

Learning Environment Policy

Purpose

This policy acts as a guide to developing our school learning environment, to ensure a shared understanding and consistency of approach throughout the whole school. Children and adults are expected to value and respect the whole school environment which contributes to our ethos, climate for learning and in raising standards.

Rationale

Our classrooms and learning areas support and enrich the learning of all children. As well as being rich, vibrant and welcoming, the environment is a learning tool, a way of engaging children, promoting and building the class and school climate for learning. Our environment creates a sense of ownership and is used to support and promote learning, as well as celebrating children's learning achievements. With thought and planning, an effective classroom environment is used as an interactive resource supporting teaching, learning and assessment.

The term 'Learning Environment' in this policy includes a) The visual displayed environment b) The class or learning area organisation and management (e.g. book & equipment storage, teacher & children's resources, ICT resources etc. – the whole environment, what is frequently referred to as 'tidiness'. Is the classroom environment well managed by the teacher for learning c) the auditory environment – the level & type of sound generated is a critical factor in learning d) the level light, especially natural light – clean, well lit & uncluttered window areas.

Classroom organisation, display quality, storage – the whole learning environment of your classroom evidence your qualities as a teacher. Similarly the areas your cohort or Key Stage share (cloakroom, learning corridor, shared area) also evidence yours and our schools qualities and professionalism.

Aims

1. To ensure that all learning environments are bright, stimulating and welcoming for children, staff and visitors (n.b. the classroom environment needs to be tailored to the specific class taking account of children's Special Educational Needs - children on the autistic spectrum for example, benefit from a well ordered, calming environment).
2. To celebrate children's achievements in all areas of the curriculum (especially in writing – our particular school focus) in order to boost their self-confidence, show clear examples to aspire to and genres of writing and to assist in raising standards.
3. To develop learning environments so that they are used as an interactive resource to support teaching, learning and assessment effectively.
4. To support children's learning by providing prompts, models, good examples and information which they can use within their learning on a daily basis.
5. To ensure that the prompts and examples provided are referred and added to regularly so that they don't become 'wallpaper'.
6. To develop children's ownership of their classroom by involving them in the development and relevance of their working environment.
7. To enable children, staff and visitors to gain an insight into the learning taking place in classrooms. Our current focus on writing needs to be consistent across all classrooms and learning areas so that it is visually evident that writing is our priority.
8. To reflect the learning that is taking place showing work in progress, as well as finished pieces.
9. To support children understands of where they are in their learning and what the need to do next.

Expectations

All learning environments will provide the following at an appropriate level for the age of the children working in the classroom. The following will also be used within lessons to support teaching and learning.

1. Learning objectives, success criteria and key questions are displayed and referred to in lessons (using as appropriate; children's books/ the classroom displays/IWB/whiteboard).
2. Prompts, ideas and good examples that are generated during lessons are displayed and referred to, to support future learning – see working walls
3. Prompts to support learning about learning, are available to support children's talking and thinking about learning.
4. Key questions/grids are displayed and used to trigger prior knowledge.
5. Curriculum displays include objectives and questions to highlight key learning points.
6. Key words and technical vocabulary are displayed and discussed for a variety of curriculum areas.
7. Vocabulary and definitions of words are referred to, discussed and used within teaching.
8. Good examples of work are displayed, annotated, and referred to during lessons by teachers and children.

Strategy for implementation

Expectations for every classroom

- Literacy and Numeracy working walls – see below
- An interactive Foundation curriculum or Science related display
- A successful learning/target development display
- Class developed values and expectations ('rules') – established at the start of the year and frequently referred back to & reinforced.
- Phonics displays to support up to Phase 5.
- A celebrated, valued and attractive book area. Where appropriate, a role play area related to the topic theme this should also be clearly evident in YR and KS1.
- Children's books are kept neatly in labelled containers, that are easily accessible.
- If a teacher's desk is present, it will be kept neat and tidy and not contain piles of papers. Sink areas are kept well ordered and clean.
- Constant and visible child access to ICT – digital cameras, computers etc.
- All rooms will be left in a tidy manner before each lunchtime and at the end of the day. The children are proactively managed, so that they take a full part in caring for their learning environment (which includes cloakrooms & shared learning areas).

The learning environment – Working Walls

On your classroom walls and shared areas there needs to be children's writing from a range of genres. This must be evident and consistent across the whole school.

Working walls should be precisely that *and change over the course of a week*. A learning wall should not stay in place without change for over a week.

- The classroom learning environment particularly for literacy and numeracy has a 'working wall approach' where teachers' modelling and prompts are displayed as part of ongoing learning in each classroom. E.g. Modelled writing, example pupil writing, comprehension questions/ideas, mental jottings, word problems, visual models, prompts etc....working walls are short term, dynamic and well planned.
- Children's work is used to affirm features of work that are desired – the focus and priorities for learning.
- Vocabulary relevant to the focus of the learning is evident in all planned areas of learning. There is an interactive element in displays using this approach, where children have the chance to interact with the display either during the main teaching input or as part of their lesson or informally to extend their learning beyond the lesson. Interactive aspects of the display should enable children to use a range of learning styles e.g. adding photographs, writing on speech bubbles, recordable postcards or talking tins
- Work on the working wall reflects the National Numeracy and Literacy expectations.
- Work is not necessarily mounted, as it is expected to develop rapidly and change frequently e.g. in literacy in line with the teaching blocks.
- Teachers and pupils may write captions and posters by hand as part of the lesson, which are then put on the wall for reference. Handwriting should not contradict the schools Nelson handwriting scheme.

EAL

Our learning environments acknowledge our mixed community. Pupils home language & culture is celebrated.

The learning environment – Display as Celebration

Celebration of work is displayed in corridors and other shared areas and is not the focus of the classroom learning environment. However, it is expected that the central topic the class is studying will be clear and in evidence within classrooms. This involves display of pupils' work in foundation subjects and ICT, RE and PSHE. Work displayed should be named, with Year group and dated.

The current class theme should also be evident in interactive displays, artefacts and books on display in each classroom. Work that is a finished piece and the end result of the teaching and learning process in an aspect of study, should be mounted on separate paper.

Paintings and photographs should be mounted, as well as written work. Captions to explain the learning process, pose questions or provide contextual information should be part of the celebration display. Captions and titles should also be mounted.

The use of artefacts, drapes or plants enhances the display. Using boxes, stands and other devices to make parts of the display three-dimensional enhances the display.

Each class is expected to maintain the display boards that are in corridors within the vicinity of their classroom. The entrance hall represents the schools ethos and values and photographs should be changed at least half-termly. Displays as celebration of pupils' work should change at least termly. **Writing should take priority** so that children can see good examples and know that this is valued. Around the school all staff are ensuring that there is high quality and a range of genres of writing displayed.

The Outside Environment

The school has a rich outside learning environment that can be used to enhance the children's experiences and opportunities. We aim to together provide:

A Positive Psychological environment in which: children are able to relax and feel secure, confident and at ease.

Dos and Don'ts Guidance

Displays should belong to the children and not be window dressing. They provide one of the best ways of demonstrating that a child is valued and a range of abilities should be evident, not just selections made from the highest attainers. Work that reflects process does not always have to be the finished product.

A good display will stimulate discussion and curiosity and should be changed regularly (at least half-termly) to maintain this level of interest. Above all keep it accessible and think of the target audience. **Question on displays** enhance their value and draw & engage the viewer into the learning. Avoid 'over display' with over use of website photocopies. A minimal, focussed and strategic approach is more effective. Children should be able to use and interpret each piece of display which supports their learning. Avoid visual display becoming too 'loud' which can be confusing and inaccessible to learners. N.b. consider the adaptations which may be required for some SEN pupils where calm uncluttered rooms can be beneficial whereas visually 'loud' rooms can be a barrier to learning.

Window areas and ledges should overall remain uncluttered and not become a shelf for storage. Our classrooms should be corporate and consistent, whilst it is acknowledged that teachers bring their individualism to classrooms and learning, classrooms and learning areas should represent our schools policy, standards and priorities and not those of individual class teachers.

Choose colours carefully – complimentary colours such as red and green or violet and yellow will make things stand out. Tonal colours such as blue and violet will create a harmonious, peaceful display. The background mount should compliment a piece of work, not distract from it. Work of different sizes or types is unified for a single display by being mounted on the same colour. Display boards should be edged with border roll or other edging and contain a clear title. Backing paper should be changed each time, if required. Make sure work on the board that is meant to be straight is. Make sure that work at angles can clearly be read or seen. *Children's work should be named dated and have the year group.* Cutting work into shapes such as circles, triangles and squares can add interest to the work. Keep to the display boards – please do not pin or staple into ceilings or walls. Blotak onto walls should avoided as overnight, at weekend or holidays as temperatures vary, the display can fall triggering an alarm call out. When displays are taken down, you should ensure that no pins, staples or pieces of blu-tack remain on the wall etc Finally stand back and evaluate the learning environment – has it worked? Are the children using it or talking about it? Is it a useful tool for teaching? Has it made children feel proud?

Monitoring

Learning Walks will be carried out at least half-termly to monitor the implementation of this policy. It will also form part of the lesson observation process. This policy will be reviewed annually in line with National Curriculum developments and school priorities.

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Appendix 1. Monitoring our Learning Environment.

Hawthorn Tree Primary School **Monitoring of Teaching & Learning - The Environment for learning**
 Class Date

<p><i>To what extent</i> Lesson Objectives are accessible, clear and understood by the children</p>	
<p><i>To what extent</i> Children have an awareness and understanding of their own targets for learning</p>	
<p><i>School priorities</i> Writing is high profile. A range of genres are represented in classroom display. High quality exemplar, aspirational writing is displayed.</p>	
<p><i>Examples of & children's understanding of</i> classroom / school Positive Behaviour Reward systems & Celebrating success</p>	
<p><i>Examples of & children understanding of</i> classroom / school Behaviour Sanction systems</p>	
<p>Appropriate timetables for children</p>	
<p>Aids for learning & display (incl EAL & SEN support)</p>	
<p>Overall management, organisation & quality of the learning environment including levels of noise & suitability for the range and types of EAL & SEN pupils in the class.</p>	
<p>Improvements required & timescale</p>	

Additional Notes/ Discussion with teacher

Observation Grading: Outstanding/ Good/ Requires Improvement/ Inadequate