

**COLEHILL FIRST SCHOOL  
POLICY FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING**

*Colehill First School is a Rights Respecting School. As such it is committed to upholding children's rights and promoting their responsibilities under the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The contents of this policy are fully in keeping with this commitment.*

**Rationale**

At Colehill First School we recognise that the ways in which pupils acquire understanding, knowledge and skills in the different curriculum subject areas have more similarities than differences. This policy clearly sets out those cross-curricular elements of teaching and learning which are fundamental in achieving our school's stated aims. In doing so, it forms the basis by which the school can assess the quality of its practice.

**The policy addresses three key areas:**

- What the learning environment looks like, and how it is organised and resourced;
- How the learning experiences offered to pupils seek to challenge them, meeting their varied needs and aptitudes;
- The teaching strategies used to ensure high quality learning experiences and outcomes for all pupils in the school.

**SECTION 1: THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

We believe the learning environment is key to promoting and sustaining high quality teaching and learning. We want all of our learners to be proud of their classroom and school.

At Colehill First School, all classrooms and learning areas should always be:

- well organised
- appropriately resourced
- stimulating
- well cared for.

**Layout and Organisation**

Classrooms have a clear furniture layout, with tables and chairs spaced to allow for ease of movement between and around them. There is sufficient furniture of the correct size for the whole class. Children need to have a clear, uninterrupted view of the interactive whiteboard, and left handed children are seated on the left side of their respective tables. There is a carpeted area where the children can gather to listen to stories, have discussions and take part in peer discussions. This is large enough to accommodate all of the class comfortably.

Storage is well organised, with clearly labelled storage units for books, folders etc. These are positioned for ease of access. Children take responsibility for getting out and putting away resources. They also know where to put finished work for the teacher to see. There is a clearly displayed timetable, so that the children know what activities are planned for the day or week, and in what order they happen. Clear routines are established and maintained, but, within these routines, there is scope for flexibility, which children learn as they progress through the school.

## **Display**

The way the classroom looks makes a fundamental difference to the children's attitudes and motivation. Children have the right to a classroom that is welcoming, stimulating and attractive, and neither bare nor hectic. Learning prompts on display need to reinforce key learning messages in both English and mathematics and these are regularly reviewed in the light of specific curriculum priorities.

Written material is displayed at a level and at an appropriate font size size for pupils to read easily. Displays of children's work reflect recent learning, and are used to celebrate the achievements of all children over time. A full range of curriculum learning is displayed over time, reflecting good achievement for the children concerned.

Displays are also used as stimuli when beginning new work, or as teaching tools and visual prompts when developing children's understanding. Visual prompts are used thoughtfully and with clear purpose so they do not become 'background' displays.

## **Promoting Learning**

Teachers plan learning activities carefully to enable children to interact positively with their learning environments, for example through top tips displays, working walls and 'wow' boards. Working walls should display key learning vocabulary in mathematics and English and other subjects as appropriate. They should enable pupils to check their learning independently of the teacher.

## **Care of the Environment**

We believe that children will not develop responsibility for their own space if it is unkempt. Classrooms and shared areas within the school must always be left tidily at the end of each day to allow cleaning staff full access to surfaces and floors.

We teach and expect children to take responsibility for:

- the care of resources, equipment and materials.
- returning equipment to base at the lesson's end.
- cleaning used equipment (with adult supervision as necessary).
- tidying classroom resource areas and shared areas around the school as necessary.
- the tidiness of cloakrooms throughout the day.

Cleaning staff also have a clear responsibility to ensure that the rooms are free from dust and grime, making them a clean, healthy environment for everyone. Particular care must be given to areas where bacteria might multiply, including sinks, waste bins and cloakroom areas containing lunch boxes.

## **SECTION 2: THE LEARNING EXPERIENCES**

### **Children as Learners**

- We recognise that effective learning is underpinned by pupils' emotional well being. Every child at our school has the right to learn and to be safe. We seek to develop children's understanding of their own and others' feelings and emotions through tailored programmes of learning (currently the Jigsaw PSHE scheme) that enable them to express themselves appropriately, manage their own feelings effectively, empathise and engage with others, and appreciate their uniqueness, similarities and differences. Pupils with additional needs in the area of social, emotional and mental health can be targeted for ELSA support from a trained Teaching Assistant.

- We also recognise that every learner has a unique combination of skills, abilities and qualities, which lead to a unique learner profile. We acknowledge the need for diversity in the learning experiences offered, as well as the need to make learning accessible to everyone.

Teaching staff at Colehill plan carefully so that this variety is reflected in classroom practice:

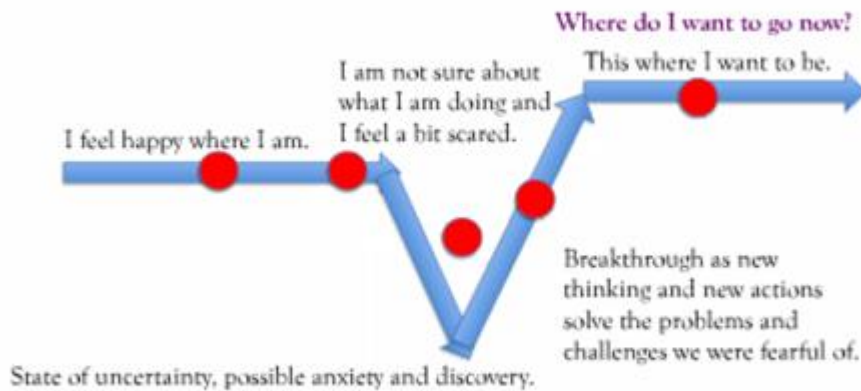
- We plan learning opportunities for children that are enquiry based, starting from questions raised by the teacher, or by the children, or both.
- We encourage pupils to ask thoughtful, open questions. We also ensure that a significant proportion of learning activities are open-ended, prompting higher order thinking and leading to a diversity of successful outcomes.
- We are aware that there are likely to be some gender differences in learning profiles. We aim to make our curriculum equally accessible, appealing and relevant to boys and girls.

## **The Curriculum**

- Our curriculum is designed to make sense to children. Subjects are connected together thematically, and children are positively encouraged to make links between different areas. It is our aim that children always have a strong sense of what they are learning, and how this connects to previous learning.
- We believe that an effective curriculum links pupils' skills, values and attitudes with the knowledge and understanding they gain. This is reflected in the learning objectives shared between teachers and children.
- We are flexible in how we deliver the curriculum: teachers undertake formative assessments before starting a new theme so that prior learning is taken into account. They use a range of tools and techniques for this purpose. For further details, refer to the school's Assessment Policy.

## **Learning About Learning; and The Learning Line**

- At Colehill First School, we encourage children to play an active part in the learning process by teaching them about learning. This takes several forms: Questioning: children are taught the difference between closed and open questions, and between simple and complex questions. They are encouraged to ask questions of their own, using a range of question starters, as well as responding to questions from the teacher. They are introduced to philosophical questioning as part of this process.
- Reflection: we encourage children to be reflective learners, i.e. to consider what went well in a piece of learning, what could be improved, how well they used their time, how well they co-operated and collaborated, and what they would do differently if they had to do the task again. Through reflection our aim is to raise self awareness and, in doing so, build self esteem.
- Learning Lines: the learning process is modelled using the Roy Leighton Learning Line approach which enables pupils to visualise and articulate the Learning Journeys they make (see diagram overleaf):



### Peer to Peer Learning

- We know that when learners are taught to communicate, co-operate and collaborate, they can maximize their learning by contributing their individual strengths to shared situations. Paired and group learning is valued at Colehill, and is regularly used throughout the whole school. Children have learning partners with whom they collaborate and to whom they respond. Talk is valued highly, because we recognise that dialogue is critically important to the development of children's thinking. Opportunities for speaking and listening are created before, during and /or after learning activities as appropriate to the task. This dialogue is also essential in self and peer assessment activities as detailed in the school's assessment policy.
- As children move up through the school, so they begin to learn in progressively larger collaborative groups. Group members are taught to assume different roles and responsibilities, and are expected to use these to carry out group learning tasks with increasing independence.

### Creativity

- We recognise that learning in all subject areas can and should be a creative process. We seek to maximise creative opportunities in the curriculum, and encourage children to think imaginatively and 'out of the box' whenever appropriate.
- In creative learning tasks, we expect the same high quality of thinking as that which children apply to other learning tasks. Creative tasks offer learners important and necessary opportunities to use and apply their knowledge and skills in new contexts.

### Independence

*Independent tasks* can be defined as tasks which enable children to develop understanding, skills and attitudes for an extended period of time without adult input. They can be individual, paired or group tasks.

- Learning activities at Colehill First School are designed to offer children the opportunity to develop independence. Teachers expect that children can select resources and make appropriate decisions for themselves, given their age and the context of the learning.
- Extended opportunities for independent learning often take the form of investigations and research tasks. When teachers design such tasks, they will consider carefully the following factors to ensure appropriateness:

- the skills and attitudes which the children already have;
- the new skills they will be learning;
- the support which children may require;
- the level of challenge within the task;
- the degree to which children can shape the learning task for themselves.

## **SECTION 3: THE TEACHING**

### **Two Key Aims**

#### **1. To Secure the Highest Possible Quality of Teaching and Learning**

At Colehill First School we believe that all children have a right to the highest quality of teaching possible, and teaching staff have a responsibility to provide this. Teaching assistants and HLTAs are very much part of our teaching team, and contribute greatly to learning outcomes for all children. We aim constantly to reflect upon our practice, taking into account new research and new learning, and acting upon this in the best interests of our children. Because the staff are a combined teaching team, we seek always to maximise our capacity to learn from one another. As part of a multi-academy trust we are also open to learning from the practice of other schools within our trust as well as from the expertise of SLEs, LLEs and NLEs identified as part of our alliance with Wimborne Teaching School. We welcome opportunities to share our expertise with colleagues across the Trust and beyond.

#### **2. To Maximise the Quality of Outcomes Over Time.**

In seeking to provide the highest possible quality of teaching, we aim to sustain high standards so that, compared to similar schools, Colehill First School children continue to achieve and attain highly. We use a range of evidence to glean a fair and representative view of the quality of teaching in the school (see monitoring policy).

### **Planning and Preparation**

- All teachers must have secure, up to date and complete knowledge of the revised NC/ EYFS curriculum requirements. The school provides regular CPD opportunities through a range of providers to ensure curriculum knowledge and pedagogical approaches remain up to date.
- Planning must be coherent, building logically and systematically on children's previous knowledge, understanding and skills.
- It must offer pupils opportunities to use and apply their learning at greater depth and in a variety of contexts and situations.
- Learning objectives must be specific, clear and unambiguous.
- Planning must also be flexible enough to respond to and address children's misconceptions so that learning is consolidated without loss of learner confidence.
- Planning must incorporate a range of teaching approaches, enabling all learners to engage effectively.
- Use of time must be planned carefully so that there is an appropriate pace to the learning.
- Resources will be used appropriately and effectively to enhance the learning.
- The learning environment will be adapted appropriately to suit the objectives.
- Additional staff will be deployed in a carefully planned way.
- Assessment opportunities will be carefully identified.

## **Teaching**

- Teachers must share the purpose of each lesson with the children through shared objectives or key learning questions, so that learners understand why they are learning what they are learning.
- The children should always understand the key success criteria for their learning.
- Teaching should be lively, well paced (not fast and furious), interactive and enjoyable for all learners within the class.
- Teachers must ask effective questions: there needs to be an appropriate balance of open and closed questions, and of simple and more complex questions. We use the Bloom's Taxonomy questioning guide as a benchmark tool (see appendix 1).
- Questions should be used not only to elicit pupils' knowledge and understanding but also to promote thinking, dialogue and reflection.
- Teachers must have appropriately high expectations of all groups of learners, so that challenge is balanced well with success and so that gaps do not open up or widen between key groups of pupils.
- Differentiation, whether by task, by framing, by resources, support or outcome, should be used thoughtfully and appropriately.
- Teaching should enable learners to realise and articulate their learning, making reference back to the Learning Line model.

## **Outcomes**

### **Organisation of Pupils' Learning**

- The vast majority of pupils' learning in English and mathematics is recorded chronologically in either writing or mathematics books as appropriate. This enables the reader to readily identify progress over time for each pupil. Any worksheets should be glued into books at an appropriate point in the book reflecting the point in time when the learning was completed.
- The learning intentions must be reflected in the title and / or annotation for each separate piece of work.
- Each new piece of work should be dated clearly.
- Errors should always be corrected neatly, without defacing the page. Scribbling out is unacceptable.
- Unless there are exceptional circumstances (e.g. medical leave) each piece of learning should be complete.
- Wherever possible each task should build on the result of the last within any given unit of learning.

### **Quality of Recorded Learning**

- Recorded learning should be of high quality and in keeping with the learning objective. For example, titles should be clearly demarcated, dates evident, lines drawn with a ruler as soon as the child is able to do so, errors corrected neatly, highlighting and annotations which do not detract from the overall presentation.
- Children should present their work with care and pride, and have a sense of audience.
- Handwriting should be legible and appropriate, and spelling should be appropriate to the children's age and abilities.

### **Quantity and breadth of recorded learning**

- There should be an appropriate quantity of learning given the age/abilities of the children and the time of the year when books are scrutinised. This would typically be, for pupils in year 1 and upwards, 4 entries per week for each of mathematics and writing (one day's entry may be a continuation of the previous day's learning).
- There needs to be a variety of learning outcomes over time to reflect the breadth of NC objectives for each year group.

- Wherever possible each task should build on the result of the last within any given unit of learning.
- Key reading, writing and mathematical skills should be applied effectively across the wider curriculum. For example, in writing books there should be evidence of writing for other subjects, e.g. science reports, historical accounts etc.

### **Use of Assessment**

Please refer to the school's Assessment and Marking Policies.

**This policy has been reviewed in line with the 9 principles set out in the Single Equality Policy and an initial screening Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out.**

Signed:

Position held: Chair of Academy Committee

Date of policy: March 2016

Review date: 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Scheduled review: Spring 2021