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Teaching and Learning Policy

At Unique Academy, we are committed to high quality teaching and learning to raise standards of achievement for all children. It reflects what has been agreed in terms of approach and consistency and makes explicit the best practice to which the school aspires. It also reflects the aims and objectives of the school and supports its vision.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our subject policies.

Principles

Learning is the purpose of the whole school and is a shared commitment. At Unique Academy, we recognise that education involves children, parents, staff, the community and the local authority, and that for optimum benefit all should work closely together to support the process of learning. Working in partnership, we aim to:

- provide a supportive, positive, healthy, caring and safe environment, which has high expectations and values all members of the school community;
- recognise the needs and aspirations of all individuals and provide opportunities for all pupils to make the best possible progress and attain the highest personal achievements;
- ensure children can develop as literate, numerate and technologically competent individuals, within a broad, balanced, exciting and challenging curriculum;
- provide rich and varied contexts and experiences for pupils to acquire, develop and apply a broad range of knowledge, skills and understanding;
- provide a curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, physical, mental and emotional development of the pupils;
- develop individuals with lively, enquiring minds, good thinking skills, self-respect, self-discipline and positive attitudes;
- encourage all children to be enthusiastic and committed learners, promoting their self-esteem, self-worth and emotional well-being;
- develop children's confidence and capacity to learn and work independently and collaboratively;
- develop enduring values of respect, honesty, equality, integrity, tolerance, fairness and trust;
- encourage children to respond positively to the opportunities, challenges and responsibilities of a rapidly changing world;
- encourage children to value the diversity in our society and the environment in which they live;
- encourage children to become active and responsible citizens, contributing positively to the community and society.

As a school, we are committed to our mission statement – *'We Aim High to Achieve'*.

Ethos

Unique Academy is founded upon an Islamic ethos. Our ultimate goal is to provide excellence in Islamic and academic education, enabling the unique children to develop holistically, into an upright citizen. We aspire to put these positive values and behaviours into practice as part of our *Deen* (way of life).

Roles and Responsibilities

Learning and teaching is a shared responsibility and all members of the school community have an important part to play.

All members of the school community should work towards the school's aims by:

- treating children as individuals and respecting their rights, values and beliefs;
- fostering and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community;
- providing a well ordered environment in which all are fully aware of behavioural expectations;
- offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life and recognising the importance of different cultures;
- encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviours and work;
- working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another.

Teachers will endeavour to:

- provide a challenging and stimulating curriculum designed to encourage all children to reach the highest standard of achievement;
- recognise and be aware of the needs of each individual child according to ability and aptitude;
- ensure that learning is progressive and continuous;
- be good role models, punctual, consistent, well prepared and organised;
- keep up-to-date with educational issues;
- provide clear information on school procedures and pupil progress;
- have a positive attitude to change and the development of their own expertise;
- establish links with the local community to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life;
- work collaboratively with all involved in education to develop a shared philosophy and commonality of practice.
- take part in CPD activities
- strive to learn and implement the latest research based evidence and pedagogical skills into their daily
- Go the extra mile to ensure that learning outcomes are good or better consistently for every single pupil they teach

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

- ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, well-rested and in good health;
- ensuring that their child arrives at school wearing the correct uniform and bringing necessary equipment;
- providing support for the discipline within the school and for the teacher's role;
- supporting the work of educational targets and becoming actively involved in the implementation of any support programme;
- participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainment;
- ensuring early contact with school to discuss matters which affect a child's happiness, progress and behaviour;
- support the school's homework policy and give due importance to any homework;
- ensuring that all contact addresses and telephone numbers are up to date and correct;
- allowing their child to become increasingly independent as they progress throughout the school;
- informing the school of reasons for their child's absence;
- actively supporting the Home-School Agreement.

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

- attending school in good health, maintained by adequate diet, exercise and sleep;
- attending school regularly and punctually;
- being organised, bringing necessary equipment, taking letters home promptly, etc;
- conducting themselves in an orderly manner in line with the expected behaviour policy;
- taking increased responsibility for their own learning.

The community is invited to support the school by:

- contributing to activities, such as assemblies, specialist outings, extra curricular enrichment clubs, etc;
- presenting themselves as positive role models to be emulated;
- organising activities and events throughout the year to extend and deepen pupils' knowledge and skills;
- supporting school events;
- voluntarily helping in the classroom.

Planning

At Unique Academy, we are committed to following the programmes of study as set out in the National Curriculum with a thematic approach to learning.

Long Term Planning

The schools Long Term Plan from Nursery through to Year 6 is produced by the Headteacher (Curriculum Coordinator) and distributed to all classes before the start of the new academic year. The Long Term Plan enables staff to have an overview of the themes and topics that pupils will be learning throughout the academic year.

Medium Term Planning

Medium term planning (Termly Spider diagram) is shared with the Headteacher and weekly plans for English, Mathematics, Science and all other foundation subjects are added to the 'Timetable' on the Cornerstones Curriculum Maestro system.

Weekly Planning

Weekly planning takes place fortnightly, with reference to the National Curriculum 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage and the schools Long Term Curriculum Plan. Staff training and mentoring is used to discuss various aspects of planning/ curriculum and ensure consistency of approach and standards. Plans are based upon previous assessment data, pupil need and subject expectation. Curriculum time can be planned as continuous study throughout the term, or as blocks of study.

Literacy and Maths Skills Across the Curriculum

At Unique Academy, we are committed to raising the standards of our pupils' fundamental skills; meaning the ability to read, write and speak in English and to use Mathematics at a highly proficient level to facilitate learning across the curriculum.

Monitoring teaching and learning

As a small school, to begin with the Headteacher will monitor teaching and learning across a range of subjects across the whole school. In addition, we will:

- taking the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in each subject across the school;
- supporting colleagues in their development and implementation of the scheme of work, and in assessment and record-keeping activities;
- monitoring progress in subjects, resources and organisation
- using release time to support colleagues;
- keeping up-to-date through reading and attending relevant courses.

Organisation

The learning environment will be managed in such a way as to facilitate a range of learning opportunities, including:

- whole class teaching;
- group work, organised according to appropriate criteria (i.e. ability, mixed ability etc);
- one to one teaching;
- collaborative learning in pairs or groups;
- independent learning.

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 classroom will be organised to facilitate learning and the development of independence. For example:

- resources in each area will be grouped according to curriculum subject;
- book corners will be comfortable and attractive;
- in the early years, there are areas for imaginative and creative play will change regularly, in order to give opportunities for a range of play and role-play which will contribute to learning in a purposeful manner ;
- pupils will be involved in the maintenance and care of all equipment and resources.

Classrooms provide a stimulating and purposeful learning environment, including thought provoking and stimulating displays.

Volunteer helpers will be used to assist with the many aspects of school life, including supporting reading and providing assistance with school visits.

Excellence should be celebrated in displays and performances. Sustained effort, including drafting and reworking, should be encouraged to enhance standards in English, in particular.

School events such as performances and assemblies should be seen as opportunities for all pupils to demonstrate their own best performance.

Pupils should be encouraged to believe that any exhibited work (performance or display) should represent their highest standards of personal achievement.

Adaptive Teaching

So that we always have the highest possible expectations of individual learners and so they can demonstrate what they can do, understand and achieve, teachers will adapt their teaching in response to individual needs in relation to a lessons:

- pace;
- content;
- task;
- resources;
- offer extension work to challenge more able children;
- provide autonomy and independent learning tasks for more able children;
- outcome;
- provide teacher/ support via an additional adult

Homework

Homework is considered to be a valuable element of the learning process. (See **Homework Policy**)

We believe that homework should be set:

- to involve parents in their children's learning;
- to help parents keep abreast of what their child can and cannot do;
- to take advantage of the home context to apply learning;
- to encourage children to talk about their work to their parents and explain what they are doing and how;
- to extend the time for learning, thus enabling children to practice and consolidate their skills and knowledge and strategies;
- to view learning as a lifelong process and not just restricted to school hours.

The school's agreed practice for homework is that:

- homework is set on a weekly, for all years, in line with our homework policy;
- homework will generally follow on from work which has taken place in class but may take many different forms, including reading, learning multiplication facts and spellings. It should not entail new ideas that require explanation from a teacher;
- homework may sometimes consist of preparation for work yet to be done;
- children should understand exactly what they are expected to do, how to do it, and how long it should take;
- homework should sometimes involve the participation of the parents;
- children who have made insufficient effort during class time may occasionally be asked to complete work at home.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Regular assessments are made of pupils' work in order to establish the level of attainment and to inform future planning. Formative assessment is used to guide the progress of individual pupils. It involves identifying each child's progress in each area of the curriculum, determining what each child has learned and what therefore should be the next stage in his/her learning (See **Pupil Assessment Procedures**).

Suitable tasks for assessment include:

- question and answer;
- short tests/quizzes in which pupils write answers;
- specific assignments, such as writing tasks, for individual pupils;
- peer and self assessment
- pupil observations;

Feedback to pupils about their own progress is achieved through discussion and the marking and oral feedback of work.

Effective marking:

- helps children understand how to improve and comments aim to be positive and constructive;
- is often done while a task is being carried out through discussion between child and teacher;
- written work is used sensitively and with discretion so that a child can assimilate a limited number of corrections at one time. This will vary according to the age, ability and task.

All results from assessments are analysed and used to inform future planning.

Cross phase continuity is ensured by:

- in-school liaison meetings between staff;
- transfer of pupil records of progress and summative assessment results.

Records of progress kept for each child are:

- updated as a minimum annually by teachers;
- examined by class teachers at the start of each academic year as they prepare for a new class;
- retained throughout the child's time at the school and appropriate records passed on to other schools when pupils leave.

Reporting to parents is done three times a year through consultation meetings and once through a written report in the summer term.

Results of individual pupils' assessments are made available to the parents.

Teaching Strategies and Styles

In order to ensure equality of access and effective matching of tasks to needs, teachers will employ a variety of teaching strategies in any one session. This will include:

- provision of a thematic curriculum;
- teacher observation;
- discussion and questioning (open and closed as appropriate);
- interactive teaching;
- listening;
- brainstorming;
- providing opportunities for reflection by pupils;
- demonstrating high expectations;
- providing opportunities for repetition/reinforcement;
- providing encouragement, positive reinforcement and praise;
- making judgements and responding to individual need;
- intervening, as appropriate, in the learning process in order to encourage development;
- providing all children with opportunities for success;
- using a range of communication strategies – verbal and non-verbal.

Activities should show a balance in terms of individual, group and whole class work. Specialist teaching is available from subject leaders, such as the Arabic teacher, and also in the form of visitors.

The emphasis of our policy is on a good variety of experiences and we encourage children increasingly to take an active role in their own learning. Thus:

- investigative work is used;
- children are encouraged to communicate findings in a variety of ways;
- opportunities are provided for children to become involved in decision making and to take responsibility, along with staff, for their own learning.

Key Skills Across the Curriculum

At Unique Academy we recognise the importance of key skills. Opportunities will be made available across the curriculum to develop:

- application of number;
- communication;
- computing skills
- problem solving;
- working with others;
- improving their own learning and performance.

Thinking skills will also be developed across the curriculum. This will include:

- creative thinking;
- enquiry;
- information processing;
- reasoning;
- evaluation.

At Unique Academy we recognise the importance of formative assessment and the important role it has to play in creating a learning culture.

We believe that formative assessment furthers and deepens learning and consists of four basic elements, underpinned by confidence that every child can improve and an awareness of the importance of children's high self-esteem.

Formative assessment carries with it the expectation that, when properly motivated and appropriately taught, all learners can reach a level of achievement which may currently appear beyond them. It provides a breadth of proven life-long learning skills based on an understanding of how we learn rather than what we ought to be learning. This includes:

- creating a positive learning environment;
- focusing all feedback on specific performance improvements which can be acted on;
- sharing an overview of content, process and benefits of the learning to come;
- engaging learners by posing problems and challenging thinking;
- providing opportunities for learners to meet the challenge in a variety of pairings and with multiple ways of representing their understanding;
- creating space for reflection and meaningful dialogue;
- reviewing what has been learned, how it was learned and how it will be used.

Learning Processes

Children enter school at different stages of development. Children learn in different ways and at different rates of progress. In the course of learning, children develop their skills through a variety of processes and learning styles. These include:

- investigation;
- experimentation;
- listening;
- observation;
- talking and discussion;
- asking questions;
- child-initiated play;
- practical exploration and role play;
- retrieving information;
- imagining;
- repetition;
- problem-solving;
- making choices and decision-making.

At Unique Academy, opportunities will be organised to allow pupils access to these processes, and for them to develop their own strategies to gain knowledge and skills.

We aim to provide opportunities to develop a wide range of learning styles. We recognise that each child has a unique way of learning and that learning preference is affected by previous experience, competence, confidence, beliefs and values.

We shall ensure that learning is accessed by as many means as possible, e.g. staff will be made aware of a range of theories and research linked to learning including encouraging a 'Growth Mindset'.

Planning will incorporate as many styles of working as possible. These styles include:

- individual learning;
- collaborative learning in small groups, or pairs;
- one to one learning with an adult, or more able pupil;
- whole class;
- independent learning.

Group work may include friendship, matched ability, mixed ability, etc, appropriate to the activity. Collaborative learning is encouraged, although some periods of the day may be set aside for silent work.

Teachers at Unique Academy feel that pupils 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

- the learning environment is well-organised and resources are easily accessed
- tasks are differentiated, matched to the child
- 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
- the teacher is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and motivated
- they have clearly defined targets which they can successfully achieve eg appropriate time scale

Effective learning is ensured through the process of monitoring successful teaching (see monitoring policy) and pupil's learning outcome.

Successful teaching takes account of children's prior learning and must ensure continuity and progression. Linked to the above, successful teaching is:

- confident – teachers have a clear understanding of subject knowledge and setting objectives
- high expectation – there is optimism about, and high expectation of success
- well planned – there is differentiation with methods and organisation strategies which match curricular objectives and needs of all pupils
- interactive – pupil's contributions are encouraged, expected, extended
- characterised by high quality oral work
- well paced – there is a sense of urgency, driven by the need to make progress and succeed
- informed – by assessment outcomes

Resources

Classroom and central resources are the responsibility of classroom teachers to ensure that:

- there is a range of appropriate, accessible and labelled resources available for which pupils can select materials suitable to the task in hand;
- all children know where classroom resources are kept and the rules about their access and use;
- children are encouraged to act independently in choosing, collecting and returning resources where appropriate;
- the class reading corner is a valued resource and used appropriately;
- children work together to establish an attractive, welcoming and well organised environment engendering respect, care and value for all resources.

Each classroom will be equipped with a basic set of resources and books appropriate to the age range.

Specialist resources are stored in the storage room and monitored by the school administrator. Consumables will be replenished as necessary. Staff may contact the school administrator with suggestions for specialist materials which may need ordering.

Pupils will be taught how to use all resources correctly and safely, with care and respect and with regard for Health and Safety and waste. Care will be taken to ensure that resources reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of our society, and that all pupils have equality of access.

At Unique Academy the use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum is valued and these are used throughout the school to widen children's experiences and support learning across a range of subject areas.

Time is a resource that we value. To maximise its use:

- as children progress throughout the school they are encouraged to take greater control of their own learning, including their use of time;
- opportunities for learning are maximised by ensuring that tasks are made specific by focused objectives;
- teachers will encourage pupils to work within given time scales, and will facilitate the effective use of time through the provision of appropriate resources and planning extension activities;
- all children engage in useful activities upon entering the classroom and know what to do between the end of an activity and the end of a session.

Computing is a major resource and opportunities should be used wherever appropriate to incorporate IT into the subjects.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Pupils' work will be monitored and moderated regularly in each of the core curriculum areas by the Headteacher. Children's books will be monitored and learning walks will be carried out on a regular basis.