures can be developed so that they are consistent across the whole school, from EYFS to Year 8.

This policy sets out the school's approach to curriculum design and delivery in line with the Independent School Standards Regulations (ISSR, Part 1) and EYFS Framework, ensuring continuity and progression from Nursery to Year 8.

Aims

At Sherborne Prep, we want children to enjoy learning, work with purpose and discover what excites them. We encourage curiosity, initiative and a genuine love of finding things out.

We support every child in developing their talents and shaping their own sense of self, while staying grounded and true to who they are. These are important years, and the habits formed here last a lifetime.

Children are encouraged to grow in social and cultural awareness, to understand their place within our community and the wider world, and to recognise the responsibilities that come with it.

We work in close partnership with parents, building trust and understanding so that, together, we can support each child at every stage of their journey.

Above all, we want our pupils to see education not as an end point, but as a beginning. A foundation for lifelong learning, curiosity and achievement.

10 Key Principles of our Approach

1. We help all of our pupils to achieve their full potential.
2. We provide opportunities for active, stimulating, investigative learning.
3. We believe in the importance of securing a firm foundation of knowledge across subjects, to ensure successful progression.
4. We believe that developing core learning skills has equal importance to the acquisition of knowledge and that this will better prepare our pupils for their future lives.
5. We maximise opportunities to explore the interdisciplinary interaction between subjects.
6. We feel that it is important to provide parents with an understanding of progress through regular assessments and meetings.
7. We use data to inform our planning.
8. Our curriculum reflects the collective wisdom of our qualified staff, regarding content and how children learn.
9. Teachers are able to enjoy and maximise professional freedom.
10. We encourage collaboration and communication across all areas of school life: between staff, between pupils, with pupils and with parents.

Curriculum

Our school curriculum is informed by our vision and ethos. The children at Sherborne Prep have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which provides continuity and progression and takes their individual differences into account.

Curriculum planning is informed by national guidance and best practice, ensuring that all pupils acquire skills and knowledge suitable for their ages, aptitudes and abilities. The school promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance.

The school implements the early learning goals, educational programmes and assessment arrangements of the EYFS.

Our curriculum takes account of the importance of academic, creative, social responsibility/citizenship, health/wellbeing and physical development. Experiences are offered in linguistic, aesthetic, literary, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social areas.

Our curriculum is designed to foster links, helping pupils to make connections between subjects and transfer learning.

Teaching

Teaching at Sherborne Prep promotes intellectual curiosity and a spirit of enquiry.

Staff select the best teaching methods from a range of innovative and established practices to enable all children to acquire new knowledge and develop skills, based on what they already know and to make progress according to their ability. Learning differences are taken into account, as well as social and/or emotional factors which may affect a child's learning.

Staff are asked to avoid the overuse of any of the following:

- 'Chalk and talk' or prolonged 'monologue'
- Asking children to copy lengthy information from a board or book
- Photocopied sheets
- Online videos
- Textbooks

Lesson content is distilled from the Schemes of Work contained in departmental documentation held on SharePoint. This sets out what is to be taught but also provides plenty of scope for spontaneity, whilst offering progression, support and challenge.

Lesson observations, learning walks and peer reviews are used to monitor and support high-quality teaching across departments and key stages.

Learning

We recognise the need to provide opportunities for all children to learn in ways that best suit them. These include, but are not limited to:

- investigation and problem solving
- cross curricular tasks
- individual assignments
- group, paired, independent and whole-class work
- the use and integration of technology
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest
- creative activities
- debates, role-play and oral presentations
- participation in athletic or physical activity
- use of a range of ways of recording information – graphic organisers, mind maps, charts, extended writing, presentations, images etc.

Pupil voice and feedback are used to inform teaching approaches and curriculum design.

Core Skills

At Sherborne Prep we have adopted an assessment model that has, at its heart, the development of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required for children to succeed and

flourish in an ever-changing world. Our four core skills are collaboration, communication, critical thinking and creativity. Developing these skills in pupils throughout the school is a key component of their education at Sherborne Prep.

Year 8 Extended Project (SPQ)

A key part of the skills programme is an independent project undertaken by pupils in Year 8. Children are supported through the process by an assigned mentor and their research can be presented in a variety of formats. These projects have been highly praised and valued by senior schools as it develops independence, critical thinking and self-regulated learning.

Careers Guidance

Through Personal Development lessons and the wider curriculum, children are encouraged to think beyond their life at school and are given guidance and advice on how to conduct themselves to be positive and productive citizens. From Reception, children begin learning about different jobs, and by Year 5, they start exploring the steps needed to pursue particular career paths. In Key Stage 3, the focus shifts to preparation for senior school and future opportunities. Lessons, workshops and talks by key visitors encourage children to consider their futures and the pathways they may follow in their future to fulfil their potential. (See *Careers Policy*)

Learning Support Provision

The policy of the Learning Support Department is closely aligned to the *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (SEND)*. All staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with the documents shared by the Head of Learning Support, including Educational Psychologist report summaries, Pupil Profiles, and ensuring they follow guidelines and recommendations. All teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all the pupils in their class. High-quality teaching is our first step in responding to pupils who have SEND.

When a concern about a child arises, the member of staff refers them to the Head of Learning Support by completing a referral form. The Head of Learning Support will then carry out the arrangements as specified in the Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy. This typically involves gathering relevant information about the pupil – analysis of data, looking through books, reading of reports, meeting with teachers and parents. Further steps may be taken to assess specific strengths and challenges.

Provision and differentiation are applied for those with English as a second language.

Provision is also given to children who are considered to be able, gifted and talented. Stretch, challenge and enrichment is provided within lessons and part of our extra-curricular offer.

Further details can be found in the Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy, our EAL policy and the Able, Gifted and Talented Policy.

All teachers receive regular CPD on inclusive teaching strategies and differentiation to meet the needs of SEND, EAL and Able, Gifted & Talented pupils.

Medium Term Planning

Schemes of Work are completed by the relevant academic staff and the Heads of Department ensure that these are available on SharePoint at the start of each academic year, in conjunction with key relevant teaching resources. These are working documents which are updated regularly.

Prep

Pupils are set prep tasks at appropriate points across the week to consolidate and extend their classroom learning. These tasks are purposeful, manageable, and varied, encouraging independence and good study habits. Teachers ensure prep is balanced with pupils' wider commitments and wellbeing.

Prep is designed to consolidate and extend classroom learning while fostering independence, self-discipline, and a sense of responsibility. The frequency and duration of prep vary by year group and subject, increasing gradually as pupils move through the school. Tasks are purposeful, appropriately challenging, and balanced to support both progress and pupil wellbeing.

Guidelines for Academic Staff on the setting of Prep

- Pupils should be able to complete prep independently.
- All prep should be differentiated appropriately.
- Prep is an opportunity for pupils to practise learned skills providing revision and repetition
- Prep will be set on specified days, according to the timetable shared by the Senior Deputy Head. Teachers are asked to adhere to this timetable, to ensure children do not feel overloaded.
- Each subject prep should take approximately 20 minutes of focused work. For pupils in Years 6–8, some teachers may prefer to set one 40-minute prep instead of two 20-minute tasks where appropriate. In such cases, pupils should be reminded to manage their time responsibly across the week. During specific "Independent Project" weeks in Year 7, prep time may be allocated entirely to project work.
- Total prep time per evening should not normally exceed 60 minutes for Years 7–8 and 40 minutes for Years 5–6. Teachers are expected to liaise with colleagues to ensure pupils are not overloaded.
- For pupils in Years 7 & 8, prep will be set on Microsoft Teams to enable each child to take responsibility and ownership of scheduled preps and timelines.
- For pupils in Years 3 – 5, prep will be written on the classroom board or reminded by the teacher during form-time. For pupils in Year 6, prep may be written on the classroom board or staff should ensure that all pupils have written down their prep correctly in their prep diaries.
- Ensure that children who missed the lesson due to LS, EAL, Music or Speech and Drama lessons have a copy or a note of the prep set.
- When set prep is completed, pupils in all year groups are expected to read, learn tables, spellings and review vocabulary (where relevant).
- Pupils missing prep due to commitments may be expected to make up the time through an agreed extension arrangement. Individual circumstances and pressure must always be taken into account.
- Problems with the completion of preps should be referred to the pupil's form teacher and registered on CPOMS.

Guidelines for Y6-8 Form Teachers for supporting with Prep

- Display the prep timetable in classrooms.
- Regularly check that each child has noted down the preps expected each day in their prep diary or can locate it in Teams.

- Regularly check to ensure that pupils are keeping on top of their preps and assist with organisation where necessary. Remind pupils to "turn in" their preps on Teams, where relevant.
- Keep a record of those pupils experiencing problems with the completion of prep, and those who are floundering on a regular basis. Concerns are raised using CPOMS; this alerts the form tutor and Senior Deputy Head (Academic).

Feedback Policy

Background

Effective feedback supports pupil progress, builds learning, addresses misunderstandings, and closes the gap between a pupil's current level and the teacher's expectations. It is a fundamental component of continuous assessment.

Feedback, Not Marking

The DfE report *Eliminating Unnecessary Workload around Marking* (2016) stated that written feedback has become disproportionately valued, creating an unsustainable workload for teachers. Over-reliance on written marking can detract from time spent planning effective lessons tailored to pupils' needs.

At Sherborne Prep, feedback aims to ensure the best outcomes for pupils by adhering to two key principles:

1. **Encouraging pupil reflection**: Pupils are encouraged to review and improve their own learning. Promoting independence and deeper understanding requires pupils to think for themselves rather than relying on teachers to correct every mistake.
2. **Effective use of teacher time**: Research shows detailed marking of every piece of work is not necessary or effective. By reducing excessive marking, teachers can focus on planning high-quality lessons that meet pupils' individual needs.

Principles of Feedback for written or digital work

- Verbal or written feedback should be timely, regular, and specific.
- Written feedback should be selective, focused and actionable, highlighting one or two key improvement points rather than correcting every error.
- Where possible, teachers should use verbal feedback to promote immediacy and dialogue.
- Pupils are encouraged to:
    - Review the quality of their work
    - Reflect on their understanding of lesson objectives
    - Engage in self-assessment activities
- Across all subjects, high expectations for spelling, punctuation, grammar, and presentation are promoted according to individual ability.

Purpose of Teacher Feedback

- To recognise effort and to motivate and encourage pupils
- To gauge achievement against criteria and monitor progress
- To move learning forward by providing constructive formative feedback, specific guidance and direction
- To assess outcomes to inform teaching and lesson planning
- To advise pupils on how to improve and inform target-setting

- To encourage pupils to reflect on their own performance
- To highlight the need for intervention (challenge or support)
- To inform parents and report writing

Nature and types of Feedback:

- Regular, specific, meaningful and manageable
- Responsive, live feedback acted upon in the moment
- Timely, detailed, and appropriate to the task and pupil's needs
- Self, paired, or class marking with scaffolding
- Pupil review and improvement before handing in.
- Inclusion of extension or support tasks and model answers
- Whole-class feedback
- Reflection time (e.g. **PPP** – Purple Pen of Progress)

Presentation of Written Work

- Underline long date for English and Humanities subjects
- Underline short date for STEM subjects
- Underline title
- Underline with a ruler
- Blue ink or pencil for writing
- Correction fluid is not to be used
- Draw diagrams in pencil only
- Pencil only for maths

Marking Code for Written Work

All marking should be completed in green pen.

Teachers may choose to use some of the symbols set out below:

?	This doesn't make sense and might need rewording
^	One or 2 words have been missed out
*****	A phrase has been missed out and has been written at the end of the passage
P (in a circle)	Punctuation mistake – identified and in some cases, corrected
O	Ongoing or repeated errors have been circled
//	New paragraph
WWW: **EBI:**	Teachers may provide formative feedback under these headings. (WWW: what went well) (EBI: even better if) The stamp may be used where appropriate.
VF	Verbal feedback
PPP	Purple Pen of Progress – pupil should review and improve their work in purple
HP	House points can be awarded for excellent work and/or aligned to one of the 4 core skills.

Teachers may also use the 5Es grades in their marking to indicate a child's performance level:

Attainment	Core Skills	Effort
Exceptional - A full grasp of new concepts and recent topics; always applies knowledge and skills independently to a range of situations with creativity, adaptability and flair; working well above the year-specific expected level	**Exceptional** - Adapts communication skilfully for different audiences and leads discussion with precision; is an outstanding collaborator who draws on everyone's strengths; thinks independently and perseveres with tenacity; shows originality and makes creative connections that enrich others' learning.	**Exceptional** – Always demonstrates exceptional effort, behaviour and engagement in class; participates eagerly in all activities and is always willing to complete a task to the best of their ability.
Exceeding - Confident understanding of new concepts and recent topics; can apply knowledge and skills consistently and mostly independently; can transfer skills to other areas with growing creativity.	**Exceeding** –Communicates ideas with confidence and listens attentively to others; collaborates effectively with a wide range of peers; reflects deeply on their work, actively seeks feedback and acts on it; approaches challenge with an open mind and experiments enthusiastically with new approaches.	**Exceeding** – Usually exceeds the expectations of effort, behaviour and engagement in class and with preps; usually participates eagerly in activities and works hard when completing a task.
Expected - Sound understanding of new concepts and recent topics; almost always applies knowledge and skills independently. Has reached the level we expect from our pupils at Sherborne Prep in this subject, at this age range.	**Expected** – Contributes to discussions and communicates with growing clarity; collaborates well and is gaining confidence with a wider range of peers; reviews their work and acts on feedback; is developing their ability to make connections and try different approaches.	**Expected** – Effort, behaviour and engagement in class and with preps is good, but does not exceed expectations; they often work hard to complete a task although there is room for greater commitment.
Evolving - Knowledge, concepts and/or skills have started to be grasped and used with some independence. There is a requirement for support and scaffolding at times to reach the expected level.	**Evolving** –Shows willingness to contribute but often needs prompting to engage with confidence; can collaborate but may rely on others rather than contributing fully; is beginning to reflect on their work but needs guidance to act on feedback and to develop ideas.	**Evolving** – Effort, behaviour and engagement in class and with preps is satisfactory, but can fall a little short of what is expected at Sherborne Prep; they do what is required, but could show a greater commitment to learning
Emerging - Knowledge, concepts and skills have yet to be understood fully and support is required to complete the tasks set. Your child is being well-supported to make progress towards the next level in this subject.	**Emerging** - Rarely contributes without significant support and communicates with little confidence or clarity; struggles to collaborate and can disengage when learning becomes challenging; seldom reflects independently on their work and rarely attempts new approaches.	**Emerging** – Effort, behaviour and engagement is class and with preps is unsatisfactory; they need to make better use of the opportunity to learn, in order to reflect their true ability

Assessment at Sherborne Prep includes both formative and summative elements. Summative assessments take place at least termly, providing data that informs departmental planning, interventions and whole-school tracking. The Senior Deputy Head (Academic) reviews assessment outcomes and tracks progress using the whole-school assessment system. Heads of Department analyse pupil data at least once per term to identify trends and support interventions.

Marking in Pre-Prep

Rationale

Improving learning through assessment is aided by the provision of effective feedback to pupils who need to be able to assess themselves and understand how to improve. The marking of pupils' work is therefore an important part of teacher assessment. This policy sets out how staff intends to ensure that marking in the Pre-Prep is an integral part of our assessment procedures.

Marking will be used to inform planning and therefore will be a continuous assessment. The marking will adhere to the Marking Policy.

Marking Procedures:

- Green ink pen used
- As far as possible, marking will be done daily or when a piece of work is completed
- Teachers will use feedback from marking to inform future targets and planning
- Wherever possible, marking will be related to a clear learning objective, which has been shared with the children
- Good presentation is expected and may be marked
- Marking will celebrate success whenever possible in order to raise self-esteem and encourage all children to work to their full potential
- Appropriate comments or prompt questions will be written in language that the child understands (this may assume having comments read to them for non-readers)
- A particularly successful piece of work may be awarded with a star or stickers in line with the school's system of rewards
- Every effort will be made to allow children time to reflect on marking and edit/improve their work
- Work discussed with the children by a staff member has a verbal feedback stamp on it

Pre-Prep Assessment

Nursery Teachers start the Early Years Foundation Stage Profiles and at the end of the school year hand on to the Reception Teacher.

All Reception children take a baseline assessment (Quest) at the start of the academic year. The Reception Teacher subsequently completes the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, submitting the results to Dorset County Council and passing this information on to the Year 1 teacher.

Year 1 and Year 2 children complete the Quest Maths and Quest English assessments at both the start and end of the academic year, each generating a standardised score. In addition, pupils undertake the Quest Spelling and Quest Reading assessments at the same two points in the year, from which a spelling age and reading age are derived. All results are recorded on our whole-school tracking document.

Staff Meetings

Regular Monday evening staff meetings are a forum for discussion regarding topical issues, such as assessment of learning, development of skills, character virtues, the curriculum, progression, standards and links across the school. Heads of Department meetings occur fortnightly. Subject specific departmental meetings happen on an ad hoc basis, according to need.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Senior Deputy Head (Academic) monitors the implementation of this policy through lesson observations, work scrutiny, assessment data analysis and pupil feedback. Findings are shared with the Head and Governors to inform strategic planning. The policy is reviewed annually to ensure alignment with best practice, current research, and regulatory requirements.

Sherborne Prep is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils, regardless of gender, race, disability, religion, belief or background, in accordance with the *Equality Act 2010* and to promoting an inclusive environment where every pupil can thrive.

Appendix 1: Summary of Changes in Issue 2

- Core Skills reduced from six to four.
- Updated throughout to reflect the change from Trackit to CPOMS including award of House Points rather than Trackit Points in marking.
- Pre-Prep assessment updated to reflect introduction of Quest.
- Approval Body changed to Education Committee

Issue 2.1

- Approved by the Education Committee with no further amendments.