

Headcorn Primary School

Learning Policy



Approval Body	Head Teacher
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Signed - Head Teacher	S Symonds

Learning Policy

Introduction

Learning is an interactive process involving pupils, parents/carers, all members of staff, governors and others in the school community.

This policy seeks to ensure that the quality of learning and teaching is consistently high in our community, enabling children to move forward in their learning and to raise their standards of achievement.

1. Principles of successful learning and teaching

Successful learning builds on experiences and develops enthusiasm. It is continuous and involves many different influences.

Effective learners:

- Have appropriate self-confidence and a positive self-image
- Have their basic physical needs met
- Feel emotionally secure, safe, and relaxed
- Take responsibility for their own learning
- Are actively engaged, motivated and self-evaluating
- Are independent, show initiative and are willing to take risks
- Understand what they need to do to move forward in their learning
- Ask relevant questions, are interested and inquiring
- Listen and communicate well
- Interact with others positively
- Are able to access information, resources and the environment appropriately
- Interpret and transfer skills in new contexts
- Remember and apply their learning
- Persevere and are resilient

Effective learning experiences:

- Enable children to become effective learners as described above
- Ensure that all children are competent in basic skills
- Ensure that they also experience a rich and challenging curriculum that encourages them to apply and further develop these basic skills
- Enable children to develop their thinking skills, especially through problem-solving
- Foster their self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people
- Show respect for all cultures and promote open-mindedness
- Enable children to understand and feel valued in their community
- Support children as they grow into reliable, independent citizens, capable of making a positive contribution to society

Characteristics of an effective lesson:

- Children are content and secure and are able to experience a sense of achievement; they are engaged and motivated
- They understand what they are learning and what success will look like – the learning objectives are shared with children
- Everyone is included and Quality First Teaching ensures that all needs are met because lessons are differentiated well; children with additional needs are supported well
- All children learn and make good progress; they face an appropriate degree of challenge because everyone has high expectations
- Activities are pitched to match children's skills, knowledge and understanding – teaching starts from where the children are

- Children have opportunities to be independent in their thinking and learning, they make choices and take risks
- Behaviour is good and any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with effectively
- Misconceptions are dealt with and are used as opportunities for learning
- Resources are accessible, they are selected carefully and of high quality
- Teaching assistants and other adults are deployed well and impact positively on learning
- Children receive effective feedback, enabling them to improve; they have opportunities for self-evaluation and reflection

Indicators of effective teaching:

- High levels of engagement between adults and pupils
- Focus on what and how the children are going to learn
- Reference to working walls which are being used to enhance learning
- Children talking about their learning
- Children visibly enjoying their learning
- Confirmation of progress
- A sense of calm
- A range of open questions
- Positive responses from adults and children
- Signs that the behaviour policy is being followed

See Appendix I for OFSTED descriptors.

2. The Learning Environment

The classroom should promote effective learning. We expect that all children will experience consistently high quality learning environments and that every aspect of the classroom should promote learning.

See Appendix II for Learning Environment Checklist.

Key features of every classroom:

- The school's Core Values and Community Code are clearly displayed and referred to, as well as any class rules which have been developed and agreed with the children
- The Reward system (house points, MIMs and awards presented in Celebration Assembly) is well-used and visible
- Class timetable is on the wall; timetable is also represented visually (a daily timetable will be more accessible for some pupils)

All classrooms will be clean, tidy and uncluttered. Teaching resources not normally required for display or access purposes should be stored in the correct storage units. Teacher and TA desks/work spaces should present a positive model for children to follow.

Adults should use cursive style handwriting (with entry and exit strokes) in Year R/1 and a joined cursive style from year 1/2 onwards; printed texts for pupils should be in the font 'comic sans'.

Displays should enhance the ethos of the school and be an inspiration to all.

We expect to see:

- Quality displays that celebrate children's work across the curriculum
- Interactive displays, including learning walls, which relate to current learning
- Displays have a title, caption or key question; they are labelled with the learning objective/WALT and the individual names or class name of those responsible
- As appropriate: alphabet friezes, phonic displays, number lines, timeline
- All pupils and all areas of the curriculum are represented, reflecting diversity
- Displays are changed at least once each new term (x6 per year)
- These expectations also apply to displays in other areas of the school

In the Early Years Foundation Stage classroom:

- Seven areas of learning are reflected in the classroom and outside
- There is opportunity for free flow, including from inside and outside, so that children can make their own decisions about what and where they want to learn
- Resources should be labelled so that they can be accessed by the children independently (e.g. with photographs)
- Role play areas are linked with topics and provide learning opportunities for teacher lead and independent speaking and listening, reading, writing and maths
- Phonics learning wall shows previously taught phonemes as well as those currently being taught

See Appendix III for minimum standards for displays

Other areas of the school should also promote and reinforce learning:

- Corridors should be clean and uncluttered
- The school hall should be left ready for the next teacher so that all children can enjoy a clean and safe environment
- Any equipment needed should be out ready for children to use and put away afterwards
- Outside areas should be appropriately resourced and tidy

3. Planning

Planning must clearly identify what the teacher wants the children to learn, how they will learn it and how their learning will be assessed:

- All planning should always be based on assessment of prior learning
- The school template for ‘Experiences’ is used and are presented on the website
- Planning must meet all learners’ needs with clear differentiation in English and Maths and in other subjects where appropriate
- It should reflect the class profile of vulnerable groups and be linked to the provision map
- Planning should allow for a variety of learning styles
- Planning should enable pupils to work collaboratively, with age-appropriate peer assessment opportunities
- The plenary must be used as part of the assessment process
- There should be clear evidence of daily communication between the teacher and other adults working in the classroom

Planning must meet the requirements of individual pupils with Special Educational Needs, including the provision of their intervention strategies.

4. Learning objectives

Effective use of learning objectives is crucial to raising standards of achievement.

Sharing these objectives with pupils enables them to take ownership of the process and creates a more effective learning culture in our school.

Therefore:

- The learning objective/WALT of the lesson must be clearly explained and displayed
- Pupils must have an opportunity to discuss the success criteria/WILF with the teacher
- Every child and every adult present must understand the Learning Objective/WALT and Success Criteria/WILF

At Headcorn Primary School, the learning objective is always introduced by the phrase ‘we are learning to’ (also known as the WALT).

Objectives should begin with:

To know ... (knowledge/factual information)

To be able to ... (skill/using knowledge/using resources)
To understand ... (concepts/reasons/cause and effect/how things work)
To be aware of ... (attitude/empathy)

In English and in Maths, the learning objective should be taken from the National Curriculum and Target Tracker Statements and put into teacher's plans. In the classroom, they should be presented in oral and written language appropriate to the children's level of development. The learning objective/WALT must always be shared at the beginning of each lesson and referred to again in the plenary (as a minimum).

5. Children's books and folders

The use of photocopiable worksheets should be kept to an **absolute minimum**.
Ask yourself "*what will the child learn from completing this worksheet?*"

- Books and folders should be clearly and correctly labelled with first and last name, subject and year group
- Each piece of work should be dated (long date for English, short date for Maths)
- Any underlining should be done with a ruler
- As soon as children are able to write the learning objective, this should be shown at the top of the piece of work (expected from year 2 onwards)
- Children should write in blue ink
- A handwriting pen should be used for writing when children have the appropriate skills (expected to be during year 3 or by year 4); biros should not be used
- A range of mark-making tools should be available in Reception/Key Stage 1;
- Felt pens or gel pens should only be used for a specific purpose; eraser pens and ink rubbers are not to be used; children should not 'decorate' their books
- A pencil should be used for maths and all maths calculations/working out should be in the books
- Incorrect answers must not be rubbed out once work has been marked. Corrections should be made at the side of incorrect answers with the Purple Polishing Pen.
- Adults should indicate when support has been provided (I = independent, S = supported (also show adult:child ratio), D = discussed); where there is no annotation, it will be assumed that the work has been done independently.

6. Marking (feedback)

Marking (feedback) must make a difference, it should always take the learning forward:

- The teacher's comment should relate specifically to the learning objective/success criteria/target
- The feedback should be age-appropriate; adult handwriting must be legible for pupils and match the preferred school style as closely as possible
- Colour-coded highlighter pens may be used, e.g pink = think, green = good
- There should be clear and compelling evidence of children responding to marking
- Children should use the Purple Polishing Pens when responding to marking
- Red pencils or pens will be used to underline dates and WALTs
- There should also be opportunities for children to consolidate or develop the skill identified in the marking
- Pupils should be encouraged to engage in self- and peer-assessment
- Written notes of observations made by adults also contribute to the marking process
- The effectiveness of marking (feedback) will be considered as contributing significantly to the quality of teaching.

See Appendix IV for our Marking Key

Policy written by: Sarah Symonds

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