



Teaching and Learning Policy

Chair of Governors: 

Executive Headteacher: Mr. Dean Gordon NPQH

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1. Introduction

This policy sets out the principles, expectations and approaches to teaching and learning at The Phoenix Federation. It ensures consistency of approach across both Grinling Gibbons Primary School and Oak Gardens Primary School whilst recognising each child's individuality and unique learning needs.

Curriculum (what we teach) and **pedagogy** (how we teach) are inextricably linked. This policy addresses both, grounded in evidence-informed practice and research on how children learn most effectively.

All that we do at The Phoenix Federation is underpinned by our five core values:

Aspirational • Brave • Compassionate • Determined • Enlightened

2. Vision and Aims

Our Vision

At The Phoenix Federation, we believe that every child deserves an exceptional education that ignites curiosity, builds confidence and prepares them for success in an ever-changing world. We are committed to providing a rich, inclusive and ambitious curriculum delivered through expert teaching that enables all pupils to achieve their full potential.

Our Aims

Our aims are for every child to:

- Engage with a broad, balanced and experiential curriculum that leads to success, both academic and holistic
- Learn and make progress across all curriculum areas, developing deep knowledge and transferable skills
- Develop effective learning behaviours for lifelong learning, including motivation, curiosity, enthusiasm, collaboration and resilience
- Become confident, articulate communicators through the explicit development of oracy and vocabulary
- Experience high-quality, adaptive teaching that meets their individual needs and removes barriers to learning

3. Prerequisites for Learning

At The Phoenix Federation, we recognise Maslow's Hierarchy of Need as an important framework for understanding what needs to be in place for children to achieve and thrive. Before effective learning can take place, pupils must have their fundamental needs met.

We ensure that:

- High-quality relationships exist between adults and children, and between children and their peers
- A positive learning culture is established where children feel safe, are able to take risks and learn from mistakes
- Learning environments are calm and purposeful, with clear routines and structures understood by all

- Classrooms are well-organised with accessible resources that promote independence
- Children attend school every day and on time, because every lesson counts
- Pupils' emotional wellbeing is prioritised, enabling them to be ready to learn

Guiding Principles

Pupils learn best in our Federation when they:

- Have their basic physical needs met and feel secure, safe and valued
- Feel a sense of belonging to their class and school community
- Are engaged, motivated and can see the relevance of their learning
- Know what success looks like and understand the steps to achieve it
- Can link new learning to prior knowledge and other experiences
- Have access to the resources and tools they need
- Are guided, taught and supported in appropriate ways at appropriate times
- Have opportunities to practise, apply and consolidate their learning
- Can persevere when learning is challenging and manage their emotions
- Recognise that mistakes are a valuable part of learning

4. Evidence-Informed Pedagogy

Our approach to teaching and learning is grounded in the best available evidence from educational research. We draw on cognitive science, evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation and other high-quality research to inform our practice.

The Gradual Release of Responsibility Model

As a federation, we follow the pedagogical approach of the **Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR)** model. This evidence-informed teaching strategy gradually shifts the cognitive load from the teacher to the pupil, building independence and confidence in learners.

The model is structured around three interconnected phases:

I Do (Explicit Instruction and Modelling)

In this initial phase, the teacher provides explicit, direct instruction. The teacher demonstrates a skill or concept, providing a clear example of what success looks like. This involves:

- Thinking aloud to make reasoning and thought processes visible
- Breaking complex tasks into manageable steps
- Explicitly teaching vocabulary and key concepts
- Modelling the language pupils will need to use
- Checking for understanding through questioning

We Do (Guided Practice)

During this phase, pupils begin to practise the skill with the teacher's support. The teacher facilitates this process by:

- Providing structured scaffolds that are gradually removed
- Offering immediate feedback and correcting misconceptions
- Facilitating collaborative learning with peers
- Using questioning to deepen understanding
- Building pupil confidence through supported practice

You Do (Independent Practice)

In the final phase, pupils work independently to apply what they have learned. The teacher's support is reduced, allowing pupils to:

- Take full responsibility for their learning and decision-making
- Apply knowledge and skills in both familiar and new contexts
- Demonstrate mastery and depth of understanding
- Develop metacognitive awareness of their own learning
- Build resilience and independence as learners

Important: The GRR model is not linear. Effective teachers move flexibly between phases based on ongoing assessment of pupil understanding. If misconceptions emerge during independent practice, teachers return to modelling and guided practice.

5. Oracy and Vocabulary Development

At The Phoenix Federation, we recognise that language is the foundation of all learning. Our school context, with approximately 50% of pupils speaking English as an additional language, makes the explicit teaching of oracy and vocabulary even more essential.

Oracy

Oracy is the ability to articulate ideas, develop understanding and engage with others through speaking and listening. We believe that oracy is not just a skill to be developed but a **tool for learning** across all subjects.

Our approach to oracy includes:

- Structured talk activities in every lesson, including talk partners, group discussions and whole-class dialogue
- Explicit teaching of speaking and listening skills through Talk for Writing in EYFS and KS1
- Sentence stems and talk frames to scaffold academic discourse
- Opportunities for pupils to rehearse and refine their oral responses before writing
- Debate and discussion embedded across the curriculum
- High expectations for pupils to speak in full sentences using subject-specific vocabulary
- Participation in Debate Mate and other enrichment opportunities that develop confident communication

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Research demonstrates that vocabulary knowledge is one of the strongest predictors of academic success. We prioritise the explicit teaching of vocabulary across all subjects.

Our approach includes:

- **Pre-teaching key vocabulary:** Essential words are introduced before the lesson, with definitions, examples and opportunities for practice
- **Tiered vocabulary instruction:** Tier 2 (high-utility academic words) and Tier 3 (subject-specific terminology) are explicitly taught
- **Multiple exposures:** New vocabulary is revisited frequently across different contexts to secure understanding

- **Word-rich environments:** Working walls and displays feature key vocabulary with definitions and visual representations
- **Morphology instruction:** Pupils are taught to understand word roots, prefixes and suffixes to unlock meaning
- **Vocabulary notebooks:** Pupils record and revisit new vocabulary in dedicated vocabulary books or sections

Use of Widget Symbols

We use **Widget symbols** to support communication and comprehension for all pupils, particularly those with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), those with English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs.

Widget symbols are used:

- On visual timetables to support understanding of daily routines
- In key vocabulary displays and working walls
- On learning resources and task instructions
- In social stories and behaviour support materials
- To support communication for pupils who are pre-verbal or have limited verbal communication
- Alongside text to support comprehension through dual coding (visual and text together)

6. Adaptive Teaching

At The Phoenix Federation, we are committed to ensuring that all pupils can access high-quality teaching and make strong progress from their starting points. **Adaptive teaching** is our approach to meeting the diverse needs of all learners within the classroom.

We recognise that the most effective inclusion strategy begins with everyday high-quality teaching. Adaptive teaching is not about creating different work for different groups, but about anticipating barriers and providing the support needed for all pupils to access ambitious learning.

Key Principles of Adaptive Teaching

- **Same ambitious curriculum for all:** We do not lower expectations. All pupils are entitled to access the full curriculum.
- **Scaffolding, not simplifying:** We provide temporary supports that enable access, which are removed as pupils develop independence.
- **Flexible groupings:** Groupings are responsive to learning needs and change according to the task, not fixed by prior attainment.
- **Pre-teaching to enable access:** Key vocabulary and concepts are pre-taught to pupils who may need additional preparation.
- **Assessment informs adaptation:** Teachers continuously assess understanding and adapt in real-time.

Strategies for Adaptive Teaching

Teachers will adapt their teaching by:

- Providing scaffolds such as writing frames, word banks, sentence stems and worked examples
- Using dual coding (text and visual) to present information accessibly
- Making full use of technology including visualisers and interactive resources
- Carefully considering the presentation of information (font size, layout, cognitive load)
- Using Widget symbols to support communication and comprehension
- Deploying support staff effectively to enable access rather than create dependency
- Streaming the teaching of reading in EYFS and KS1 to match phonics instruction to need
- Providing additional thinking time for pupils who need it
- Adjusting the level of teacher support during guided and independent practice

Meeting Specific Needs

We adapt learning to meet the needs of:

- **Pupils with SEND:** Working closely with the SENCo, pupils and families to establish appropriate support and reasonable adjustments
- **Pupils with EAL:** Prioritising vocabulary development, visual support, and opportunities for structured talk
- **Disadvantaged pupils:** Ensuring access to high-quality resources, enrichment and targeted support
- **Higher-attaining pupils:** Providing challenge through depth, complexity and application rather than acceleration

7. The Graduated Response: Universal, Targeted and Specialist Provision

Our approach to meeting the needs of all pupils operates through a graduated response, often visualised as a pyramid of support. This ensures that provision is matched to need and that pupils receive the right level of support at the right time.

Universal Provision (Quality First Teaching)

The foundation of our approach is **Quality First Teaching** - high-quality, inclusive teaching for every child in every classroom. This is the most powerful lever for improving outcomes and is our primary focus.

At the Universal level, all pupils receive:

- An ambitious, well-sequenced curriculum designed to build knowledge cumulatively
- Teaching following the Gradual Release of Responsibility model
- Explicit teaching of vocabulary and oracy embedded across all subjects
- Adaptive teaching strategies that anticipate and remove barriers
- Regular formative assessment and responsive teaching
- Scaffolds, visual supports and Widget symbols where appropriate
- Structured opportunities for talk and collaboration
- Positive relationships and a safe, inclusive learning environment

Targeted Provision (Additional Interventions)

Where pupils require additional support to meet their learning goals, we provide **targeted interventions** that supplement, not replace, quality first teaching.

Targeted interventions include:

- Precision teaching for rapid recall of key facts
- 1:1 phonics tutoring for pupils requiring catch-up
- Fresh Start intervention for older pupils who have not yet secured phonics
- Lexia literacy intervention for targeted reading support
- Boosting Language and Auditory Speech Training (BLAST)
- Black Sheep Speech and Language programmes
- Nurture provision for pupils requiring additional emotional support
- Language for Behaviour programmes
- Pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts
- Same-day or next-day intervention following assessment

Important: Targeted interventions are time-limited, regularly reviewed and focused on closing specific gaps. They are delivered in addition to, not instead of, quality first teaching. Interventions are evaluated for impact and discontinued if not demonstrating progress.

Specialist Provision

For pupils who require a significantly higher level of support, we provide **specialist provision** through close partnership with external agencies and Lewisham Local Authority.

Specialist provision may include:

- Highly personalised support plans developed with the SENCo and external professionals
- Involvement of Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists and other specialists
- Implementation of recommendations from EHCP assessments
- Access to Grinling Gardens alternative provision for pupils at risk of exclusion
- Specialist equipment and resources
- Close partnership working with families and multi-agency teams

8. Curriculum Planning

The Federation uses high-quality schemes of learning to inform planning. These are selected to align with our pedagogical approach and are adapted to meet the needs of our community.

Curriculum Area	Scheme / Approach
Phonics and Early Reading	Read Write Inc
Reading at KS2	Destination Reader
Writing	Literacy Tree
Mathematics	White Rose Maths, supplemented with NCETM resources and Mastering Number
Science	Bespoke Phoenix Curriculum
History and Geography	Bespoke Phoenix Curriculum

Physical Education	The PE Hub
Music KS1	Kapow
Music Lower KS2	Ukulele
Music Upper KS2	Steel Pans
PSHE	Bespoke Phoenix Curriculum
RE	Lewisham Agreed Syllabus
RSE	Christopher Winter Project
Art	Access Art
DT	Bespoke Phoenix Curriculum

9. Learning Environment

We recognise that the physical learning environment significantly impacts pupils' ability to focus and learn. Our classrooms are designed to be purposeful, calm and supportive of learning.

Our learning environments will include:

- Working walls containing information relevant to current learning, including key vocabulary with Widget symbols
- Clearly labelled resources that promote independence
- Comfortable and attractive zones such as reading corners and quiet areas
- Seating layouts that allow all pupils to see the board and participate
- Class charters displaying agreed behaviour expectations
- Visual timetables supported with Widget symbols

Low-arousal classrooms: We recognise that some pupils struggle to focus in overstimulating environments. We aim to keep classrooms purposeful and low-arousal through: use of neutral hessian to back display boards; presenting information with words and visuals; keeping hanging displays to a minimum.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

Teaching and learning is our core offer and everyone's responsibility. Everyone in our community has an important role to play in ensuring all children achieve and thrive.

Teachers

- Follow the Teachers' Standards and Federation policies consistently
- Plan and deliver lessons following the Gradual Release of Responsibility model
- Explicitly teach vocabulary and provide structured opportunities for oracy
- Adapt teaching to meet the needs of all learners
- Use assessment to inform planning and address gaps promptly
- Communicate effectively with parents through newsletters, Class Dojo and parents' evenings
- Have high expectations of all pupils and celebrate achievement

- Engage in professional development to continually improve practice

Support Staff

- Know pupils well and adapt support to meet individual learning needs
- Support teaching and learning with flexibility and resourcefulness
- Promote independence rather than dependency
- Use agreed assessment for learning strategies
- Deliver targeted interventions effectively
- Provide feedback to teachers on pupils' progress and understanding
- Attend relevant training and CPD opportunities

Subject Leaders

- Create well-sequenced curriculum plans that build knowledge and skills cumulatively
- Ensure curriculum planning identifies key vocabulary for explicit teaching
- Drive improvement in their subject through monitoring and support
- Moderate progress and standards across the federation
- Provide CPD and support for colleagues in their subject area
- Resource their subject effectively within budget

Senior Leaders

- Maintain a clear and ambitious vision for high-quality, inclusive education
- Hold staff to account for the quality of teaching and learning
- Plan and evaluate strategies to secure consistently high-quality teaching
- Lead and monitor the impact of CPD programmes
- Address underachievement and intervene promptly
- Provide coaching and mentoring to support staff development

Pupils

- Take responsibility for their own learning and support the learning of others
- Attend school every day, on time and ready to learn
- Be curious, ambitious, engaged and confident learners
- Put maximum effort into their work
- Know their targets and how to improve
- Complete home learning activities as required

Parents and Carers

- Value learning and encourage their child as a learner
- Ensure their child attends school every day, on time and ready to learn
- Participate in discussions about their child's progress
- Support home learning including daily reading
- Communicate with the school to share relevant information

Governors

- Monitor that resources and funding are allocated effectively
- Monitor the impact of teaching and learning on pupils' progress and attainment
- Hold senior leaders to account for the implementation of this policy
- Ensure Federation policies promote high-quality teaching

11. Continuing Professional Development

At The Phoenix Federation, we are committed to developing all staff as expert practitioners. We believe that investment in professional development directly improves outcomes for pupils.

CPD Principles

- CPD is evidence-informed and rooted in research on effective practice
- Training is sustained over time, not one-off events, allowing for embedding and practice
- CPD priorities are aligned with school improvement priorities and individual development needs
- All staff have access to high-quality professional development appropriate to their role
- Impact of CPD is evaluated through improved practice and pupil outcomes

CPD Opportunities

- Weekly staff meetings with structured professional development time
- INSET days focused on Federation priorities
- Subject-specific training led by subject leaders
- External training and courses aligned to school priorities
- Coaching and mentoring programmes
- Peer observation and collaborative planning
- Access to research and professional reading
- Early Career Framework support for ECTs
- NPQ programmes for aspiring and current leaders

Current CPD Priorities

- Embedding the Gradual Release of Responsibility model consistently across all classes
- Developing expertise in explicit vocabulary instruction
- Strengthening adaptive teaching strategies for our diverse learners
- Improving the quality of feedback and its impact on pupil progress
- Supporting staff to use Widget symbols and visual supports effectively

12. Assessment, Recording and Reporting

We track pupils' progress using a combination of formative and summative assessment. Assessment is used to inform teaching, identify gaps and ensure all pupils make strong progress.

Formative Assessment

Teachers assess pupils continuously through:

- Hinge questions to check understanding at key points
- Targeted questioning to assess individual and group understanding
- Choral responses and whole-class feedback
- Live marking and immediate feedback during lessons
- Observation of pupils during guided and independent practice
- Exit tickets and mini-plenaries

Summative Assessment

- Termly summative assessment in reading and mathematics for Years 1-6
- Renaissance Learning (STAR) assessments to track reading progress
- Statutory assessments: EYFS Profile, Year 1 Phonics Screening, KS1 SATs, Multiplication Tables Check, KS2 SATs
- Teacher assessment in writing and foundation subjects

Reporting to Parents

- Termly verbal reports at parents' evenings
- Written annual report in the summer term
- Ongoing communication through Class Dojo

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

At The Phoenix Federation, we use a robust quality assurance process to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Our aim is to ensure consistency and coherence across the federation while supporting continuous improvement.

Quality assurance activities include:

- Learning walks focused on agreed priorities
- Book looks and work scrutiny
- Planning reviews
- Pupil voice and staff voice
- Data analysis and pupil progress meetings
- Moderation of standards within and across schools

Feedback from quality assurance is developmental and supportive. Next steps are identified to support staff in their continuing professional development. All quality assurance activities are rooted in the Teachers' Standards.

14. Home Learning

Home learning supports pupils to make connections between what they have learnt in school and the wider world. Research demonstrates that homework involving digital technology typically has greater impact, so we make full use of platforms like Mathletics and Times Tables Rock Stars.

Home learning expectations:

- Daily reading (pupils will be given a book at their level to read at home)
- Maths tasks set via Mathletics and Times Tables Rock Stars
- Spellings adapted for the child's current spelling ability

- Project-based learning for half-terms and holidays
- In Year 6, CGP books support consolidation in reading and maths

15. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Executive Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

16. Links with Other Policies

This policy links with the following policies and procedures:

- Positive Behaviour and Trusting Relationships Policy
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Home-School Agreement
- Quality Assurance Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Curriculum Policy