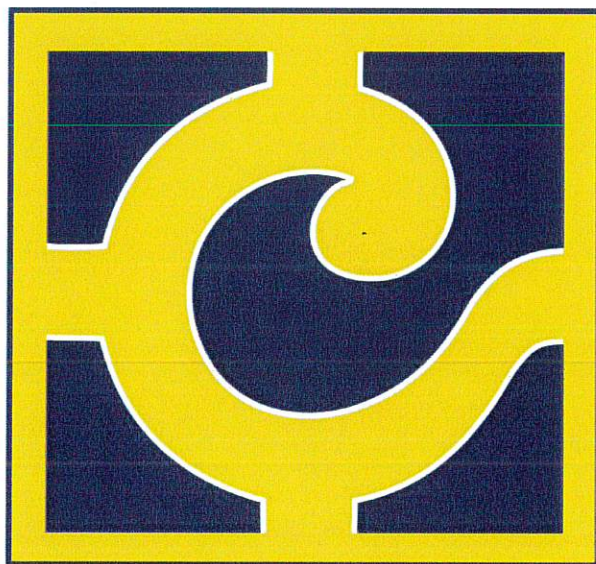


THE COURT SCHOOL

Teaching & Learning Policy

Academic Year 2023/24



THE COURT SCHOOL

*Approved by Governing Body – November '23
Review – Autumn 2 '25 (or sooner if required)*

INTRODUCTION

One of our main aims at the Court School is to enhance the lives of the pupils who attend the school by improving their attitude to education and schooling in general. Many pupils who attend our school have had poor experiences OR haven't received the education that they need in order for them to thrive. Often, we're able to provide alternative pedagogical approaches/different conditions, e.g. high staff-pupil ratio, experienced and well-skilled staff in the field of BESD and alternative 1:1 spaces where pupils feel calm and ready to learn.

The teaching and learning at the Court School is underpinned by our core values which were co-constructed by staff and have been updated over time. Our values are:

- Keep everyone safe
- Stay positive
- Communicate effectively
- Respect our differences
- Be flexible
- Maintain high expectations

Our pupils come to us at different stages of their development so our work with them is dictated by what they need at that particular time. This is detailed in the diagram below:



Some of our pupils are ready for more formal learning and are placed in classes accordingly. For other pupils it is vitally important we target other key areas first, e.g. encouraging positive engagement with school. In simple terms, unless our pupils; trust us, have positive relationships with us and feel happy coming to school, they will not learn.

Ultimately, what we provide for each of our pupils is different and highly personalised with a view to making them safe and maximising their potential. In addition, this changes over time so we continually adapt our teaching and planned learning experiences depending on the presentation of the pupils in our classes, e.g. they may have had a difficult morning or not slept well the night before – so we may take some time to talk with them or give them opportunities to rest. Class teams meet on two occasions throughout the day. They have a briefing at the beginning of the day to discuss the plans for each pupil/staffing responsibilities. At the end of the day, class teams meet to have a de-brief to celebrate successes and, more importantly, analyse where things have gone wrong/discuss what they can do next time to ensure teaching and learning is more effective.

To help us work out what pupils need, we undertake a number of assessments at the beginning and throughout the course of the year. (We do not insist because many of our pupils find these assessments anxiety provoking). We use this information proactively to set targets and plan pupils' learning. In addition, we track pupils' progress closely (mainly using Taith 360) which also helps with the above. Key information regarding pupils' progress is also captured via Learner Profiles which details pre and post placement data. This way, we can reflect on our school's effectiveness and impact over time. (Essentially these documents are 'case studies' on 2 sides of A4).

All of the pupils who attend the Court School have significant social and emotional barriers to their learning. In addition, many of our pupils have had substantial periods out of school, e.g. exclusion or withdrawal. Therefore, they often have significant gaps in their learning and are usually working at levels well below their chronological age. Nearly all of our pupils are aware of this and therefore have low self-esteem and are often incredibly defensive and sometimes work avoidant. Our priority is addressing the wellbeing of our pupils because we are aware that we cannot teach and pupils cannot learn unless they feel calm and regulated. Hence our motto, which is reflected in daily our daily practice 'Keep Calm - Keep Learning'. It is also worth emphasising that many of our pupils have experienced significant trauma in their lives and therefore our pedagogical approaches are now sensitive, therapeutic and 'trauma-informed'. We understand that these approaches are vitally important in our setting and have invested heavily in staff training over the past few years. We are now a TISUK accredited setting and strongly believe that the approaches we now use and environment we create (and continue to enhance) results in pupils feeling safe, calm and ready to learn.

On an annual basis senior leaders meet with teachers to discuss what excellent teaching and learning looks like at the Court School. We work together to produce/refine a document which is used extensively throughout the course of the year. It is displayed in all classes and teachers and support staff are encouraged to reflect on it regularly with a view to developing and improving practice in the classroom. See document below:

<p><u>What does excellent teaching and learning at The Court School look like?</u></p> <p>Updated October 2023</p>	
<p>Underpinned by motto and values... Motto: <u>Keep calm – keep learning...</u></p> <p>Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep everyone safe ▪ Stay positive, ▪ Communicate effectively ▪ Respect our differences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be flexible ▪ Maintain high expectations 	
Excellent teaching and learning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive and trusting relationships with pupils. • Personalised and relevant tasks with clear learning intentions • High quality and relevant feedback/recognition of effort. • Consistency, boundaries and predictable routines. • Engaging experiences outside school, e.g. natural environment. • Effective use of space around the school, e.g. cwtch, library etc. • IT pedagogical approaches to ensure pupils feel safe. All actions should reduce anxiety. • Strong support when pupils are distressed. Co-reg. → self-reg. • Excellent staff-staff team work with effective NV comm. • Regular reminders about making healthy choices (physical activity, food and drink and sleep). • Supportive regular communication with parents/carers. • FUN! 	<p>Key question – Are pupils making progress? (Academic and in relation to their wellbeing) ...</p>

Senior leaders quality assure the effectiveness of teaching and learning in a number of important ways:

- They undertake informal and formal learning walks and provide ongoing feedback for teachers and support staff.
- They undertake lesson observations which are discussed during performance managements reviews.
- The 'Excellent Teaching' document (above) is used as a reference tool and guide when senior leaders spend time in classes.
- They undertake 'book looks' on a regular basis to ascertain the quality of the learning experiences and feed back to teachers and support staff.
- They undertake scrutiny of planning to ensure it is comprehensive and personalised.
- They facilitate 'progress meetings' on a termly basis to reflect on; pupils' progress against targets, general academic progress, attitude to learning,

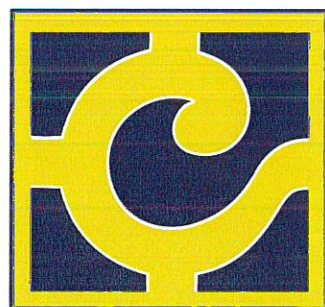
wellbeing etc. A Red Amber Yellow Green (RAYG) system is utilised to undertake this exercise. (At the Court School we strongly believe that if pupils are making good progress, the quality of teaching and learning is effective).

We work hard to establish and maintain strong links with parents and carers because we know they are partners in pupils' development. We speak to parents/carers directly, on the phone and message regularly. A strength of ours is that we take photographs throughout the course of the day and send it to parents/carers who often respond with positive comments that we then share with pupils. We absolutely encourage parents/carers to get in touch if they have any concerns about their child's education. They can contact; the class team, school office, the Deputy Headteacher or the Headteacher.

Concluding remark - Things don't always work and there are numerous occasions where our pupils struggle to adapt to teaching and are reluctant to learn. Our pupils are complex and vulnerable and, when dysregulated, many can be aggressive and violent. This is what makes teaching and learning at the Court School so challenging and rewarding. However, our aspiration is to do 'what works' for as many of our pupils because we want them to succeed. Therefore, when things aren't working we change what we do as opposed to expecting pupils to make changes themselves (although we do reflect with our pupils on a regular basis). The following quote reflects this key philosophy.

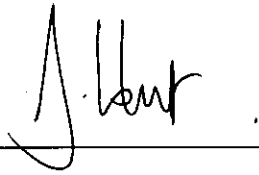
"When a flower doesn't bloom you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower".

(Quote - Alexander Den Heijer)



THE COURT SCHOOL

Signature of chair of governing body:



Date: 29/11/23

Policy to be reviewed/updated every two years...