SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL
SINCE 1576

Teaching and Learning Policy

(Prep School)

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This Policy applies to Sutton Valence School (including, as the context requires, the Nursery and the Prep School).

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1. Pedagogy

Parents know that children grow in light years. They know that whilst Spider-Man is an exciting film for a six-year-old, Spiderman for a five-year-old is a career opportunity.

Our pedagogical philosophy is therefore to provide opportunities and belief and ultimately foster knowledge, skills and values which will serve children as well tomorrow as they do today. We do this through our superpowers, which we call our Super Hoot Learning Powers, which are cross curricular and as applicable in outdoor learning as they are in digital learning.

Wherever one looks here, you will see curiosity and passion underpinned by genuine warmth and the ever-present expectation, to be kind.

Because we are a school for the kind. Since 1576.

2. Super Hoot Learning Powers

Our Super Hoot philosophy, symbolised by an owl, was created to introduce pupils to the value and power of adopting a growth mindset. This is achieved through our 'Learning Powers', where instead of children saying, "I can't do that", they ask themselves "What is the best way for me to learn this?"

We have six pairs of linked Learning Powers:

Independence and Initiative;
Empathy and Reflection;
Observation and Excellence;
Tenacity and Bravery;
Flexibility and Collaboration;
Curiosity and Originality.

Each half term, we focus on two specific Learning Powers. We discuss their meaning with the children and give examples of what they look like in real life. In this way, we build shared understanding of these cross-curricular skills that will serve our children throughout their lives.

Learning Power	Child-friendly definition
Independence	Developing the ability to do things for yourself
Initiative	Giving something a go, especially if new or difficult
Empathy	Considering how others may feel and think
Reflection	Thinking about the impact of your words and actions on yourself and others
Observation	Looking and listening carefully to further your understanding
Excellence	Striving to be as good as you can be, always aiming for a personal best
Tenacity	Keeping going when things are hard
Bravery	Making the choice to do things, particularly when faced with worry or fear
Flexibility	Adapting to your circumstances and being willing to change your mind
Collaboration	Considering how to work effectively with others
Curiosity	Asking questions and carefully considering what you discover
Originality	Being prepared not to follow the crowd, looking for your own path

Super Hoot Learning Powers are embedded into the curriculum and celebrated by every year group from Reception to Year 6. We also encourage our children and families to adopt the same philosophy and language at home to embed the learning and growth mindset approach. To that end, we warmly invite our parents to our weekly Super Hoot Assemblies where we recognise and reward children who have displayed their Learning Powers during the week.

3. Curriculum

The curriculum for children aged two to eleven aims for each individual to embark on a unique educational journey and thereby build self-confidence, learning the power of hard work and achieving the highest possible academic standards. Every child deserves high quality academic teaching alongside a myriad of opportunities designed to enhance their personal development and build lifelong skills and habits. We proudly provide all of this here at Sutton Valence School.

The aim of our curriculum is to provide a broad and balanced education for pupils aged two to eleven. The core skills of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy are emphasised together with a focus on pastoral wellbeing, age-appropriate education and the development of values that will last for life.

The principal language of instruction is English.

The curriculum is balanced and promotes Fundamental British Values (FBV) as well as Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) attributes where appropriate. We also celebrate achievement in its broadest sense through awards, certificates and prizes in various areas of the curriculum, thereby incentivising gaining knowledge and skills for adult life and developing responsibility and confidence to make informed decisions.

We support and challenge our pupils and give them opportunities for independent learning. The School develops the individual and prepares pupils for the next stages of education and beyond.

Our curriculum aims to:

- be balanced, broadly based and engaging;
- provide fair and equal access and opportunity;
- ensure progression and continuity for all children;
- stretch and challenge all children;
- support those who need supporting, including those with Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities (SEND); and
- promote critical thinking.

Further details about the curriculum can be found in the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) Policy, the Relationships Education (RSE) Policy, the EYFS Policy and the SEND Policy. In addition, the annual Curriculum Overviews (available to parents via the School Portal) detail the termly knowledge and skills focus for each subject.

Subjects

Across their journey at the School, pupils study the following subjects depending on their age:

- English (Literacy)
- Mathematics (Numeracy)
- Science
- PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education)
- French, including WoLLoW (World of Languages and Languages of the World: the study of

languages, teaching children the history, culture and development of all languages)

- Humanities
- Religious Education
- Music
- Drama
- Art and Design
- Digital Learning
- Physical Education (PE), including Swimming and Athletics
- Games (including our major Games: Cricket, Football, Hockey, Netball & Rugby)
- Forest School
- Dance
- Yoga

Heads of Departments design the curriculum and teachers, including the many subject specialists, deliver the curriculum. We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (see the EYFS Policy) and, broadly speaking, the National Curriculum. Heads of Departments use these documents to shape the curriculum for each subject. For clarity, we always follow the EYFS Framework (which evolves from time to time) but we do not always follow the National Curriculum for assorted reasons. For instance, we make use of local history opportunities to develop the children's understanding in History instead of precisely following the National Curriculum in this subject.

From Nursery to Year 6, pupils are usually taught by specialist teachers in subjects such as (but not limited to) Art & Design, Dance, Drama, Forest School, French, Games, Music, PE and Yoga. Classes are mixed ability, with setting in Mathematics only. Setting begins in Mathematics from around the Summer term of Year 3 onwards. Setting groups are reviewed intermittently.

4. Style of Teaching

We believe all learners are entitled to be stretched and challenged. We aim high and are aware of the ability levels, prior knowledge and prior attainment of the children. We adapt our teaching through our detailed knowledge of the children and in response to feedback from them. We use scaffolding when necessary to allow the children to access challenging content and achieve a high level of success to motivate further learning. To challenge, we provide difficult work that causes learners to think deeply and engage in healthy struggle.

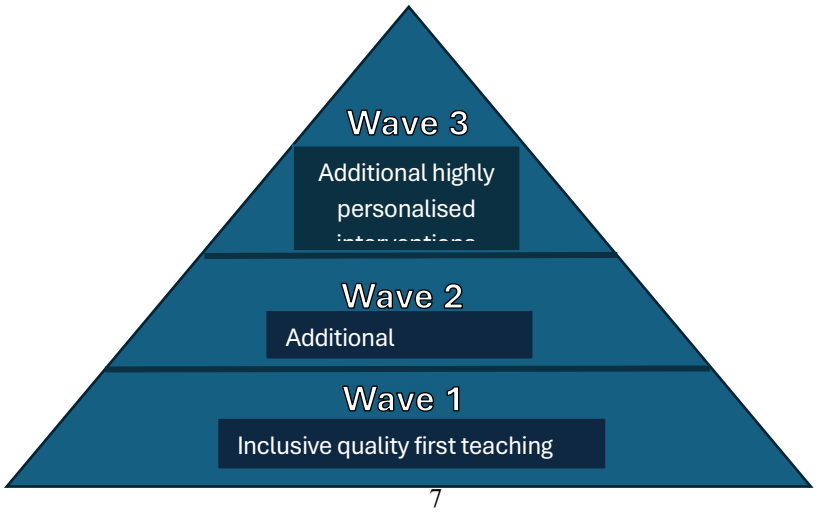
When learners struggle just outside their comfort zone, that is when they will be likely to learn most. Low challenge can generate boredom within a lesson, just as high challenge can create a culture of anxiety. Getting the flow right, ensuring the level of challenge is constantly just beyond the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes, will then create deeper learning and expertise. By scaffolding work too much and for too long, and stealing the struggle from learners, we can undermine expectations and restrict the ranges of response that our learners could potentially develop unaided.

In order to teach challenging lessons that make our students think hard, we should:

- Teach to challenge whilst adapting, supporting and scaffolding when necessary
- Make learning objectives single and challenging for all
- Know the ability levels and prior attainment and skills within each group
- Take into account the expected knowledge, concepts and skills
- Set high expectations and make students aware we are doing so
- Embed a challenging classroom ethos through the language we use with students
- Ensure that students know what excellence looks like
- Use questioning to probe students to stretch them further
- Provide regular feedback that both motivates and challenges their thinking

Adaptive Teaching

We follow a graduated approach underpinned by Quality First Teaching (QFT). This means that all pupils are provided with high quality teaching that is adapted to meet the diverse needs of all learners, including those with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). The graduated approach follows three stages known as 'waves' that outline the provision that we provide for our pupils.



The first wave focuses on QFT where the teachers adapt lessons to meet the needs of all children. The second wave refers to targeted support provided for children who need additional help to make progress, delivered through small-group and / or short-term interventions within or outside of the classroom. The third wave represents further focused strategies and targets that may require support from outside agencies or external professionals.

To ensure good QFT, we employ a range of strategies including, adapting:

- by rate (pupils working at a rate appropriate to them);
- by task (groups within a class working on different areas of the same subject);
- by outcome (pupils attempting the same task but with different expectations and results);
- by input (providing some individuals or groups with targeted adult support or scaffolds);
- through the level of questioning from the teacher or adult;
- by breaking the task into smaller, simpler steps;
- by extending work for more able pupils which takes them beyond what the others in the class/group might be asked to do.

Intervention Approach

Whilst our style of teaching is unashamedly aspirational, all children require a bit more support at times and some children benefit from specific interventions to achieve the learning objectives. Most interventions are provided in the classroom by the teacher or teaching assistant. Some children require additional interventions which may be provided at a range of times across the school day, including before and after school as well as sometimes in break times. A few children even benefit from additional support provided by specialist teachers, for instance children with dyslexia and ADHD. Further details may be found in the SEND Policy.

5. Homework

Homework expectations evolve as children progress through the School. Our approach is informed by educational research and is similarly designed to dovetail with busy, modern family life. Whilst there are many benefits to children continuing their learning at home, children also have other commitments or may simply be tired from their busy days at school.

Therefore, broadly speaking, our minimum expectations are reading, spellings, times tables and, where applicable, instrument practice. Further written and digital options are provided for older children in the Prep School. On top of this, a suite of enrichment, which we call 'Why Don't You?' activities (e.g. learn to tie your shoelaces or write a letter to the Prime Minister), provide children and families with opportunities to extend their learning and develop lifelong habits of personal development, service and charity.

6. Outdoor Learning (including Forest School)

Every child from Nursery to Year 6 has the opportunity to experience outdoor learning through weekly timetabled Forest School lessons as well as in other subjects. Outdoor learning develops independence and confidence, builds observation and creativity skills, and deepens resilience, communication and collaboration skills.

Forest School activities include, but are not limited to, building shelters, wildlife spotting, orienteering, tool skills and habitat improvement. Additionally, the School grounds are used across the curriculum in a range of ways. This includes Art, English, Science and more, as well as recreation time.

7. Digital Learning and Technology Integration

Our approach to teaching and learning is founded on a balanced integration of digital and traditional resources to meet the diverse needs and learning styles of all pupils. Each classroom is equipped with interactive screens, and pupils have access to a range of digital devices—including iPads, Surface Gos, and desktop computers (see our Personal Computer Usage Policy). These technologies are not only used during dedicated digital learning lessons but are also embedded across the curriculum, enhancing engagement, supporting collaboration, and enabling access to rich multimedia content.

Technology is employed purposefully and in moderation. In non-digital lessons, its use is carefully planned to complement, rather than replace, high-quality teaching and direct interaction. This ensures that screen time remains meaningful and that pupils continue to benefit from tactile and interpersonal experiences. Alongside digital tools, pupils regularly engage with traditional materials such as notebooks, printed texts, and library resources. Outdoor learning and hands-on activities further enrich the curriculum, fostering curiosity, independence, and deep conceptual understanding.

Through a balanced blend of traditional and digital tools, we provide varied opportunities for children to learn, practise and refine essential skills in meaningful contexts. This approach equips pupils with digital fluency, critical thinking, and adaptability; skills essential for lifelong learning in an increasingly connected world.

8. Enrichment, including Clubs, Workshops and Trips

Clubs and wraparound care not only help parents juggle the demands of parenthood and work but, perhaps even more importantly, also help to enrich each child's education.

There are a wide range of clubs and activities available for children from Reception to Year 6 on every day of the week. For older children, these take place before, during and after the School day. The activities cater for a wide variety of interests; active, creative and academic. Many clubs are run by School staff and outside providers also visit the School to share their own skills and interests.

In the same vein, pupils will regularly experience a range of internal workshops and external trips which enhance curriculum learning and broaden knowledge and creativity. We also organise residential trips for all children from Year 3 up.

9. Preparation for Secondary Education

All children prepare for secondary education through both their regular lessons and timetable and also, in the Summer term of Year 6, through a specific programme of lessons, activities and trips designed to ensure that they are secondary ready when they leave the Prep School. These include, for example, workshops with a Magistrate, Career Coach and a Transition Coach, as well as a Parent Careers Fair to explore a diverse range of professional opportunities.

Secondary Entrance Exams

Some children take secondary school examinations. Children sitting the ISEB Common Pre Test (CPT) for independent secondary schools (usually in November) use online programmes to support familiarisation for that examination.

A number of our pupils sit the Kent Test 11+ and similar tests (e.g. Medway Test) for admission to grammar schools. This takes place in early September.

Occasionally, other entrance examinations are required, which are secondary school dependent, such as GL Assessment CAT4 tests. Some children may also be required to participate in individual interviews and / or group tasks. Preparation for these forms of assessment is bespoke for each child depending upon their secondary school's requirements.

Secondary Scholarship Processes

We support pupils in applying for scholarships for a range of secondary schools, with appropriate preparation and support taking place in advance of applications.

Scholarships to Sutton Valence School (Senior School) are offered in Art, Design Technology, Drama, Music and Sport. Academic Scholarships are also offered by invite-only applications.

Children also sit scholarship assessments for other secondary schools.

Details about scholarships are available by the Assistant Head (Academic) and the relevant Heads of Department.

10. Feedback

Feedback encompasses all the methods that a teacher or a peer can use to provide guidance and reflection to a pupil with the aim of helping them improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. Feedback needs to be as immediate as possible to be constructive and helpful to the children, although this is not always easy to facilitate. Often it is verbal but it can also be written (marking).

Feedback can be provided by teachers, teaching assistants and supporting adults as well as peers where appropriate. Through effective feedback, we indicate to pupils aspects of their understanding and work which:

- have met or not met the criteria specified for the piece of work;
- show improvement or the reverse;
- show how aspects could be improved or completed;
- in some subjects, are correct or incorrect;
- involve omissions or inaccuracies;
- involve conceptual misunderstandings;
- contain Spelling, Punctuation And Grammatical (SPAG) errors.

Marking

Marking can be an important part of feedback and includes proof-reading, editing, monitoring and correcting work. All marking should be done as follows:

- Green pen for correct answers and positive feedback;
- Pink pen to show where mistakes have been made and, where appropriate, teacher corrections, clarifications or questions; and
- Purple pen, used by the pupils, to show responses to teacher marking.

11. Assessment

At Sutton Valence School (Prep School) we believe that assessment and record keeping are an essential part of school life. Much of what teachers do in classrooms can be described as assessment, from questioning the children to observing what they say and do. Assessment is important because it enables us to monitor the progress of individual pupils, evaluate the provision we make and to plan effectively for all pupils and differentiate work accordingly.

The purpose of assessment is to support the development of the whole child and to ensure that every pupil makes meaningful progress. Through ongoing assessment, we seek to:

- Monitor pupils' developing skills, knowledge and understanding over time;
- Identify and celebrate each pupil's strengths and highlight areas for further growth;
- Inform future planning and ensure that next steps are clear, purposeful and achievable;
- Assess pupils' learning in relation to each department's curriculum;
- Record and communicate pupils' progress and achievements;
- Provide accurate and useful information to parents, future schools and other stakeholders;
- Enable teachers to set appropriate targets and plan for progression;
- Support consistency, reflection and the continual improvement of teaching and learning across the curriculum.

Types of Assessment

The forms of assessment we employ at Sutton Valence Preparatory School are:

Formative
The information gained forms or affects the next learning experience. Teacher assessment is undertaken informally within normal planned classroom activities. It can take the form of observation, conversations with pupils, notes and assessing written work.

Summative
Summative assessment involves the intermittent and formal testing of children. This information is then used in the planning of future teaching, the setting of children, and in determining those children who may need extra support or stretch and challenge. Learning support assessments are also used where required. See 'Assessment Cycles' below.

Self-Assessment
Pupils are fully aware of the objectives within a scheme of work and each lesson and are aware of their individual progress within this. A range of strategies are used to promote self-assessment including the "Traffic Light System" or "Smiley Face System".

Pupils in Year 1 to Year 6 also take a Wellbeing Survey twice a year, which identifies areas of pastoral confidence and development.

Assessment Cycle

	Michaelmas Term	Lent Term	Summer Term
Y6	Wellbeing Cognitive Abilities Reading Age/Level	English Attainment Maths Attainment Reading Age/Level	Wellbeing English Attainment Maths Attainment Reading Age/Level
Y5	Wellbeing Cognitive Abilities Reading Age/Level	English Attainment Maths Attainment Reading Age/Level	Wellbeing English Attainment Maths Attainment Reading Age/Level
Y4	Wellbeing Cognitive Abilities Reading Age/Level	English Attainment Maths Attainment Reading Age/Level	Wellbeing English Attainment Maths Attainment Reading Age/Level
Y3	Wellbeing Cognitive Abilities Reading Age/Level	English Attainment Maths Attainment Reading Age/Level	Wellbeing English Attainment Maths Attainment Reading Age/Level
Y2	Wellbeing Cognitive Abilities	English Attainment Maths Attainment	Wellbeing English Attainment Maths Attainment Reading Age/Level
Y1	Wellbeing Cognitive Abilities Phonics screener	English Attainment Maths Attainment	Wellbeing English Attainment Maths Attainment Reading Age/Level
R	Baseline Assessment		Early Years Profile*
N	2 Year Progress Check (where appropriate)		

*The EYFS Profile only needs to be reported to the local authority upon request.

12. Reporting to Parents

We believe that families have a vital role to play in helping their children learn. We inform families about their child's learning by:

- Holding formal parent consultations throughout the year;
- Providing grade cards (Years 1-6) and written reports at specific points;
- Holding regular information evenings;
- In Nursery, sharing our online learning journal;
- Holding ad-hoc discussions as required by School or parents.

Parent Consultations

These take place in the following terms:

Nursery:	Up to once a term, depending on the age of the child
Reception to Year 5:	Michaelmas and Lent Terms
Year 6:	Michaelmas and Summer Terms

In addition, there are Book Share events for parents of children in Reception to Year 6 where parents can visit the classrooms and see the work the children have been doing.

Written Reports

Reports are prepared by staff to help to track progress over time and identify targets for each child.

<u>Nursery (2-3 years old)</u>
Two-year progress check (at any time between the child's second and third birthday);
Summer end-of-term Prime Areas of Learning.

<u>Nursery (3-4 years old)</u>
Michaelmas end-of-term Prime Areas of Learning;
Summer end-of- term Prime Areas of Learning and Characteristics of Effective Learning.

<u>Reception</u>
Michaelmas half term Form Teacher comment and targets;
Lent Form Teacher comment and targets;
Summer end-of-term full report.

<u>Year 1 – Year 5</u>
Michaelmas half term English and Maths grades and targets, Form Teacher comment;
Lent half term full grade card, English and Maths targets, Form Teacher comment;
Summer end-of-term full report.

<u>Year 6</u>
Michaelmas half term English and Maths grades and targets, Form Teacher comment;
Lent end-of-term full report;

Summer letter from the Head.

13. Inspiration and References

The following resources and inspired the development of this policy:

EBE Great Teaching Toolkit - a compendium of what works in teaching

EEF Toolkit - up to date educational research guidance

Growth Mindset - Carol Dweck's seminal philosophy