



TEACHING and LEARNING POLICY

(This policy is available on the website or on request)

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Introduction

This policy has been developed by teachers, teaching assistants and pupils. It reflects learning from developments in teaching for learning and the use of research into how children learn. We have particularly used the following in our reflection and developments towards our teaching for learning policy.

Assessment for Learning – We believe that Assessment for Learning is a useful tool in our teaching and we use various strategies across the school in each year group.

Mind mapping – We encourage children to organise their thoughts and ideas by mind mapping.

Pupil involvement and personalised learning – All children take a major part in their learning. They are encouraged and supported to assess their own work and have clear knowledge about the next step in their learning. As far as possible we adapt planning to enable all children to personalise their learning so that maximum potential is reached and progress is continually made.

Section One

What are our broad learning aims for pupils at QEH Junior School?

Our School Aims

We endeavour to provide an enjoyable, enriched educational experience, relevant and meaningful for every child. We aim to develop personal qualities to provide a sound foundation for the future and to ensure that every child leaves us recognising themselves as life-long learners.

We do this by:

- Providing a stimulating, enriched, relevant and enjoyable learning environment
- Nurturing the potential in every child
- Having clearly articulated, high expectations of all children
- Providing the opportunity to learn and practice transferable skills
- Expecting children to become increasingly independent in their learning
- Recognising that children achieve in different ways and celebrating this success
- Promoting positive attitudes to learning
- Ensuring that children feel safe and secure and have a positive self-image

These beliefs are shared by all those concerned with the school and are reflected in the way in which we aim to work as a team.

Section Two

What are the generic principles of effective learning?

We believe that learning is a social activity enhanced by shared enquiry. We ensure that all pupils have opportunity to engage with learning individually, in pairs and at group level.

The decision regarding the arrangement for learning considers the needs of the learners in the context of the learning activity. A repertoire of group discussion strategies are used to ensure engagement for all learners.

Across the variety of group learning situations opportunities are planned for pupils to develop a range of skills. These include:

- Speaking in turn
- Listening to others' points of view
- Participate, respond and make suggestions
- Supporting others' suggestions by building upon them, clarifying or modifying them
- Challenging ideas sensitively so that others reflect on their validity
- Reasoning or justifying ideas
- Asking questions to seek clarification and elaboration
- Summarising to move discussion on
- Analysing and evaluating to make explicit the strengths and weaknesses of their and others' thinking
- Co-operating within a small group
- Taking on a given role within a group
- Developing problem solving skills

Adults seek to use effective intervention, for example by careful questioning or prompts, to maintain momentum and refine the quality of the learning opportunity.

Section Three

What does effective learning look like in pupils' day-to-day work and over time?

3.1 How do we promote and organise independent learning?

We believe that the more pupils are directly engaged with their learning, with an active role, responsibilities and sense of ownership, the greater their learning. We aim to develop the pupil's capacity for independent learning and to ensure that the principles of independence are embedded throughout the School.

We do this by:

- Involving pupils in planning reviewing and evaluating aspects of their own work. Our approach to assessment for learning also involves pupils in understanding and using pupil friendly assessment criteria. (e.g. Writing assessment)
- Pupils are taught self-help strategies supported by prompts in the learning environment
- Ensuring that verbal and written instructions are clear
- Scaffolding learning with guidelines and frameworks (e.g. writing frames)
- Planning for group work that requires decisions and planning (e.g. A resourced limited DT task)
- Encouraging pupils to generate and devise strategies to answer their own questions
- Supporting learners who wish to pursue a line of enquiry or interest at a tangent from the topic
- Encouraging pupils to pursue their initiative by planning activities that are structured but with sufficient room for pupils to make choices and decisions
- Ensuring that the learning environment is well organised and clearly labelled. We also expect pupils to have a shared responsibility for maintaining an orderly learning environment.
- Our teachers model a risk taking culture where making mistakes and getting something wrong is considered a learning experience. We also focus on this aspect of learning in assemblies.
- We actively encourage children to extend their learning beyond the school and celebrate the contributions that are made from home and in the community.
- We extend learning with a wide range of educational visits and the use of visiting speakers and specialists
- We have an active house system.
- Encouraging pupils to plan for events and activities e.g. class assemblies or school functions

3.2 How do we ensure that we respond to a variety of learning styles?

We believe that pupils have distinct learning characteristics and may have preferred learning styles even though most can learn beyond these preferences. We recognise that an individual learning style is a combination of how learners prefer to receive information, process information, the ways in which they are intelligent and how they prefer to engage with the learning activity.

We do this by:

- Seeking to ensure that our lessons we use teaching strategies that will support visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning where appropriate.
- Raising awareness of multi-sensory learning and ensuring that learners develop a range of learning strategies rather than relying on one preferred approach
- Ensuring that teacher knowledge of the needs of learners with different learning styles is good and that teaching strategies and learning activities are varied to accommodate these needs
- Ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants are flexible in their approach to a learning activity enabling pupils, be they activists, reflectors, theorists or pragmatists to access the learning
- Making explicit our belief in multiple intelligence, celebrating achievement in all aspects of learning and where possible allowing pupils to respond to a challenge or activity in a form that responds to a particular aptitude

3.3 How do we ensure the holistic development of pupils?

We believe that in order to ensure the holistic development of pupils it is essential that social, moral, spiritual and cultural skills are promoted throughout the teaching and learning experience.

We do this by:

Social – organising social events and activities to encourage and develop social skills

Moral – through our Code of Conduct showing the importance of right and wrong, discussing moral dilemmas etc

Spiritual – giving children time to reflect spiritually on a daily basis in whole school or class assemblies

Cultural – developing a sense of belonging in the community and a cultural awareness of where they live and the diverse nature of living in multi-cultural Britain

3.4 How do we develop thinking skills?

We believe that thinking skills can be taught and further developed so that pupils can apply these skills when they process information, apply reason, engage in creative thinking and evaluate.

We do this by:

- Providing open and challenging tasks that require the pupils to do the majority of the thinking
- Using problem solving and investigation settings for learning wherever possible
- Asking pupils to explain their learning strategies
- Using questioning to reference prior learning and connect current learning to a bigger picture
- Allowing for a range of learning outcomes from a given starting point
- Using mind mapping techniques to support the connections between aspects of learning and as a tool for future learning
- Asking open questions wherever possible
- Modelling thinking
- Building in time for review and reflection and not always confining this to the plenary in a lesson

3.5 How do we motivate and engage the learners?

We believe that motivation is highly personal and crucial for effective learning. We believe that we should ensure high levels of motivation are developed and sustained, supporting learners to become aware of their motivations and able to self-sustain them.

We do this by:

- Recognising the importance of positive self-esteem and self belief and promoting this through appropriate use of praise and encouragement
- Knowing our pupils well and understanding what motivates them
- Responding to their learning styles
- Ensuring that the learning environment is an active support and a celebration of pupil achievement
- Providing challenges at an appropriate level, ensuring activities are accessible for all
- Giving pupils choices in their learning
- Providing clear and immediate feedback on learning
- Using developmentally appropriate reward systems that evolve to encourage intrinsic motivation
- Using learning logs and targets for learning set with the learners
- Promoting a positive learning culture
- Involving children in self and peer assessment
- Providing a showcase for celebration of achievement e.g. Sharing assembly, class assembly and through display
- Ensuring all pupils encounter success frequently

3.6 How do we develop and maintain positive self-esteem?

We believe that positive self esteem is also crucial for effective learning. We believe that self esteem is not fixed and can be very fragile. It is shaped by interactions with others who may enhance or reduce it.

We do this by:

- Maintaining a positive culture in the classroom, seeking to minimize negative interactions and increase positive ones
- Recognising those children who have low self-esteem and ensuring that all adults use positive interaction with these children wherever possible
- Modelling that making mistakes is a learning experience
- Using circle time activities to highlight successes
- Using pupil of the day/week type strategies
- Being consistent in our approach to pupils
- Showing an interest in the pupils, allowing them informal opportunities to talk about themselves, their families and their interests
- Ensuring feedback is always framed in a positive way

3.7 How do we ensure the learners have a voice?

We believe that pupils should have an authentic role and responsibility within the decision making processes that shape the developments of their school. We believe it is crucial to put pupils at the centre of their learning and that the learners have valuable things to tell us about their learning.

We do this by...

- Involving pupils in discussions and decisions
- Involving pupils in planning, designing and reviewing the curriculum around themes
- Consulting pupils in changes to the school environment, school improvement
- Listening to pupils and setting a culture where it is appropriate for pupils to voice an opinion if it is framed in a thoughtful way
- Having high expectations of pupils' capacity to be thoughtful and reflective about the learning experience they meet
- Ensuring pupils understand how decisions are taken

Section Four

What are the implications for teaching?

How do we create a positive learning climate? How do we create a supportive learning environment?

Our learning environments are organized with the learners in mind. The environment reflects, supports and challenges the current learning with:

- Displays to stimulate interest and contextualize the learning
- Key vocabulary lists and other prompts
- Guidelines for routines and procedures
- Key questions, puzzles, problems and investigations to think about

The pupils are involved in the development of the learning environment as this encourages active learners with a sense of responsibility, ownership and independence. In the learning environment:

- Resources are available and accessible
- There are clearly designated learning areas
- Interactive displays stimulate engagement in the learning
- Information and prompts scaffold the learning and enable learners to make choices and develop self-help strategies

The quality of the learning environment conveys high expectations about standards, progress and achievements by:

- Displays including annotated exemplars and models
- Displays of processes as well as outcomes
- Learning objectives/outcomes displayed for use in self assessment
- Celebration of achievements, efforts, progress and attainment of pupils

The learning environment reflects the needs of the learners; it supports all abilities and learning styles and reflects a developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Section Five

How do we plan, assess and evaluate the learning?

Planning

The planning documents are structured into three categories.

- Long Term
- Medium Term
- Short Term

Long Term Planning

This planning can be seen on our Curriculum Map which consists of an overview of topics within Science, ICT and Foundation subjects for each year group.

Medium Term Planning

These indicate a sequence of learning activities with a broad learning intention related to the National Curriculum programmes of study. Each learning activity is defined with clear expectations of what the children will achieve. Differentiation is defined into three areas.

- MUST – what all children will achieve
- SHOULD – what most of the children will achieve
- COULD – what some children will achieve

Short Term Planning

This weekly planning timetable details

- The curriculum areas taught
- When it is taught
- How long it is taught for
- Which activities are formally assessed

Each learning activity has

- A specific learning intention(s)
- Brief description of what the learning activity is (related to the MTP)
- Differentiated groupings
- What the TA is doing