

West Exmoor Federation



Learning and Teaching Policy

Reviewed in May 2024

Learning and Teaching Policy

Rationale

Organisation of the learning environment, teaching techniques and teachers' subject knowledge are major factors affecting the quality of learning. Agreed values and consistency of approach in these areas should enable both children and teachers to achieve their full potential which will lead to excellent learning.

Aims

- To ensure the factors associated with quality learning and teaching and to adopt a whole federation approach
- To identify and implement organisation strategies which lead to better classroom practice
- To identify the best way of organising materials and resources
- To identify and implement good teaching techniques
- To assess the level of staff knowledge and expertise and to implement strategies for support and development
- To identify the features of a stimulating classroom and overall school environment
- To identify and enhance the role of the parent/carer in the learning process
- To identify how behaviour can affect learning and to adopt agreed 'Code of Conduct'
- To consider how 'rural isolation' can affect learning and teaching and to develop strategies to reduce this effect

Strategies

Agreed Features of a Good Lesson

- The lesson is carefully planned to take into account the needs of the pupils and is based upon formative assessment
- Lesson objectives and outcomes are explicitly shared with the children
- Process success criteria/learning ladders are negotiated with the children whenever appropriate
- Layered, curricular targets are reinforced when appropriate
- Assessment for learning is embedded into the lesson
- Clear time frames for learning are given
- TAs are well briefed and usefully deployed under the direction of the class teacher
- A suitable array of visual prompts are used
- Opportunities for problem solving are planned into the taught phase of lessons
- Open, challenging questions are used
- Modelling is effectively used
- Coaching is effectively used
- High expectations of pupil achievement is evident
- The children have the opportunity to work with talk partners, etc
- Children are motivated and engaged
- There is a good range of support and challenge
- Children are encouraged to develop their independence
- Expectations of activities are made explicit and suitably challenging – low threat/high ceiling
- Prompts are given re the appropriate presentation of learning
- There is sustained guided work, when appropriate
- Guided work puts children in the zone of proximal development (ZPD)

- All activities support the learning objectives and outcomes
- When appropriate, there is a plenary which gives the children the opportunity of peer and/or self assessing
- The plenary makes explicit links to the learning objectives and outcomes are made throughout the lesson
- There are opportunities for the children to use and apply their learning during the plenary
- The great majority of teaching is securing good progress and learning

General Classroom Practice

- All core and foundation subjects will be appropriately planned for in accordance with the agreed planning format and curriculum map
- Classrooms will be kept tidy and well organised
- There will be a mixture of didactic and child centred or enquiry/resource based approaches
- There will be a mixture of individual, group and whole class teaching
- Provision will be made for children with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented
- There will be clearly established classroom routines and systems which are understood by the children
- Children will be encouraged to devise, monitor and assess their own, and others, learning
- The classroom will be considered as a 'workshop' thus encouraging children to:
 - Be autonomous
 - Explore
 - Research and investigate
 - Be imaginative and creative
 - Problem solve
 - Record and publish their learning

Organisation of Resources

- All materials and children's work will have a specific storage space
- Areas of the classroom will be designated for different activities, eg, reading/library area, maths, science, ICT, water/sand, etc
- All storage containers will be clearly labelled and those in regular use by the children will be accessible to them
- Children should become fluent with the choosing, using and replacing routine
- Children will be encouraged to maintain and organise equipment themselves

Teaching Techniques

- Both didactic and children centred, enquiry/resource based approaches will be used as appropriate
- In the didactic approach care will be taken to:
 - Pitch information at varying levels to allow for different age ranges and abilities
 - Ensure delivery is at a speed that is suitable for all and instructions are clearly understood
 - Pose challenging, open ended questions that encourage children to draw on their existing knowledge and extend their thinking
 - Give opportunity for children to ask questions, repeating information as necessary
 - Allow time for general discussion and give as many children as possible, at varying levels, a chance to contribute

- Follow up on children with special educational needs as necessary
 - All modelling is well planned and prepared
 - Ensure follow up learning is matched to different abilities and age
- In the child centred approach many of the above guidelines are also appropriate but the following are especially important:
 - Tasks will be set at varying levels according to age range and ability
 - These tasks will be carefully structured to achieve an explicit learning objective, although there will also be an inbuilt open-endedness to allow children to pursue their own lines of enquiry, initiate ideas, select appropriate resources, research, problem solve and record
 - Self discipline will be encouraged
 - Children may, from time to time and within reason, select their own groupings for learning
 - Children will be encouraged to plan, discuss and assess their own learning and that of others
 - As much use as possible will be made of first hand experiences to stimulate learning

General Points

- Use praise and encouragement as much as possible and treat children's opinions with respect, in accordance with our Relational Learning Policy
- Children's learning should be valued and high standards should be encouraged through example
- Children should be encouraged to redraft learning to achieve their best
- Every child should feel that they are equally important and cared for
- Care must be taken to ensure equal opportunities and equality for all
- A variety of assessment techniques will serve to inform planning and facilitate progression
- The learning process is enhanced by teachers clearly defining specific expectations and giving immediate, formative feedback on work
- Children's success should be measured by the amount of individual progress. Although external tests must be administered they only serve to place children on a nationally standardised hierarchy of ability. The end result must always be considered in relation to an individual's starting point

Staff Knowledge

- Teachers and support staff should ensure that they have a good understanding of the subject matter to be taught. Where gaps are identified, CPD will be made available
- Information on Curriculum areas and the latest developments will be made accessible to staff. Staff support material will be purchased according to the School Improvement Plan
- Individual staff expertise will be shared and used to the benefit of all
- Every opportunity will be taken to use outside input to support and enhance teacher and support staff knowledge

The Learning Environment

- The learning environment should be enabling
- It should be tidy and well organised
- Resources should be of a high quality and clean
- Tired, damaged or outdated resources should not be used
- Working walls must be used to enhance and support learning

The Role of the Parents/Carers

- Parents/carers play an important part in the learning process in a variety of ways:
 - By helping with educational visits
 - By offering expertise in a particular curriculum area
 - By offering personal experience
 - By supporting children's learning at home
- Home/School links are extremely important and are achieved through:
 - Viewing the education of children as a 'partnership' with parents/carers and teachers working together to develop and nurture the 'whole' child
 - A well planned induction procedure
 - Planned and informal opportunities to discuss children's learning, eg, appointments, open evenings, detailed reporting procedures
 - Home/School Agreement
 - Curriculum information/participation evenings

Behaviour

- Good behaviour, positive reinforcement and effective discipline are essential to the smooth running of each school within the federation and helps to promote a happy, caring and secure environment in which effective learning can take place
- Issues relating to behaviour should be carried out in accordance with the agreed Relational Learning Policy

Rural Isolation

- We value the opportunity to work collaboratively across the federation and consider it as a way of reducing the effects of rural isolation
- By working collaboratively, learning and teaching will be enhanced in several ways:
 - Special trips/activities to broaden horizons
 - Sharing a wider range of facilities and resources, eg, Forest School, kiln, VR headsets, 3-D printer
 - Teacher expertise can be shared
 - Children can socially interact with a wider number of children of the same age
 - Staff will work together professionally, planning and sharing their ideas and expertise across the federation
- Providing our children with a wide range of enrichment opportunities helps to combat rural isolation and enables them to live life in all its fullness.