



Curriculum Policy
(Inc Teaching and Learning and Homework)
2023-2024

Pear Tree Mead Academy
Part of the Passmores Co-operative Learning
Community

Curriculum Policy

Pear Tree Mead (PTM) dedicates itself to 'Pupils That Matter.' We embody this in our ethos, values, and curriculum. Because of this we aim to provide our children with an engaging, exciting, and empowering curriculum that equips them for today and tomorrow.

Intent

At PTM the curriculum is designed to 'help all children grow so that they can reach the branches to their future.' This is done through:

- Self-belief
- Respect
- Aspiration
- Inquisitiveness
- Resilience and
- Togetherness

The PTM curriculum aims to be broad and balanced and relevant for our Harlow community. This means that learning opportunities are underpinned by basic life skills along with our strong core values. As a staff we feel it is important to enable children to be independent, adventurous and develop a growth mindset through all experiences they encounter.

PTM are dedicated to well-being and a positive mental health, and this is a key feature in the development of the PTM curriculum. We celebrate and welcome difference, all cultures, diversity, beliefs and most of all ourselves and the beauty in being unique.

Implementation

The PTM curriculum was created through a united desire to provide more for our children and their individual needs. Therefore, we have developed a set of PTM progressions for Foundation subjects that allow us to teach and develop in a more inclusive and child centred way. We follow the National Curriculum and supplement their division across the year groups with a set of PTM skills. These skills are what we believe is needed to enthuse and support our community.

We teach on a one-year programme of objectives and skills where the 'focus,' 'experience' or 'approach' may change. This allows PTM staff to teach through current affairs, community links, common interests, or a philosophical question. The options are endless!

The one recurring feature for planning is that we have a child's voice. The PTM curriculum comes to life through the 'forward planning sessions' held every term with the children. This is where the children discuss and involve themselves in the next stages of learning.

We are very lucky to have extensive grounds and a plethora of opportunities on our doorstep. We take advantage of these boasting a forest school, various habitats (pond, allotment, outdoor classroom), outdoor learning opportunities and our own swimming pool. We involve our community in as many experiences as possible from community days, family visits, workshops, guest speakers and links with the secondary schools and colleges. PTM staff understand that these are the links to further aspirations and future goals.

PTM have a commitment to inclusion, accessibility, and positive self-image. We provide a Nurture group, flexible learning mentors and extended school provision that supports all these areas. PTM staff understand the beauty in being unique and endeavour to provide opportunities to strengthen this.

Subject leaders play an important part in the success of the curriculum by leading a regular programme of monitoring, evaluation and review and the celebration of good practice contributes to the ongoing commitment to evolve and improve further. All subject leaders are given training and the opportunity to keep developing their own subject knowledge, skills and understanding, so they can support curriculum development and their colleagues throughout the school.

Impact

The innovative practice across the school provides a strong foundation and opportunities for children to collaborate and develop social skills both indoors and out. This curriculum design ensures that the needs of individual and small groups of children can be met within the environment of quality first teaching, supported by targeted, proven interventions where appropriate. In this way it can be seen to impact in a very positive way on children's outcomes.

Enjoyment of the curriculum promotes achievement, confidence, and good behaviour. Children feel safe to try new things. High quality visits and visitors to the school enhance the curriculum and provide opportunities for writing and communicating for a purpose.

At PTM we continue to develop and broaden our outcomes. We continue to involve the children and their views through the school council, wellbeing team, pupil perception and the family group feedback. This means we will always know if we are on the right lines!

Special Educational Needs

- The PTM curriculum is designed to provide access and the best opportunities for all children who attend our school. If a child has a special educational need, the school will endeavour to meet all individual needs. We comply with the requirements set out in the SEND Code of Practice in providing for children with special needs and disability. The school provides group / individual support for children identified to be on the SEND register. A plan will set out the nature of the need, and outlines how the school will aim to address it. Targets for improvement are set and regular reviews and monitoring of children's progress is made.
- Inclusion and work adaption are of high importance for our curriculum to meet the needs of all PTM children, these may include the targets from an ILP or EHCP. Quality first teaching is always the primary approach for all children.
- A nurture group, providing an individualised curriculum, can be accessed by most SEND children in an EHCP plan and others that are in need. This runs 5 times a week.

The role of the subject leader

The brief role of the subject leader is to:

- develop and work from subject action plan, which are linked to the whole school priorities.
- Keep the school website up to date and relevant for their subject.
- provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject based around the subject needs.
- support and offer advice to colleagues on issues related to the subject.
- Follow PTM monitoring guidelines to monitor pupils progress in that subject area, including, talking to children (pupil perception), planning scrutiny, 'book looks,' possible lesson observations and possible teacher interviews.
- provide efficient resource management for the subject.
- review PTM NC and skills coverage.
- Identify areas for improvement and record these on a subject SEF.
- To record the time taken to manage the subject, activities undertaken and outcomes in order to see if management is appropriate.

The subject leader may also keep a portfolio of children's work, displays and photos which can be used to show the achievements of children at each key stage and to give examples of expectations of attainment. Subject leaders may also lead creative days, workshops and sessions involving the whole school. Each subject has opportunities to showcase their subjects, and this is on a rota in order to personalise and not overwhelm the curriculum.

Monitoring and review

A curriculum leader is responsible for the overall organisation of the curriculum across the school. The curriculum leader ensures the National Curriculum is covered along with PTM skills. The curriculum leader also monitors the overall level of each subject being taught through the subject leaders.

Subject leaders monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school. They examine all planning and carry out pupil perception interviews to track their engagement with the subject. Subject leaders have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed in order to assist quality teaching and learning.

Our governing body's committee are informed and engaged in monitoring the way the school curriculum is implemented. Opportunities are provided for governors to liaise with members of staff.

They are provided with 'termly implementation forms and an end of year subject SEF. The showcase the work undertaken by the subject leader and the impact the curriculum area is having on the whole school.

Community cohesion

There is a duty for schools to promote community cohesion under the Education and Inspections Act 2006. PTM lies in a mixed community area in both socio-economic terms as well as culturally although the school has a predominantly white British intake.

Although our school has a predominantly white British intake this is increasingly changing. In order to support our children, families, and the community we have an EAL lead who oversees any cultural needs we may have. It can be seen in our PTM curriculum that we have strong links to pockets of the community, and these are ever growing. Our EAL lead oversees quality opportunities for these learners.

Our PTM ethos and curriculum promotes the sense of community cohesion and works closely with a number of other schools in the community to promote this. This is overseen by our outdoor learning lead and in the action plan it clearly shows links to the community and our endeavour to be a positive part of this.

Teaching and Learning

Learning - We acknowledge that people learn in many different ways, and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them. The psychologist Howard Gardner identifies seven main areas of intelligence: linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal/group working, and intrapersonal/reflective. We take into account these different forms of intelligence when planning teaching and learning styles.

We offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways. These include:

- investigation and problem solving.
- research and finding out.
- group work
- pair work
- individual independent work
- whole class work
- questioning
- use of the computer and other technology

- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest
- creative and designing activities.
- debates, role plays and oral presentations.
- participation in physical activity
- reflecting on what has been learned.
- outdoor learning

Teaching - When teaching we focus on motivating children and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of how to access the curriculum. We believe children learn effectively when the teacher provides:

thorough preparation;	an atmosphere where children are prepared to take risks;	lessons where children's previous learning and interests are built upon, through purposeful application of knowledge to different situations;
shared learning objectives which are understood by the pupils;	innovative teaching;	opportunities to review and reflect on the learning;
clear expectations of what pupils are expected to achieve by the end of the session;	appropriate pace to the lesson;	thinking time before answering questions;
open-ended, thought provoking, challenging questions of the children;	lessons where children's understanding is developed through active, practical, and first-hand experiences, involving individual and collaborative talk, exploration, questioning, prediction, investigation, and challenge, so that the lesson makes a difference	developmental feedback and constructive criticism of pupil's work;
support for the learning of pupils with differing abilities	a planned programme of educational visits to reinforce and stimulate learning	An environment where we can move children on swiftly in their learning.

All teachers try hard to establish positive working relationships with the children that they are teaching as highlighted in our TPP training. We treat them fairly and give them equal opportunity to take part in class activities. All teachers follow the school policy with regard to discipline and classroom management. We praise and reward children for good effort and, by so doing, help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general. This is helping children move from a fixed to a growth mindset. This is important as it helps children be resistant to making mistakes and challenging themselves. At PTM we insist on good order and behaviour at all times. When children misbehave, we follow the guidelines for sanctions as outlined in our school Behaviour Policy.

Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and other adult helpers are deployed in a variety of ways. Sometimes they work with individual children and sometimes they work with small groups. LSAs are also fully involved in the delivery of support programmes along with the daily curriculum and assessment. Class LSAs are highly valued and highly skilled and most deliver a weekly curriculum session covering the teacher for their required PPA time. Our adult helpers also assist with the preparation and storage of classroom equipment, and resources.

PTM truly believes in lifelong learning and development as PTM teachers strive to show an open mindset. All teachers reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and plan their professional development needs accordingly. PTM offers a good programme for individual development and ambitions. We consider ourselves as a progressive and forward-thinking school.

Parents

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping their children to learn. We work hard to inform and support parents in how they can help further their children's learning and confidence at school. Parents' consultation meetings with teachers are held to discuss progress and strategies for further improvement.

The school sends information to parents at the start of each school half term about the areas of learning the children will be involved. Information about homework expectations is also sent at this time so that parents know what will be given to children each week. To ensure that communication is thorough we also hold an event for parents to attend, where teachers give a presentation outlining transition to the next year group and the expectations within that year group.

We also have an extensive website, where parents are able to access information to support their child's learning and have a greater understanding about what their child is currently learning about in school.

Parents receive a school report each year halfway through the year. This outlines the child's achievements during the year so far, how they are achieving relative to expected levels and how they can improve and develop in the future. Parents may discuss any concerns they have with teachers via a parent consultation meeting.

Homework

PTM homework has been developed through consultation with children, staff, governors, and parents/carers.

The purpose of homework

By setting regular homework for pupils, we aim to:

- develop an effective partnership between the school and parents/carers in pursuing the development of their child.
- consolidate, practise, and reinforce key skills and understanding, particularly in English and Maths
- extend school learning, for example through additional reading.
- develop a relationship between children and their parents – where they need to work together to complete some homework tasks.
- Extends knowledge about a topic being taught via the creative homework.
- encourage pupils as they get older to develop the confidence and self-discipline needed to study on their own and prepare them for the requirements of secondary school.

Marking homework - Homework that is exceptionally well completed will be rewarded with house points or a Headteachers Award. Reading record books will be read and signed weekly by a member of staff. If homework is set using an online platform there will be no marking required.

Planning homework so to ensure balance and manageability - Class teachers are responsible for ensuring that the demands of homework are manageable for pupils and parents/carers on a day-to-day basis. They will also ensure there are regular patterns to homework, particularly in English and Maths. Teachers ensure that all

areas of the curriculum are covered over the year to provide children with learning opportunities across the different subjects. Due dates for homework will be specifically talked about.

Classes set a creative homework that needs to be completed over a half term, children can decide when to complete each section of the homework when it fits into their home life. Parents may need to work with and support their child to complete this creative topic work homework. Homework can vary for Y2 and Y6 as they begin to consolidate learning for their SATS. They use published materials that are purchased by the school.

In school support - If any child does not understand a task, parents should encourage their child to ask their teacher for further guidance before the due date. Parents can speak to teachers about homework by making an appointment.

Staff will talk to parents of children who are not completing their homework.

Solutions and plans can be put in place to support this.

The role of parents/carers in supporting pupils - Parents need to support their child with homework by providing a reasonably peaceful, suitable place in which they can do it. Often, particularly with younger children, parents will need to work with their child. Parents should make it clear to pupils that they value homework and support the school in explaining how it can help their learning.

Non completion of homework - Each teacher will set a due date for homework to be completed. Completion of homework will be recorded. Parents will be spoken to about non completion in order to support. In Y6 there will be an expectation that the children complete this. If not, the teachers will provide suitable support within the school. We use positive praise in order to motivate children to complete homework.

Celebrations – Weekly celebrations will be given out for homework in Class Assembly. HTAs are given for good homework. Class competitions will be celebrated with peers. SLT can be used to help promote and celebrate achievement.

Handwriting and presentation - **PTM** takes great pride in handwriting and presentation. We use Letter-join as a basis of our cursive/joined up handwriting style. This covers the requirements for the National Curriculum. Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. Letter join is the approach we use as a school and is taught in EY's- Year 6. This approach allows our children the progressive skills to ensure that by the end of KS2 children will have the ability and knowledge to produce fluent, legible, and eventually speedy joined-up handwriting. In order to progress and practice we urge parents to use the Letter-join resources at home and if needed use the Letter-join home edition.

Extra Homework - If children wish to complete more homework on a weekly or half termly basis, there is the 'kids' zone' on our school website so that they can pick out any of the extra tasks to complete.

If the child wishes to, they can submit these to the teacher at any time. Headteachers Awards can be awarded for extra homework tasks.

There is a bank of reading, maths and writing tasks that can be accessed at any time throughout the year.