

Gurnos Nursery



Teaching and Learning Policy

“Let the magic begin...”

Introduction

At Gurnos Nursery, our policies are regularly viewed. This reflects current practice and all government guidance and statutory requirements.

Our children are the magic in our vision, our development and our future success. As parents, careers, teachers, governors and the wider community we will work together to inspire, enthuse and broaden the horizons of every child at every stage of their development.

At Gurnos Nursery we are committed to high quality teaching and learning to raise standards of achievement for all children. All teachers and governors have been consulted in developing this policy, which summarizes expectations and common working practices. 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 visions.

Aims and Objectives

At Gurnos Nursery, we aim to provide a broad and balanced Foundation Phase curriculum that allows every child to develop lifelong skills.

Principles of Teaching and Learning

Learning is the purpose of the whole school and is a shared commitment. At Gurnos Nursery we recognize that education involves children, parents, staff governors, 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 the individuals and provide opportunities for all pupils to make the best possible progress and attain the highest personal achievements.
- Ensure the children can develop as literate, numerate and technologically competent individuals, within a broad, balanced, exciting and challenging curriculum.
- Involve parents in their children's learning through termly Parent Consultations, coffee mornings, newsletters and informative displays and literature.
- Cater for the needs of the whole child. We recognize the importance of catering for children's basic needs i.e. food, water, stimulating and welcoming environment, and promote a healthy lifestyle through a daily routine which includes stimulating exercise to kick-start the day.
- Seek to broaden children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

- Support children to develop, through example and explanation, a sense of responsibility, self-discipline and respect for themselves, one another, the nursery environment, and the local community.
- Ensure that children, staff, parents and careers, governors and the community feel a sense of belonging and ownership and take pride in the Nursery.

Teaching:

- To create a working environment that all staff find stimulating and supportive; where their contributions and skills are recognized and valued.
- To provide staff with opportunities for professional development.
- To provide value for money within a balanced budget.
- To maintain a sound working relationship between staff and governors for the benefit of the whole school community.

Everyone has an important role to play in contributing to learning, therefore the term 'educator' can equally apply to parents, teachers, early years practitioners and other children. Effective educators support learning by being alongside the child – modeling, scaffolding, validation and extended learning.

Teaching should be relevant, creative, inspirational and enthusiastic, within an atmosphere of trust and respect. We believe that educators teach best when they:

- Have a good knowledge of the individual's abilities, learning styles and attainments.
- Use observations and evaluations of individual children's learning, interests, preferences and needs to inform future planning.
- Have clear expectations of what the children are expected to achieve.
- Are able to relate learning intentions to the children's own life experiences.
- Develop the child's ability to independently think and problem solve.
- Actively promote positive behaviours which create an environment in which learning can take place.
- Challenge stereotypes and promote a positive appreciation of difference.
- Share a sense of enjoyment and excitement with the children.

Planning:

Teaching can only be assessed as being effective if learning is taking place and whilst learning can be accidental and incidental it must be routed in clear and rigorous planning. Planning must take account of the school's curriculum and the individual learning needs of the pupils within the class. We are constantly striving to enhance the quality of our teaching and thorough planning closely matched to pupils' needs is an essential element of this. Therefore, planning will be monitored to ensure that the following aspects are apparent:

- Clear objectives
- Details of the activities pupils will undertake which must be linked to the learning objective(s) for the lesson

- A variety of teaching and learning styles
- Rich and probing questions
- Differentiation (identifying individuals and groups of children as appropriate)
- Assessment foci
- Relevant, high quality, stimulating resources

Plans are based upon previous assessment data, pupil need and curriculum.

Learning

- To ensure all children acquire the essential skills in language and communication and numeracy; and develop the ability to use these effectively.
- To create a climate of understanding, care, worth and mutual respect.
- To ensure equality for all by delivering a curriculum which gives all children the chance to realize their full potential?
- To promote learners bilingual skills and reflect the language and culture of Wales.
- To provide activities that children find meaningful and stimulating.
- To help children develop lively, enquiring minds and the ability to reason.
- To develop core values: independence, curious, confident, enthusiastic, respectful and happy.

We believe that learning is an active process and that children learn through meaningful and purposeful play and having fun. Everyone has their own individual learning style and we recognize the need to develop strategies that allow all children to learn in the ways that suits them best. Learning styles may be visual, auditory and/or kinaesthetic. Teaching styles at Gurnos Nursery reflect the different ways in which people learn. Learning is the purpose of the school and is a shared commitment.

Learning Environment

The importance we attach to an exciting, stimulating learning environment, both indoors and outdoors is reflective of the ethos of the Nursery, and its aims and shared values. A stimulating environment sets the climate for learning and will include:

- Creative exploration and expression.
- Investigation, experimentation and finding out.
- Small focused groups, individual and whole class learning.
- Independent, child-led, co-operative and adult supportive learning.
- Using actions and words to answer questions.
- Well organized areas, with interactive displays and easily accessible resources to encourage independence.

Ethos

The ethos and atmosphere underpin the agreed aims of the school. In the course of their daily work the staff will contribute to the development of this ethos through:

- Providing a calm and effective working environment, in which each child can produce his or her best work.
- Providing a welcoming environment, in which courtesy, kindness and respect are fostered.
- Providing positive role models.
- Providing a fair and disciplined environment, in line with the school's behavior policy.
- Effective management of their professional time.
- Developing links with all stakeholders and the wider community.
- Valuing and celebrating pupils' success and achievements.
- Reviewing personal and professional development in order to ensure a high level of professional expertise.

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 schools' aims by:

- Esteeming 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 recognizing the importance of different cultures.
- Encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behavior and work.
- Working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another.

Teachers will endeavor 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, well prepared and organised.
- Keep up-to-date with educational issues.

- Provide clear information on school procedures and all 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.

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 behavior.
- 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.

The community is invited to support the school by:

- Contributing to activities, such as assemblies, specialist outings, 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.

The School's Governing Body:

Our governors agree, support, monitor and review the Nursery policy on Teaching and Learning. In particular, they:

- Ensure that the building and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning.
- Monitor teaching and learning strategies in light of health and safety.
- Ensure the policies promote high quality learning experiences.

- Keep themselves informed through regular meetings with staff and visits to the Nursery, including Learning Walks based on current objectives in the School Improvement Plan.

Planning

The foundation for curricular development is the School Improvement Plan, developed through a process of collaboration between staff, and approved by Governors.

At Gurnos Nursery we are committed to following the programme of study as required by the Foundation Phase. We follow the cross curricular approach to learning. Regular staff meetings are used to discuss various aspects of the curriculum and ensure consistency of approach and standards.

Planning takes place weekly.

Organisation and Learning Environment

The learning environment will be managed in such a way as to facilitate different styles of learning.

Opportunities will be made for:

- Whole class teaching.
- Group work, organized according to appropriate criteria (i.e. ability, mixed ability, friendship, 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 organized to facilitate learning and the development of independence. For example:

- Resources in each area.
- Book corners will be comfortable and attractive.
- Labels and posters should be used wherever possible/appropriate to reflect the language diversity in the school.

- Areas for imaginative 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. Classroom support is available in the form of both learning support assistants and volunteers. These are used at the discretion of the class teacher. Volunteer helpers assist with the many aspects of school life, including supporting the Foundation Phase Curriculum and providing assistance with school visits. Students are welcomed into school and certain standards of dress and conduct are expected.

Excellence is celebrated in display and performance. Each child is given an opportunity to have work displayed during the school year. School events such as performances and assemblies are seen as opportunities for all pupils to demonstrate their own best performance. Pupils are encouraged to believe that any exhibited work (performance or display) should represent their highest standards of personal achievement. 'Star of the Week' Awards are given weekly to celebrate individual academic or behavioural achievement. 'Head Teacher Awards' are given once a month to two pupils in each class for achieving their personal best in an area of learning.

Differentiation

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 differentiate the curriculum according to individual needs by:

- Pace.
- Content.
- Task.
- Relevance.
- Resources.
- Extension.
- Autonomy.
- Outcome.
- Teacher/adult support.

Differentiated tasks will be detailed in weekly planning. Learning objectives will be specified for all differentiated teaching and reference will be made in weekly plans to Individual Education Plans where appropriate.

Pupils with Additional Learning Needs (including gifted and talented children) receive support provided by a learning support teacher. Extra support is given in the

classroom from learning support assistants. Additionally, advice is sought from relevant external support agencies when and where the need demands it.

Teachers set individual targets each term per child in English and Mathematics. This is in addition to the formative assessment targets the teachers communicate to the children on a weekly or daily basis where appropriate.

Homework

Homework is considered to be a valuable element of the learning process.

At Gurnos Nursery, we use homework books to encourage parents to work with their children at home. It provides the children with an opportunity to reflect on their learning and to develop their independent thinking skills. Children are expected to take pride in their work and parents are asked to support their child but not carry out the tasks.

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 practise and consolidate their skills and knowledge with strategies.
- To view learning as a life-long process and not just restricted to school hours.

The schools' agreed practise for homework is that:

- Homework is set on a weekly basis.
- Homework will generally follow on from work which has taken place in class but may take many different forms. It should not entail new ideas that require some explanation from a teacher.
- Homework may sometimes consist of preparation work yet to be done.
- Children should understand exactly what they are expected to do and how to do it.
- Homework should sometimes involve the participation of the parents.

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.

Formal summative assessment is carried out at the beginning and end of the school year using the Foundation Phase Profile. Children are baselined within six weeks of starting school. This data is revisited within the final six weeks of school.

Suitable tasks for assessment include:

- Group discussions.
- Specific assignments for individual pupils.
- Pupil observations.

Feedback to pupils about their own progress is achieved through discussion and the marking 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.

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

At Gurnos Nursery we recognise the importance of Assessment for Learning 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. The four elements are: sharing success criteria; effective questioning; self and peer evaluation; effective feedback. 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.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Pupils' work will be monitored and moderated regularly in each of the core curriculum areas by the Senior Leadership Team. A termly review of monitoring procedures is held with all members of the teaching staff in the form of Pupil Progress Meetings which include discussions around our whole school Provision Map and the impact of the interventions that are used. Book scrutinies occur termly. The Headteacher will observe each class teacher in a specified curriculum area once a term. The Performance Management cycle informs learning and teaching.

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 cross-curricular framework.
- Teacher observation.
- Discussion and questioning (open and closed as appropriate).
- Previewing and reviewing work.
- 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 judgments 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 when they can be released from class 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.

At Gurnos Nursery, we recognize 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 own learning and performance.

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

- Creative thinking.
- Enquiry.
- Information processing.
- Reasoning.
- Evaluation.

Learning Processes and Learning Styles

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.
- Child-initiated play.
- Practical exploration and role play.
- Retrieving information.
- Imagining.
- Repetition.
- Problem solving.
- Making choices and decision-making.

At Gurnos Nursery opportunities are organized 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 assessed by as many means as possible e.g. VAK. Staff are aware of a range of theories and research linked to learning.

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

- Individual learning.
- Collaborative learning in small group, 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.

Teachers at Gurnos Nursery feel that pupils learn best when:

- They are happy, healthy and alert – receptive and positive.
- They are interested and involved – learning is relevant and stimulant.
- The purpose of a task is understood – they understand why they are doing it.
- They feel secure – in terms of environment, relationships, 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 e.g. appropriate time scale.

Effective learning is ensured through the process of monitoring successful teaching and pupils learning outcome i.e. Baseline Assessment, standards grid.

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 organization strategies which match curricular objectives and needs of all pupils.
- Interactive – pupil's contributions are encouraged, expected and 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 and learning support assistants, who ensure that:

- There is a range of appropriate, accessible and labeled 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.
- Children work together to establish an attractive, welcoming and well organized 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 will be stored in the appropriate curriculum resource cupboard/area, and will be regularly audited by the subject leaders. Consumables will be replenished as necessary. Staff may contact subject leaders with suggestions for specialist materials which may need ordering.

Children 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 Gurnos Nursery 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:

- 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.

ICT is a major resource, which is used across the whole curriculum.

Health and Safety issues are the responsibility of all who work in the school. Two members of staff are nominated as Health and Safety Representatives and all

problems should be reported to them. These are the Headteacher and the School Secretary.

We will assess the impact of this policy by:

- Monitoring children's achievement.
- Taking part in external moderation.
- Reviewing the Teaching and Learning Policy (and associated policies) annually.

Criteria for success:

Data relating to all areas of the curriculum is used effectively to track and ensure progress for individuals and groups of children over time, and is regularly shared with the Governing Body Curriculum Committee and full Governing Body.

Parents' comments, gathered via annual questionnaires, how levels of satisfaction regarding their children's learning and development.

Pupil Management and Behaviour

- Promote and celebrate positive behavior throughout the Nursery.
- Ensure that all provision is inclusive.
- Ensure we maintain a positive learning environment throughout the Nursery.
- Seek to promote positive learning attitudes and respect for the beliefs and opinions of others.

School Support

- Through systems of Performance Management and Appraisal, the Headteacher will review teaching and learning and ensure appropriate Continuous Professional Development each academic year.

Monitoring

The Headteacher carries out an annual cycle of monitoring teaching and learning, supported by members of the Governing Body and the School Achievement Partner and, where appropriate, early years consultants. Termly Headteacher Reports are presented to the Governing Body and also inform the School Improvement Plan.