



The  
Westminster  
School

# Basic Skills Policy 2016/2017

*Safe Happy and Learning Together*  
*Building foundations and providing  
opportunities to create confident,  
aspirational and independent members  
of our community.*

Approved by Governing Body on: 08/06/17

Signed by Chair of Governors:

*Ken Ols*

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Lead Personnel:

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08/06/20

## **What are basic skills?**

Basic skills are defined as: 'The ability to read, write and speak in English and use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and in society in general.'

*Quality Mark - Alliance for Lifelong Learning*

Without good communication, literacy and mathematical skills, individuals are severely disadvantaged throughout their lives - as learners, in the workplace and as parents, consumers and citizens.

## **Rationale**

At The Westminster School, we recognise every pupil's right to be taught the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. These skills are essential for our pupils to flourish in our modern world and to achieve success in their independence. We endeavour to give all children every opportunity to gain in knowledge and make progress in the areas of attainment and achievement. We recognise that for our pupils Basic Skills are diverse and sometimes challenging to acquire, however through highly effective teaching and differentiation we ensure that all pupils are able to engage with and make progress towards achieving Basic Skills.

## **Aims**

We aim to:

- Ensure that the teaching of basic skills in our school is effective and makes a difference to our pupils life chances
- Identify pupils who have previously struggled with the acquisition of basic skills and support them to understand the value of these skills in developing their independence.
- Motivate all pupils to improve their basic skills and provide effective opportunities for them to do so.
- Equip parents and carers with skills to help their children to develop basic skills.

## **Key skills and inclusion**

This is achieved through a mix of order to provide a broad and balanced curriculum; we teach key skills to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. We deploy a range of different teaching styles and use differentiation appropriately. We strive hard to meet the needs of these with special educational needs, and those with special gifts and talents.

## **Equal Opportunities**

We believe that all pupils have the right to gain the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and we take positive action to ensure that pupils achieve the best possible progress.

## **Strategy**

In March 2017, we successfully achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the third time. This shows us that we are on the right path, however we constantly strive to do better for our pupils.

Every pupil in our school, through access to a rich and diverse curriculum will be able to develop the necessary skills needed to progress and to develop the skills they need to succeed as independent learners in life.

Our Curriculum rests on a firm foundation of basic skills which will enable our pupils to find their place in the community, whether that is through paid employment volunteering, exploring their interests. Although content is important and is taught as per National Curriculum requirements, skills and attitudes will be developed throughout their time as The Westminster School

Our staff strive to ensure that pupils understand that learning is not passive, but an active process that leads somewhere and in turn allows the pupils to see physical, tangible evidence of the skills they have learnt. This also helps children develop an evaluative attitude towards their work and a sense of not only pride in their work but a focus for areas to improve.

### **Guidelines**

Basic skills will be taught to all pupils at The Westminster School on a daily basis. We teach key skills through all curriculum subjects, e.g. use of number in Humanities or working with others in PE and SHaLT.

We follow a consistent approach to our Curriculum, ensuring it is personalised for all learners, with the aim that pupils develop basic skills at all opportunities. Individual, group class or whole school targets will be set in basic skills. This information will be in consultation with pupils and shared with parents.

Pupils' attainment in basic skills will be tracked and updated termly.

We will identify those pupils who are struggling to make progress, using internal and more formal assessment tools, eg reading ages. We value the teacher assessment as a vital part of the progress of learners.

Improving basic skills in Literacy and Numeracy is the responsibility of all staff in the school. Staff work together to assess pupil progress, set targets and monitor teaching.

### **Assessment**

Assessment of pupil progress is a regular part of teaching:

Pupils are assessed in at KS2 and KS3 through Skills Outcome Statements which are embedded into all aspects of the curriculum.

Baseline assessment is carried out in the first term of entry to the school, and pupils are put on a pathway to monitor progress (see Assessment and Feedback Policy)

Half termly assessment tasks take place for communication, reading, writing and number and problem solving. Our more complex learners are also supported in the acquisition towards Personal Development through our internal PD system which supports the development of early learning skills.

Data from these assessments is recorded on the school tracking system.

### **Assessment for Learning**

Teachers talk to children about their work and our marking and feedback practice regularly gives children information and makes them aware of their strengths and areas to develop. This is demonstrated through our Assessment and Feedback policy.

Children are given differentiated tasks, support and additional resources were appropriate to try and develop key skills.

## **Target setting**

Learning targets are set at the beginning of every academic year and monitored throughout. Each pupil in KS2 and KS3 has an individual target for communication, reading, writing and number and problem solving. Pupil progress is shared with parents in the form Parents Evenings, Statement/EHC Reviews and Annual Reports.

## **Strategies for achieving targets**

### **1. Training**

This school is committed to improving the skills of all staff to teach and extend basic skills. Training needs for teaching and support staff are identified through analysis of Data results, audits of pupils' work by Literacy and Numeracy Subject Leaders, and by individual members of staff through the performance management process. The School Improvement Plan links to CPD. Training is delivered through Professional Development Days, INSET courses for teachers and Teaching Assistants and through courses undertaken by staff members independently.

### **2. Involving parents**

We recognise that parents make a crucial contribution to developing their children's basic skills. Parents are invited to transition sessions before the pupils enter school. A pivotal part of successful transition is the sharing of information and understanding of Parental aspirations. Reading books are regularly sent home as KS2 and 3, pupils in KS4 and 5 have access to regular library sessions and supported by our librarian to make appropriate choices in their reading. Workshops are held to inform parents of teaching and learning of basic skills e.g. reading and calculation workshops.

### **3. Intervention**

As part of our regular monitoring of progress, pupils are identified for appropriate additional support, e.g. Wave 2 and Wave 3 interventions. Pupils whose attainment is a concern are identified by the class teacher and Deputy Head Teacher who, in consultation with the SENCo are placed on the Provision Map, a plan is drawn up for these learners based on detailed observation and assessment of their barriers to success. These plans, may include additional support from Speech and Language Team or Educational Psychology team.