

HAZEL WOOD INFANT SCHOOL

LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Hazel Wood Infant School is committed to offering all children equal access to all aspects of the school curriculum regardless of gender, race, religion or ability.

RATIONALE

At Hazel Wood Infant School we believe that learning should be relevant, meaningful, enjoyable, and personalised for the individual. We strive to promote 'celebrating learning for life together' and convey the message that learning is a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone in the school community. Through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to direct their own learning and to be able to make informed choices in other areas of their lives. We endeavour to ensure that our values permeate all our practices and that all members of our community have the right to be safe, the right to learn and the right to be listened to. Much of our work focuses on the attributes of a successful learner. Children are taught key learning behaviours; resilience, relating effectively with others, reflecting and resourcefulness.

VISION AND AIMS

This Learning and Teaching Policy is intended to promote consistency and high standards and support the achievement of the school aims, as outlined in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). At Hazel Wood we aim to provide a caring, supportive and stimulating environment with high quality teaching through which to foster:

- Enquiring minds that seek to learn more each day
- A high level of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills
- Imagination and creative expression through a wide range of media
- Conscientious young citizens who are tolerant and respect others' values
- Pride in achievement and a desire to succeed
- Independent children who are confident, flexible and able to cooperate with others
- Effective links between the school, the child's home and the community
- Equality of opportunity for all

EFFECTIVE LEARNING

At Hazel Wood Infant School we emphasise four key learning behaviours:

Resilience - building emotional strength, a 'have a go' attitude, concentration and an ability to ignore distractions.

Relating - teaching children to collaborate, empathise and be sensitive to the needs of others.

Reflection - exploring methods for self-evaluation, transferring and applying learning and questioning or querying information that is presented (intelligent scepticism).

Resourcefulness - becoming adaptable, able to question, use their imagination and solve problems in different ways.

We acknowledge that children 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. These include:

- Whole class work, group work, pair work, independent work
- Investigation and problem solving
- Research and questioning
- Reflecting upon and evaluating what has been learned
- Creative activities, including design and production
- Participation in physical activity
- Use of a wide range of ICT
- Fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest

We encourage children to be involved in planning their own learning. This may be in collaboration with teachers when planning topics, or independently as child-initiated learning. Children are actively encouraged to self-evaluate what they have learned and are involved in setting targets for their next stage of development. Mutual identification of barriers to learning is also an integral part of ensuring success.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Our main considerations when teaching are to engage and motivate the children to learn and to clearly convey the skills and knowledge required for success. By fostering a positive and safe climate in class, we encourage children to take risks and to independently apply skills in new and exciting ways. Staff use tools such as

P4C, TASC and Learning Logs to engage children and stimulate discussion and questioning.

We believe children learn most effectively when the teacher provides:

- rich tasks that enable all children to make visible progress
- an atmosphere where children are prepared to take risks
- a clear purpose for a lesson that includes expectations of children's achievement and outcomes of tasks
- innovative teaching
- lessons where children's previous knowledge and interests are built upon
- developmental feedback on children's work, encompassing child/teacher conferencing
- opportunities to review and reflect on learning
- thinking time before answering questions
- consideration of or support for the learning of children with differing abilities or needs
- personalised learning where appropriate
- opportunities for individual working and collaborative working with children from various classes
- talk, exploration, questioning, prediction and investigation

Our prime focus is to further develop children's knowledge and skills. Through careful use of Assessment for Learning (AFL) we aim to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability. For children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) due regard is given to information and targets contained in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). We have high expectations of all children, and embrace a fully inclusive culture where all children are involved and enjoy success.

Teaching Assistants and other adult helpers are deployed in a variety of ways to support children's learning. This includes working with individuals or with small groups and encompasses the delivery of various support programmes (refer to Inclusion Policy). They are also involved in the planning, preparation for and assessment of activities.

DISPLAY

The school believes that the purposes of display are to celebrate success, model expectations of achievement or behaviour and to support children's learning. We endeavour to represent all children's work in some capacity and consider multi-cultural aspects where relevant.

Work should be neatly double mounted with appropriate lettering or labelling. Careful consideration should be given to colour combinations, including a choice of drape, and also to the position of the items on display for best effect. Children's work should be named and some description of the purpose of the learning made explicit. Displays should also include an evaluation aspect which may set a challenge for future learning. Key vocabulary and related fiction and non-fiction books should be displayed.

The classroom environment is stimulating and engaging and set up to enable children to independently access resources to support their learning. Children are encouraged to feel ownership of the learning environment and take responsibility for its appearance and upkeep.

The quality of our learning environment is regularly evidenced by Staff, Children and Governors both informally and on focused Learning Walks.

TARGET SETTING

Targets are set for reading, writing and mathematics for individuals and groups of children. Where appropriate, a 'personal and social' target may be set for individuals.

Targets are written in response to children's attainment and clearly identify next steps for learning. They are shared with children and, where possible, targets are written in collaboration with pupils. Targets are discussed with parents at parents' evenings.

The Headteacher and Governors regularly check that children are aware of their targets and what they need to do in order to achieve them.

The Headteacher sets numerical targets for individual teachers and for Year Group leaders to ensure the continued success of children and to raise standards further. These are scrutinised during tracking meetings and in Leadership meetings. The progress made by specific groups of children is carefully monitored to ensure that barriers to achievement are removed and that good progress is made, e.g. EAL, SEN, G&T etc.

PLANNING

Long Term Planning

Long term planning for foundation subjects follows a 2-year rolling programme to allow for mixed year groups. Year 1 and 2 cover the same topics to facilitate

opportunities for collaborative working and Year R loosely follow these and are increasingly involved in whole school experiences.

All staff collaborate to determine the topics that will be covered across the year and the input of all staff is valued. We consult the children in advance to ascertain their interests and this directs our decisions.

The long term plans identifies the progression of skills that children should learn for science, ICT and the foundation subjects.

We follow the Ruth Miskin, 'Read, Write Inc.' programme for phonics, setting Key Stage 1 children according to ability. Other English plans are informed by Primary National Framework (PNF). Our groupings for English sessions are very flexible and diverse to enable us to address the needs of individuals that have been identified through careful assessment.

Maths plans are informed by the PNF. Once again, groupings are not set in stone as we believe that progress is better when children work to very specific objectives that build upon prior learning.

Medium term planning

Medium Term plans clearly build on Long Term plans so a definite trail can be followed from objective, through the tasks to the assessment activity.

Plans are written for each new 'topic' but there is no specific time-scale for these. Some topics warrant more time dedicated to them, while others may relate to a specific festival or celebration and therefore take much less time. They should contain sufficient detail so the plans can be interpreted by any staff required to teach from or monitor them.

MTPs include details of all subjects related to the topic and incorporate objectives, NC references, speaking and listening opportunities, use of ICT, assessment opportunities, resources etc. They may also incorporate ideas for enhancements that will be provided in sand, water, role play and outside.

Children are again consulted about what they want to learn and through which means they would like to do so.

Short term planning

Short term plans are written for maths and literacy (reading and writing). They clearly outline exactly what will be taught and what each group of children will be

doing. The role of the Teacher and the Teaching Assistant are clearly identified. Individual focus children are clearly identified as are vulnerable groups.

Weekly timetables and daily planning are produced when they are useful.

All short term plans are annotated to show assessment for learning, next steps and teachers evaluations of activities, organisation and resources.

We believe in sharing and developing practice at Hazel Wood and as such, all planning is always accessible through class teacher files and on Mind Map to staff and governors so that it can be clearly evaluated for rigour and evidence of children's progress.

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

At Hazel Wood, we believe that quality and purposeful assessment practices are essential to enable quality learning and teaching to take place. Assessment, as a key professional requirement, is an integral part of classroom practice and informs planning for progression.

We utilise a range of strategies for assessment which can be viewed in detail in the Assessment policy.

EARLY YEARS

At Hazel Wood Infant School we believe that a high quality early years experience provides a firm foundation on which to build future academic, social and emotional success. We strive to deliver a curriculum which is challenging, fires the enthusiasm, enriches and constantly enlarges children's knowledge, skills and understanding and, above all, instils in them a life long love of learning.

The principles that guide our Early Years practice are:

A Unique Child

Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. At Hazel Wood we support every child's development and learning through observation, assessment and planning.

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. At Hazel Wood the Class Teacher

and the Teaching Assistant share responsibility for the children so that the children and parents can have a consistent key person to talk to and liaise with.

Enabling Environments

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. At Hazel Wood, children have a base classroom where they register and receive direct English and maths teaching. They have continuous provision for mark making, mathematical development and problem solving and creative thinking. Each Early Year's classroom has two focus EYFS areas and children are encouraged to move freely between the three classrooms and the outside area. All learning opportunities that take place inside are able to be transferred to the outside environment.

Learning and Development

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

An important aspect of our Early Year's curriculum is play, which we define as 'active learning in a structured environment'. It underpins all development and learning for young children.

We consider that the role of the adult is to gain a coherent insight into every child as an individual and through observation and assessment, track their progress and identify areas for development. A skilful use of questioning and talk helps to extend knowledge and understanding and enables children to further initiate their own learning.

"What children can do with adult support today they can do unaided tomorrow,"
(Vygotsky).

Planning

Long term plans run on a two year cycle and, when appropriate, Year R follow the same topics as Key Stage 1. In order to follow the interests of the children, our long term plan is a working document where Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) themes that have been covered are recorded and tracked. Continuous provision sheets that incorporate learning opportunities, resources, vocabulary and skills are displayed in each area.

Medium term plans are written for music and P.E. only. A comprehensive half-termly overview outlines possible routines of exploration, predictable themes and enhanced provision and also responds to information gained from assessments.

Short term planning takes the form of a weekly timetable that shows where children are required to work as part of the whole class, in a group situation or where there are opportunities for child-initiated learning. The role of each adult in the year group is clearly highlighted and links to EYFS and whole class objectives are printed on the back. Short term planning is very flexible to enable staff to directly respond to the differing needs of all the children in class.

ROLE OF GOVERNORS

Our governors support, monitor and review the school's policies relating to learning and teaching.

In particular they:

- Monitor the effectiveness of learning and teaching through the school self-review processes. These include the Headteacher's reports to governors and the work of the Curriculum Committee
- Monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising children's attainment
- Support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively
- Ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching
- Ensure that the school buildings and premises are effective in supporting successful learning and teaching
- Monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations

PARENT PARTNERSHIP

At Hazel Wood, we fully believe in an open home-school partnership to enable children to achieve their best. We foster clear channels of communication with parents and strive to keep them informed of curriculum developments as well as procedures pertaining to day-to-day learning and teaching.

Parents have two parent interviews during the year and one written report. They are also invited to whole school open days, special curriculum events and assemblies. The parents are also given a weekly Learning Log, regular curriculum updates and information about how to support their children. Information can also

be found on our website. There are many informal opportunities to talk about children's learning with class teachers and senior staff.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. Holidays during term time should be avoided as these interrupt the child's progress and they miss important work and may fall behind. Parents are asked to inform the school of any absence on the first day so that we know that they are safe at home.

Many of our parents offer some of their time to help in school. These offers are always welcome and parents undertake a variety of tasks, working with individuals and groups of all ages. All school helpers are required to undertake a CRB (Criminal Record Bureau) clearance before starting work.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy incorporates the current thinking of the teaching staff. We intend to ensure this policy is reflected in daily classroom practice through regular review and monitoring. We will adapt the policy as required so that we can take account of new initiatives, changes in the curriculum or developments in technology.

09 November 2011
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