



The
Golden Thread
Alliance

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

Approved by:

Curriculum and
Standards Committee

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Contents

1. Aims	4
2. Vision and Values	5
3. Trust Educational Priorities 2024.....	6
4. Roles and Responsibilities.....	7
4.1 Teachers.....	7
4.2 Support Staff	8
4.3 Phase and Subject Leaders.....	8
4.4 Senior Leaders	9
4.5 Pupils.....	9
4.6 Parents and Carers.....	10
4.7 Governors and Trustees	10
5. Planning	10
6. Learning Environment.....	11
7. Continuous Professional Development.....	12
8. Home Learning.....	12
9. Assessment, Marking and Feedback.....	12
10. Monitoring and Evaluation	13
11. Review.....	14
12. References and Links to other Trust Policies	14

1. Aims

The Golden Thread Alliance is committed to ensuring that every child in each of the Trust's schools receives the best possible education that can be provided; that all pupils achieve their potential and gain the skills and knowledge necessary for their age and stage of education.

The Trust believes that consistently high-quality teaching and learning are key to achieving that aim; that regular formative and summative assessment should be used as a crucial element for tracking progress, planning next steps in children's learning and providing regular feedback to pupils and parents. This policy reflects the high expectations placed upon all staff and children across our schools.

This policy aims to:

Ensure that high-quality learning takes place in every lesson resulting in a high standard of pupil achievement.

Explain how an environment where children learn effectively is created and where pupils are motivated to succeed and enjoy their learning.

Promote high expectations and raise standards of achievement for all pupils

Ensure that every classroom in each of our schools is free from distraction and disruption, and is led by the highest quality practitioner who:

- Has deep subject knowledge
- Has expertise in how pupils learn
- Understands how to adapt pedagogy effectively
- Utilises effectively evidence and research to maximise learning impact
- Meets the needs of all children

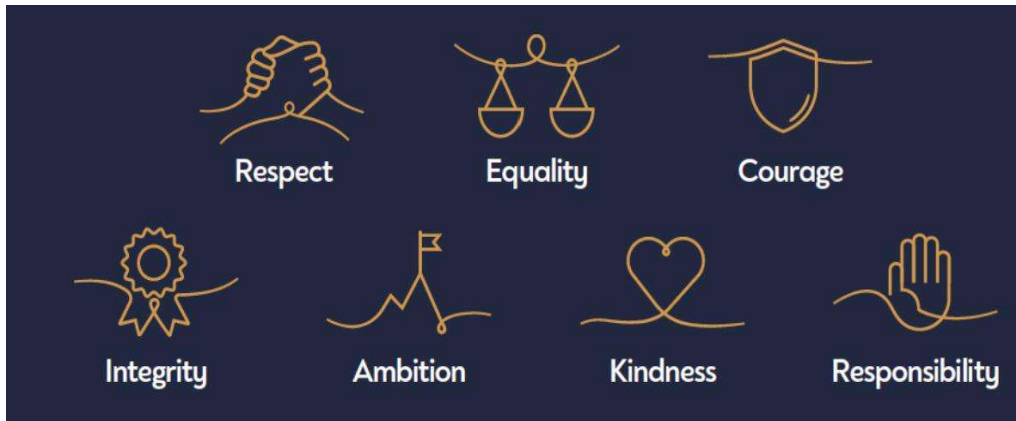
Involve pupils, parents, carers and the wider school community in pupils' learning and development.

Promote and ensure consistency across the Trust and embed good practice.

Provide an agreed focus for the monitoring of good learning and classroom practice.

Provide new staff with a clear view of the Trust's expectations.

2. Vision and Values



Respect	We respect everyone, no matter who they are or where they come from
Equality	We value each person, celebrate our differences and give everyone all that they need to thrive
Courage	We keep trying, even when things are hard
Integrity	We are always honest with others and ourselves
Ambition	We set high expectations and work hard to meet them
Kindness	We look after those around us
Responsibility	We share credit when things go well and take ownership when times are tough

The Trust’s vision for Teaching and Learning is to provide the highest quality of primary education to provide a firm foundation for the future and thereby enhance the life chances and life choices for all our children through the delivery of high-quality lessons rich in knowledge and skills delivered in inclusive classroom environments.

“High-quality teaching and learning are the most important factors in improving attainment outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged pupils”

Education Endowment Foundation [2022]

Our values of Respect, Equality, Courage, Integrity, Ambition, Kindness and Responsibility underpin everything we do.

Research demonstrates that the quality of Teaching and Learning is the largest determining factor in pupil achievement¹. Academic attainment, pupil progress and social enhancement are the keys our children need to lead fulfilling and enriching lives. At the heart of this policy are our children and their futures. Our approach is informed by the best available evidence, using research outcomes to select strategies that are most likely to improve children’s progress and attainment. Our teachers adapt their lessons to be inclusive by design. Pupil needs drive inclusivity.

Our children are entitled to excellent, memorable learning experiences through well-planned, well-taught lessons. We treat teachers and support staff as consummate professionals and expect them to strive to achieve and maintain this through continuous professional development²

¹ Major, L.E. & Higgins, S. [2019] What Works? [Bloomsbury].

² See the Golden Thread Professional Development Offer and Framework

Teachers at all levels must meet the Teachers' Standards.³ Where the quality of teaching does not meet those standards, the Trust will use a combination of support and challenge to improve practice for the benefit of our children.

3. Trust Educational Priorities 2024

"All our children, regardless of background or need, will achieve highly and will have high levels of well-being. They will be well prepared for their next steps and go on to lead happy, purposeful, rewarding lives, making a positive contribution to the world as global citizens"⁴

Pupil Outcomes

Attendance

- The Trust average attendance rate will be 1% higher than the national average or better, with no single school having attendance less than 95%
- Persistent absence in all schools is less than the national average with the gap between all children and those deemed disadvantaged narrowed to less than 3%

Standards

Schools within the Golden Thread Alliance achieve or exceed the national average with **no discernible gap between disadvantaged and other children:**

- Overall, in the Trust EYFS Good Level of Development [GLD]
- Overall, in the expected progress from the baseline assessment in Reception in Reading, Writing and Maths to the end of KS2
- Individually in the Year 1 Phonics Screening Checks
- Individually in the Year 4 Multiplication Tables check for average score and full marks
- Individually at KS2 for the percentage of pupils reaching expected and greater depth in each of Reading, Writing and Maths and also in the overall combined score

Inclusion

- Children with SEND will receive a comprehensive and robust programme of support to ensure each individual achieves the best possible outcomes
- Children who are the highest achievers will be challenged, stretched and given time to develop the deepest understanding

Wider Curriculum

- Opportunities for developing wider skills, knowledge and interests that are not part of the formal curriculum will be actively encouraged for all pupils

The Golden Thread Alliance Educational Vision [2024]

³ Department for Education [2011 – Updated 2021] Teachers' Standards

⁴ See the Golden Thread Educational Vision & School Improvement Strategy [2023]

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Teaching and learning in our schools are shared responsibilities, and everyone in our Trust community has an important role to play. Fulfilling our vision, living our values and ensuring that key priorities are achieved involves every member of staff.

4.1 Teachers

Teachers at our Trust will:

Plan and develop individual and sequences of lessons adapted appropriately for the needs of all children in their class following the principles outlined in this policy.

Follow the expectations for teaching and professional conduct as set out in the [Teachers' Standards](#)

Assess individual children's progress in all lessons, across all subjects and their retention of knowledge, skills and understanding including using "low-stakes" testing and quizzes.

Actively engage parents and carers in their child's learning and ensure that:

- Useful feedback about their child's learning is given regularly both informally as and when appropriate and formally through parental consultations and written reports
- Parents and carers know how they can support their child's learning at home or in school
- They are approachable informally, and formally available to parents through email to the school office and, if required, by appointment
- Details about class trips, school events and other relevant information are communicated to parents and carers via emails, letters, text messages, planners or through the school's social media platforms
- Home visits are undertaken for any new pupils, where appropriate, and that these happen as close to the child's start date as possible
- Parents and carers are invited to view their child's work and take part in learning with them at appropriate times during the school year
- Children's home learning is valued and celebrated including tasks set by the teacher and those undertaken independently
- Parents, carers, children and school staff work in partnership to achieve the best outcomes for their children and raise standards
- Parents and family members are invited to volunteer around the school or Trust, on trips and events that may be organised

Update parents and carers on pupils' progress and produce an annual written report on their child's progress and attainment.

Meet the expectations set out in Trust and associated school policies:

- Actively participate in developmental CPD recognising that all staff in our Trust are learners and we can all improve our practice and pedagogy

4.2 Support Staff

Support staff will:

- Know pupils well and differentiate support to meet their individual learning needs
- Support teaching and learning with flexibility and resourcefulness
- Use agreed assessment for learning strategies
- Use effective marking and feedback as required
- Engage in providing inspiring lessons and learning opportunities
- Feedback observations of pupils to teachers
- Ask questions of children to make sure they've understood expectations for learning
- Identify and use resources to support learning
- Have high expectations and celebrate achievement
- Demonstrate and model themselves as learners
- Meet the expectations set out in Trust and associated school policies
- Will undertake additional training as required

4.3 Phase and Subject Leaders

Trust Phase and Subject Leaders will:

Help to create well-sequenced, broad and balanced curriculum plans that build knowledge and skills.

Sequence lessons in a way that allows pupils to make good progress from their starting points and build effectively on prior learning.

Drive improvement in their subject/phase, working with teachers to identify any challenges.

Allocate time for pupils to:

- Achieve breadth and depth
- Fully understand the topic
- Demonstrate excellence
- Regularly reinforce prior learning

Moderate progress across their subject/phase by, for example, systematically reviewing progress against a range of evidence and reviewing qualitative and quantitative performance data.

Improve on weaknesses identified in their monitoring activities.

Create and share clear intentions for their subject/phase.

Encourage teachers to share ideas, resources and good practice.

Meet the expectations set out in all relevant Trust and School policies⁵

⁵ See Section 12 Page 13

4.4 Senior Leaders

Senior school leaders will:

Have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education.

Motivate all staff through celebrating achievement and having high expectations for everyone.

Hold staff and pupils to account for their teaching and learning.

Plan and evaluate strategies to secure high-quality teaching and learning across the school.

Manage resources to support high-quality teaching and learning.

Provide support and guidance to staff through coaching and mentoring.

Input and monitor the impact of continuing professional development opportunities to improve staff practice and subject knowledge.

Promote team working at all levels, for example by buddying teachers up to support one another where appropriate.

Address underachievement and intervene promptly.

Meet the expectations set out in all relevant Trust and School policies⁶

4.5 Pupils

Pupils will:

Take responsibility for their own learning, and support the learning of others.

Meet expectations for good behaviour for learning at all times, respecting the rights of others to learn.

Attend with regularity, be on time and be ready to learn, with any necessary equipment for the lesson.

Be curious, ambitious, engaged and confident learners.

Know their targets and how to improve.

Put maximum effort and focus into their work.

Complete home learning activities as required.

⁶ See Section 12 Page 11

4.6 Parents and Carers

Children learn best when there are strong links between the home and school and the importance of parental/carers involvement in their children's learning is recognised, valued and developed.

Parents and carers will:

- Value learning
- Encourage their child as a learner
- Make sure their child is ready and able to learn every day
- Support excellent attendance, avoiding absence for holidays during term time
- Participate in discussions about their child's progress and attainment
- Communicate with the school to share information promptly
- Encourage their child to take responsibility for their own learning
- Support and give importance to home learning

4.7 Governors and Trustees

Governors in each school will:

Monitor that delegated resources are allocated effectively to support the school's approach to teaching and learning.

Monitor the impact of teaching and learning strategies on pupils' progress and attainment.

Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

Make sure other Trust and school policies promote high-quality teaching, and that these are being implemented.

Trustees will:

- Ensure that teaching and learning in each and every school represents the highest priority to maximise educational achievement for all children in Trust schools
- Evaluate the impact of teaching and learning at regular intervals throughout each school year and hold the executive leadership of the Trust to account for continuous school improvement
- Ensure that funding is allocated to support all children and staff across the Trust to achieve the best possible outcomes

5. Planning

Children learn best when lesson planning:

- Outlines the learning for each day and is in response to regular formative assessment
- Includes learning intentions, success criteria, differentiation, assessment opportunities, modelling, scaffolding and carefully thought through questioning
- Adheres to the frameworks of the National Curriculum or Early Years Foundation Stage and follows the curriculum policy of the school, its curriculum framework and sequential plans
- Uses informed and agreed subject knowledge

- Uses resources prepared in advance to support the learning in the classroom and inspires children with the use of educational visits and external visitors
- Leads to progress in children's learning that can be seen in their books, on working walls, through pupil interactions, feedback and pupil voice
- Includes the development of children's social and emotional wellbeing

Children learn best when activities:

- Ensure progress in the short, medium and long term
- Develop curiosity and enthusiasm and when teaching and learning activities enthuse, engage and motivate them to learn
- Provide planned opportunities for assessment, including testing, that informs teaching for learning and consequent support, time to embed key learning, appropriate extension and challenge for each child at whatever level of attainment.
- Take place in an ordered learning environment where the atmosphere is purposeful, where children feel safe, and where routines and expectations are made explicit and consistently applied

Children learn best when teaching and learning enthuses, engages and motivates through:

- Teachers having high learning expectations for all their pupils
- Using targeted questioning to extend children's thinking thereby encouraging engagement and involvement in their learning
- Quality interactions to promote deeper learning and positive learning behaviour
- Adapting lessons to respond to individual need
- Adapting lesson pace to ensure continued motivation and engagement
- Opportunities for children to collaborate
- Celebrating individual and collective achievement both in class and through the wider school community

6. Learning Environment

Children learn best when the learning environment is ordered, the atmosphere is purposeful, and they feel safe:

- Explicit classroom routines are in place and expectations are high
- There is an atmosphere of mutual respect between adults and children
- Children feel secure to speak and act freely. They enjoy freedom from all forms of bullying
- Good behaviour is always modelled when interacting with children and adults
- Positive strategies for managing pupil behaviour are employed
- Good behaviour is recognised through appropriate rewards and where necessary sanctions are deployed in line with the school and Trust's Behaviour Policy. These are applied fairly and consistently.
- Conflict and behavioural issues are calmly and fairly dealt with using a restorative approach
- Classrooms and the school building are secure and well sign posted. Children are aware of emergency procedures

7. Continuous Professional Development

Children learn best when their teachers are reflective and are regularly provided with professional development opportunities that consider their pedagogy and practice.

Teachers:

- Continuously build and update their subject knowledge and reflect on the methods and strategies to deliver consistently high-quality lessons
- Are confident to adapt their teaching to support and enable the needs of individual children and their class
- Commit to self-development and whole school improvement
- Take an active role in their school by building on and sharing their strengths and addressing areas where improvement will enhance learning and improve practice
- Will support other staff and their school by using their specialism to train and support other staff through the delivery of INSET, coaching, mentoring and/or team teaching
- Disseminate knowledge and information from courses and training attended

8. Home Learning

Home learning, or homework, will support children to make the link between what they have learnt in school and the wider world. It's most effective when done in a supportive, secure environment, with focused time set aside.

All home learning will be made available through individual school online platforms, will be reasonable in challenge and length, and its purpose will be clearly outlined alongside each task.

9. Assessment, Marking and Feedback

Assessment must be undertaken with regularity in order to ensure that teaching and learning are focused on individual need and targeted to ensure all pupils make progress and reach levels of attainment in line with expectation. This is particularly important to ensure that vulnerable groups and particularly those deemed disadvantaged or who have special educational needs reach their potential and the disadvantaged/non disadvantaged gap is reduced.⁷

Formative assessment takes place weekly for each of those subjects taught as stated in each of the school's curriculum plans. There is a culture of regular feedback in each school and across the Trust. Regular testing during and at the end of work units and lessons using "low stakes" quizzes facilitates knowledge retention and "higher stakes" assessment resilience.⁸

Summative assessment takes place at key points during the academic year following tests, teacher assessments and school/Trust moderation. These are followed by pupil progress meetings.

⁷ See Trust SEND Policy and Disadvantaged Strategy

⁸ "Make it Stick: The Science of Successful Learning" Brown, Roediger & McDaniel [2014]

Children are tracked against Age Related Expectations [ARE] within each year group and across each school. These summative assessment measures are used across the Trust and reported to parents and carers at key points during the year.

Summative measures used include:

- Pre-Key Stage: [PK]
- Working Towards [WTS]
- Expected Standard [EXS]
- Greater Depth [GD]

Feedback provides a positive reinforcement of the teaching and learning process and used regularly and appropriately develops children's self-esteem and resilience. Based on extensive evidence the Education Endowment Foundation [EEF] Feedback provides the greatest potential gains in pupils' progress and attainment for the least cost.⁹ Feedback may take the form of verbal, teacher marking, objective assessment, self-assessment and that undertaken by peers.

All schools in the Trust will operate a Marking Policy that incorporates formal marking of pupils work whilst ensuring that this is one component of the means where feedback is undertaken to ensure children make high levels of progress and are consistently challenged.

Children learn best when assessment informs teaching:

- Provision for support and remediation for every child is enabled to reinforce or extend their learning and demonstrate good or better progress
- Early intervention is enacted in a timely manner and addresses gaps in their knowledge or understanding
- Open ended tasks and extended learning opportunities are provided
- Development feedback is provided in all lessons in line with the school's Marking and Feedback Policy
- Children use peer and self-assessment to inform their own understanding and their level of attainment
- Differentiated learning activities build upon their prior attainment
- Children can talk about their strengths, areas for development and how they will further extend their learning and make further progress
- Assessment records are meticulously undertaken, and assessments are accurate and submitted on time to inform pupil progress meetings and enable whole school and Trust tracking

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring of teaching and learning in our Trust will be undertaken with regularity to make sure that all children make the best possible progress from their starting points.

Trust leaders will monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning through:

⁹ See EEF Teaching & Learning Toolkit

- Regular informal and formal visits to each of the Trust's schools. The latter will result in evaluative reports provided to the school's leadership team, the Local Governing Body [LGB] and the Trust Board
- Providing at least three times each academic year a detailed analysis and commentary on pupil progress and levels of attainment to the LGB and Trust Board

School leaders will monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning through:

Conducting learning walks

Reviewing marking and feedback

Termly pupil progress meetings

Gathering input from the school council and pupil voice

Supporting and ensuring high quality planning

Undertaking book scrutinies

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Trust Executive Team and presented to the Trust Board through the Curriculum and Standards Committee for ratification.

12. References and Links to other Trust Policies

This policy links with the following policies and procedures:

Trust:

- Pledges
- Well Being Policy
- Relationships & Sex Education Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Equalities Statement & Policy
- Reading by 5 Strategy
- Writing Strategy
- Behaviour Policy and Statement of Behaviour Principles

Schools:

- Curriculum policy
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy
- Marking and feedback policy
- Home-school agreement
- Assessment policy