BEXTON
PRIMARY SCHOOL
AND NURSERY

TEACHING & LEARNING
HANDBOOK

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CONTENTS

ONE JOURNEY. FIVE TRAILS. EVERY CHILD. 3
OUR STORY: TEACHING & LEARNING ON THE PATHWAY 3
OUR SHARED LANGUAGE FOR LEARNING 4
WHAT GREAT LEARNING FEELS LIKE HERE 4
OUR SHARED LESSON RHYTHM: C.L.E.A.R LESSONS 4
PROTOCOLS: THINKING VISIBLE, EVERYONE INCLUDED 8
LEARNING MODES THROUGH *THE PATHWAY'S* FIVE TRAILS 10
RESPONSIVE TEACHING: CHILD-ENGAGED ASSESSMENT & WHOLE CLASS FEEDBACK 13
INCLUSION: AMBITIOUS, ADAPTIVE, THE NORM 14
OUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT 15
BOOKS AND PRESENTATION....15
BEHAVIOUR FOR LEARNING AND KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE 16
OUR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CULTURE....16

ONE JOURNEY. FIVE TRAILS. EVERY CHILD.

Inspiring. Practical. Consistent.

This handbook sets out how we teach and how children learn best in our school. It exists for one clear purpose: to protect the quality, consistency and magic of learning for every child.

Learning here should feel unforgettable: full of wonder, challenge, discovery and pride. It should also be purposeful and ambitious because our children deserve the very best: high expectations, rich experiences and excellent teaching every day.

Throughout the handbook, you will see:

- Non-negotiables: what must happen in every class
- Expected practice: what should be seen often across the school

This handbook sits alongside our Curriculum Handbook, *The Pathway* Brochure, Subject Handbooks, Behaviour Policy, Inclusion Handbook and Assessment Handbook. Where detail is held elsewhere, we signpost rather than duplicate, so that this document remains clear, focused and usable.

OUR STORY: TEACHING & LEARNING ON THE PATHWAY

School is more than lessons: it's an adventure.

Childhood should be filled with wonder, challenge and discovery. We want our children to fall in love with learning and leave us with strong knowledge, strong character and strong memories.

The Pathway is our whole-school approach. It brings together our curriculum, culture, opportunities and shared language for personal development so children experience learning that is meaningful and unforgettable.

The Pathway is shaped by five Trails that run through everything we do:

- Performance
- Social
- Community
- Team
- Communication

These Trails are not a bolt-on. They shape how children access learning, how we build confidence and voice, and how we create a community that is ambitious, inclusive and full of purpose.

For further information please see *The Pathway Brochure*.

OUR SHARED LANGUAGE FOR LEARNING

Trails and Values.

To create consistency, clarity and purpose across our school, we use a shared language for learning.

- **Trails for Learning** describe how learning is experienced.
- **Values for Life** describe how attitudes and morals are shaped.

Together, they shape teaching, learning and culture. They guide how lessons are delivered, how pupils participate and how adults talk about learning, behaviour and success.

This shared language ensures that learning is not only ambitious and inclusive but also meaningful and memorable for every child.

WHAT GREAT LEARNING FEELS LIKE HERE

Calm confidence. High challenge. Joyful engagement.

When teaching and learning are at their strongest, you will see:

- pupils who are curious, motivated and proud of their learning
- adults who are calm, clear and highly responsive
- classrooms full of purposeful talk and structured participation
- challenge for all, with support that helps everyone succeed
- routines that protect learning time and promote independence
- pupils building confidence through the Five Trails

We call this Learning Without Limits: high-quality teaching that motivates, engages, includes and stretches every child.

OUR SHARED LESSON RHYTHM: C.L.E.A.R LESSONS

Evidence-informed. Child-centred. Highly consistent.

To protect equity and excellence across the school, we teach through a shared lesson rhythm called C.L.E.A.R. C.L.E.A.R is not a script and not a tick list. It is the shape of great teaching: predictable enough to build security and independence, flexible enough to allow professional judgement and creativity.

C.L.E.A.R reflects what we know about learning:

- pupils learn best when new knowledge connects to what they already know
- clarity and modelling reduce cognitive overload
- guided practice and feedback secure understanding
- reflection strengthens long-term learning

Every lesson will not look identical but lessons will feel C.L.E.A.R. We secure consistency through shared planning, coaching, DLG sessions and professional dialogue about what C.L.E.A.R looks like in practice.

C – CONNECT TO PRIOR LEARNING

Building bridges. Strengthening memory.

Purpose

We activate relevant prior knowledge to build a bridge to new learning. This strengthens long-term memory, increases confidence and helps pupils make meaningful links across the curriculum.

Non-negotiables

- Prior learning is intentionally revisited, not assumed.
- Retrieval is planned and purposeful.
- Key vocabulary and concepts are rehearsed aloud.
- Misconceptions are addressed early.

What this looks like in practice

- short retrieval tasks or recap discussions
- activities that revisit key learning
- unpacking of 'I can…by…' learning targets and titles
- explicit links made by the teacher ("This links to…", "You've seen this before when…")

What pupils are doing

- recalling, explaining and connecting ideas
- using subject-specific vocabulary
- gaining confidence before moving on

L – LEARN NEW CONTENT

Clarity before complexity.

Purpose

We present new information in manageable steps with clear explanations, visuals and vocabulary.

Non-negotiables

- Learning is broken into small, coherent steps.
- Explanations are clear, deliberate and unambiguous.
- Key vocabulary is explicitly taught, explained and used.
- Visuals and representations are used where they support understanding.

What this looks like in practice

- teacher explanation with clear language
- vocabulary spotlighted and revisited
- careful pacing to avoid overload
- explicit focus on what pupils are learning and why it matters

What pupils are doing

- listening actively
- asking clarifying questions
- beginning to form accurate mental models that are verbalised

E – EXPLORE TOGETHER

Making success visible.

Purpose

We explore new learning together through modelling, worked examples, narrating thinking and guided practice so pupils understand what success looks like and how to achieve it.

Non-negotiables

- Modelling is explicit and planned.
- Teachers think aloud and unpack the learning target meaningfully.
- Pupils practise with support before working independently.
- Teachers check understanding and address misconceptions in the moment.

What this looks like in practice

- teacher modelling
- worked examples and exemplars
- guided questioning
- structured discussion and group tasks
- scaffolded or shared learning

What pupils are doing

- rehearsing thinking aloud
- responding to questions
- practising new knowledge with confidence and support
- refining understanding before independence

A – APPLY INDEPENDENTLY

From support to success.

Purpose

Pupils apply what they have learned independently, showing understanding and deepening learning while referring back to the learning target or title.

Non-negotiables

- All pupils access ambitious learning.
- Independence is genuine, not rushed.
- Support removes barriers, not expectations.
- Teachers circulate, observe and intervene strategically.

What this looks like in practice

- independent tasks matched to the learning target or title
- scaffolds such as sentence stems, models or manipulatives
- challenge that deepens thinking rather than adds volume
- targeted adult support where needed

What pupils are doing

- working independently with confidence
- referring to models, examples and learning target
- persevering and self-correcting

R – REFLECT AND REVIEW

Securing learning for the future.

Purpose

We reinforce learning through reflection, feedback and consolidation so pupils know what they have learned and what comes next.

Non-negotiables

- Time is protected for reflection and improvement.
- Feedback leads to action.
- Learning is captured and reviewed against the learning target or title.

What this looks like in practice

- self-assessment and peer discussion
- whole class feedback or live feedback
- pupils improving work (e.g. purple polishing)
- exit questions or review routines

What pupils are doing

- articulating what they've learned
- identifying successes and next steps
- strengthening understanding before moving on

You will know teaching is C.L.E.A.R when:

- pupils can explain what they are learning and why
- modelling and examples reduce uncertainty
- talk is purposeful and inclusive
- misconceptions are addressed quickly
- pupils grow in independence across the lesson
- learning feels calm, ambitious and focused

PROTOCOLS: THINKING VISIBLE, EVERYONE INCLUDED

High participation. High support. High challenge.

Protocols are the everyday routines that make learning equitable.

They ensure that:

- participation is not optional
- thinking is made visible
- language is rehearsed and refined
- pupils grow in confidence and independence
- misconceptions surface quickly

Protocols are not "extras". They are a core part of our teaching toolkit and are used deliberately to support learning, inclusion and the Trails.

Our core protocols

The following protocols are used consistently across the school:

- Build Together
- Think–Pair–Share
- Check In / Check Out
- Show Me
- Everyone Thinks

They appear across subjects and phases, adapted appropriately for age and context.

What adults do

Deliberate, consistent and responsive.

Adults use protocols to engineer participation and support learning in real time.

Non-negotiables

- Adults create a safe culture where mistakes are normalised.
- Adults insist on participation while providing support to succeed.
- Adults use responses to adapt teaching immediately.

In practice, this means adults:

- use Everyone Thinks to check understanding across the room, not just with volunteers
- support pupils to give a successful answer when using Everyone Thinks, drawing on other responses where helpful
- use Think–Pair–Share so all pupils rehearse ideas before responding
- invite pupils to Build Together so ideas are extended and developed collectively
- use Show Me to gather whole-class responses quickly and identify misconceptions
- scan responses during Show Me and adapt teaching, pacing or support accordingly
- use Check In / Check Out to quickly assess prior knowledge and reflect on learning
- provide talk stems, sentence frames and key vocabulary where appropriate
- model respectful listening and responses
- intervene during learning, not only after tasks are completed

Adults are active during protocols: listening carefully, noticing patterns and responding with precision.

What pupils do

Active, confident and accountable.

Pupils are taught how to use protocols successfully and understand why they matter.

Non-negotiables

- Pupils are expected to think, speak and listen.
- Pupils attempt responses, even when unsure.
- Pupils use agreed language structures and vocabulary.
- Pupils respect others' contributions.

In practice, this means pupils:

- rehearse ideas with a partner before sharing when appropriate
- respond when called upon, knowing support is available
- use sentence stems to structure thinking when appropriate
- explain, justify and refine answers
- show thinking using variety of methods
- reflect honestly
- listen actively and respond respectfully to others

Over time, pupils become more confident, articulate and independent learners. The protocols support responsive teaching and are used throughout C.L.E.A.R lessons to surface thinking, check understanding and ensure every pupil participates.

Protocols and inclusion

Protocols support inclusion by:

- removing reliance on confidence or hand-raising
- giving all pupils time to think and rehearse
- strengthening language and oracy
- ensuring support is built into participation

They protect equity by ensuring that every voice matters and every learner is seen.

LEARNING MODES THROUGH THE PATHWAY'S FIVE TRAILS

Purposeful learning experiences that build knowledge and character.

The Five Trails shape how pupils experience learning, not just what they learn. They ensure our curriculum is ambitious, inclusive and deeply memorable.

The Trails are not an add-on. They are woven deliberately into lessons, supporting pupils to develop confidence, voice, responsibility and independence alongside strong academic outcomes.

Teachers plan for the Trails across units and weeks, using them to:

- deepen engagement
- strengthen oracy and thinking
- build independence and character
- connect learning to the wider world

Every lesson does not include every Trail but across time, pupils experience all five in balanced and meaningful ways.

PERFORMANCE TRAIL

Confidence grows when learning is expressed.

Purpose

The Performance Trail helps pupils build confidence by expressing learning publicly and creatively. It supports pride, ownership and high standards.

Non-negotiables

- Pupils regularly explain, present or demonstrate learning.
- High-quality outcomes are valued and celebrated.
- Performance is planned, not left to chance.

What this looks like in practice

- pupils explaining answers or methods aloud
- reading aloud with confidence and expression
- presenting written or creative outcomes
- showcasing learning through art, drama, music, computing or presentation
- rehearsing before sharing (to build confidence and success)

What pupils are developing

- confidence and self-belief
- clarity of expression
- pride in their work and achievements

SOCIAL TRAIL

Learning happens through relationships.

Purpose

The Social Trail supports pupils to understand themselves and others, develop empathy and build respectful relationships. It strengthens learning through collaboration and reflection.

Non-negotiables

- Classroom talk is safe, structured and respectful.
- Pupils are taught how to listen, respond and disagree appropriately.
- Learning includes opportunities to reflect on perspectives and feelings.

What this looks like in practice

- structured discussion and reflection
- talk protocols that promote respect and inclusion
- PSHE links embedded across subjects
- opportunities to consider different viewpoints in texts, history, geography and RE, among others

What pupils are developing

- empathy and self-awareness
- respect for others
- emotional literacy and confidence

COMMUNITY TRAIL

Learning connects us to the wider world.

Purpose

The Community Trail helps pupils see their learning as meaningful beyond the classroom. It builds a sense of belonging, responsibility and contribution, with a view to making the world a better place.

Non-negotiables

- Learning is connected to real-world contexts where appropriate.
- Pupils understand how their learning fits into a wider community.
- Responsibility and contribution are valued.

What this looks like in practice

- curriculum links to local, national or global contexts
- visitors, visits and real-life experiences (*Bright Beginnings*)
- discussions about fairness, responsibility and impact
- purposeful roles and responsibilities within school life

What pupils are developing

- a sense of belonging
- responsibility and citizenship
- curiosity about the world beyond themselves

TEAM TRAIL

Together we achieve more.

Purpose

The Team Trail develops collaboration, leadership and problem-solving. It supports pupils to work effectively with others while maintaining individual accountability.

Non-negotiables

- Pupils regularly work collaboratively with clear expectations.
- Group work is structured and purposeful.
- Roles and responsibilities are modelled and taught.

What this looks like in practice

- paired or group problem-solving tasks
- collaborative learning and support
- defined roles within group work
- opportunities for leadership and support

What pupils are developing

- teamwork and cooperation
- leadership and responsibility
- resilience and perseverance

COMMUNICATION TRAIL

Language unlocks learning.

Purpose

The Communication Trail underpins all learning. It strengthens vocabulary, reasoning and confidence across every subject.

Non-negotiables

- Oracy opportunities are planned for, not incidental.
- Vocabulary is explicitly taught and rehearsed.
- Pupils are expected to speak in full sentences where appropriate.

What this looks like in practice

- talk stems and sentence frames
- structured discussion before writing
- explicit teaching of subject-specific vocabulary
- opportunities to explain, justify and debate

What pupils are developing

- clarity and confidence in communication
- rich vocabulary and reasoning
- the ability to articulate thinking across subjects

TRAILS AND EQUITY

The Five Trails support inclusion by:

- giving multiple ways to access learning
- building confidence before independence
- strengthening language, vocabulary and participation
- valuing different strengths and talents
- They ensure every child has opportunities to shine, belong and succeed.

For further information about the Trails please see *The Pathway Brochure*.

RESPONSIVE TEACHING: CHILD-ENGAGED ASSESSMENT & WHOLE CLASS FEEDBACK

Assessment that shapes teaching and strengthens learning.

Assessment in our school exists for one purpose: to improve learning.

We assess so that we can:

- understand what pupils know and can do
- identify misconceptions early
- adapt teaching and support
- help pupils reflect, improve and succeed

Assessment is not an event at the end of learning, it is woven into everyday classroom practice.

CHILD-ENGAGED ASSESSMENT

Assessment is continuous and lived in the room. Teachers check understanding through:

- purposeful questioning
- observation of talk and independent practice
- talk protocols (e.g. Everyone Thinks, Think-Pair-Share) and Show Me strategies
- review of learning during and after lessons

Non-negotiables

- We act on what we notice.
- Misconceptions are addressed quickly.
- Teaching adapts in response to pupils' needs.

Pupils are active participants in assessment. They are taught to reflect on their understanding, respond to feedback and take responsibility for improving their learning.

WHOLE CLASS FEEDBACK (WCF)

Alongside responsive teaching strategies, Whole Class Feedback is our main approach to feedback across the school.

It allows teachers to:

- give timely, meaningful feedback
- address common strengths and misconceptions efficiently
- reduce unnecessary workload
- increase pupil ownership of improvement

Non-negotiables

- Books are checked during lessons (through circulating and live review) and after lessons.
- Feedback is timely (close to the learning) and purposeful (so pupils act on it).
- Pupils respond to feedback and improve their learning (e.g. purple polishing).
- Common misconceptions are addressed for the whole class.
- Challenge is visible for pupils who need it.

Templates, examples and routines are provided in the *WCF Booklet*.

When pupils don't yet understand

- re-teach immediately (Explore Together)
- adapt scaffolds/representations
- plan retrieval practice for the next lesson/sequence

Assessment and consistency

To protect equity and ensure consistency, we share common approaches to assessment and feedback. This ensures that:

- pupils receive consistent support across classes
- expectations are clear and fair
- learning time is maximised

Detailed assessment processes, statutory requirements and reporting arrangements are set out in the *Assessment Handbook*.

INCLUSION: AMBITIOUS, ADAPTIVE, THE NORM

High aspiration for every child.

Inclusion is not a separate system: it is how we teach. We have high aspiration for every child and remove barriers so all pupils can access ambitious learning. This includes pupils with SEND and those who are vulnerable to underachievement for any reason (e.g. pupils who face barriers to learning such as language, attention, confidence, attendance, prior experience or additional needs). Our classrooms are designed so that support is built into everyday practice, not bolted on.

Non-negotiables:

- ambitious learning for all pupils
- mixed attainment is our norm; pupils are not defined by labels
- adaptations are planned (scaffolds that remove barriers, not expectations)
- adult support builds independence, not dependency

Expected practice:

- sentence stems, visuals, models and manipulatives used strategically
- pre-teaching of key vocabulary where needed
- chunking instructions and tasks
- fluid grouping based on learning need and reviewed regularly

Detailed graduated response procedures and provision information are set out in our *Inclusion Handbook*.

OUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

High standards. Calm spaces. Children ready to learn.

Our environments support learning, independence and pride. Consistency across classrooms protects equity for all pupils.

Non-negotiables (every classroom):

- No items stuck directly to walls (except agreed phonics resources in EYFS/KS1).
- The front wall/board area is clear of displays and clutter.
- Furniture is purposeful; adult areas remain tidy and organised.
- Resources are stored neatly, labelled clearly and consistently.
- Displays use hessian backing with black straight borders
- Headings use black card with white handwriting.
- Displays are purposeful and uncluttered (clarity over quantity).
- Humanities, Maths and English displays

Expected practice:

- Working walls support current learning (vocabulary, models/examples, 'what great looks like').
- Vocabulary is displayed in a usable way (pupil-friendly definitions where appropriate; visuals that support access).
- Class reading culture and curriculum identity are visible.
- Natural light and calm aesthetics are prioritised.
- Plants and warm lamps
- Calm corners / reflection spaces
- Curated theme-linked enrichment areas

This section sets our baseline standards; the *Staff Handbook* holds the detailed checklists and examples.

BOOKS AND PRESENTATION

Pride in work is pride in learning.

High standards in books reflect ambition and support pupils to value the learning journey. High standards in books support memory, independence and pride.

Non-negotiables:

- Books are clearly labelled and well cared for.
- Date and title expectations followed consistently.
- Worksheets trimmed and neatly stuck in (where used).
- Pupils respond to feedback and improve using purple pen.
- Handwriting and number formation are explicitly taught and consistently reinforced.

For further detail and information please see the *Staff Handbook*.

BEHAVIOUR FOR LEARNING AND KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

Calm routines. Safe choices. Learning protected.

We teach routines explicitly and rehearse them until they become habits. Calm, consistent adult behaviour protects learning time, belonging and safety.

Keeping children safe is a shared responsibility. We teach pupils how to keep themselves and others safe through:

- clear routines and expectations in classrooms and around school
- explicit teaching of staying safe (online and offline)
- trusted adults and 'speak up' culture
- PSHE learning and real-life scenarios that build confidence and good judgement

Systems, responses and consequences are detailed in our *Behaviour Policy*.

OUR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CULTURE

Great teaching grows through deliberate practice.

We strengthen teaching through collaboration, reflection and continuous improvement. We protect time for professional dialogue and shared practice so that teaching remains excellent and continually improves.

This includes:

- collaborative planning within year groups
- coaching and feedback
- weekly staff meetings
- half termly Developmental Learning Groups (DLGs)
- Developmental Dialogues
- Trust collaboration and training
- evidence-informed professional learning