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Introduction

Classroom environments both support and enrich the learning of all children. As well as being vibrant and welcoming, the classroom environment is a learning resource, the second teacher, a way of engaging children and building the class community. It can create a sense of ownership and be used to support and promote learning as well as celebrating children’s work. With careful thought and planning, an effective classroom environment is used as an interactive resource supporting teaching, learning and assessment.

At Woodhill Primary School and Foxfield Primary School we believe that a well organised and stimulating environment has a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning, and therefore supports raising standards. It enables pupils to develop independence as learners, building on good Foundation Stage practice.

This guidance document sets out to clarify the common expectations at Woodhill Primary School and Foxfield Primary School so that we provide consistency for all pupils in supporting, whilst challenging pupils to give their very best and develop a shared sense of what high standards look like.

Key Message:
The environment illustrates all that we value; we cannot separate our words from it

'We show our children trust and they learn they can be trusted. We treat them with respect and get respectful behaviour in return. We put them in a beautiful place, give them a small taste of what a decent, dignified future might feel like, and that makes all the difference. The beauty we’ve designed into our centre isn’t window dressing; it’s an essential part of our success. It nourishes the spirit, and until you reach that part of the spirit that isn’t touched by cynicism or despair, no change can begin.'

Bill Strickland
The Basics

At Woodhill Primary School and Foxfield Primary School all classroom environments will provide the following at an appropriate level for the age of the children learning in the classroom. The following will also be used within lessons to support teaching and learning.

1. Objectives, success criteria and key questions are displayed and referred to in lessons. (These are not only important for children but also enable adults learning with children to be clear about teacher expectations).

2. Prompts, ideas and good examples that are generated during lessons are displayed and referred to, to support future learning.

3. Key questions are displayed and used to trigger prior knowledge.

4. Curriculum displays include statements and questions to highlight key learning points.

5. Key words and technical vocabulary are displayed and discussed for a variety of curriculum areas. Please note that any collections of words or phrases are displayed and updated regularly to ensure vocabulary links to an appropriate learning context.

6. Vocabulary and definitions of words are referred to, discussed and used within teaching.
The Non Negotiables: Shared Responsibility …

• To ensure that all classroom environments are stimulating and welcoming for children and visitors
• To celebrate children’s achievements in all areas of the curriculum
• To develop classroom environments so that they provide an interactive resource to support teaching, learning and assessment effectively
• To support children’s learning by providing prompts, models, good examples and information which children can use to support their learning on a daily basis
• To ensure that regular reference is made to the prompts and examples provided, and to ensure that they are regularly updated, so that they do not become merely ‘wallpaper’
• To develop pupils’ ownership of their classroom by involving them in the use and development of their learning environment
• To enable pupils, staff and visitors to gain insight into the learning going on in classrooms; learning in progress as well as the finished product
• To support pupils’ understanding of where they are in their learning and what they need to do next
• To create and maintain a positive classroom climate
The classroom environment will:

- Reflect, support and challenge
- Empower children to be active learners with a sense of responsibility, ownership and independence
- Convey high expectations about standards, progress and achievements.
- Enable teachers and TA’s to access learning resources and paperwork to support teaching and learning quickly and easily
- Contain only resources which are relevant and which enhance quality of teaching and learning for the children in the class
- Display objectives, success criteria and key questions that are referred to in lessons
- Contain prompts, ideas and good examples that are generated during lessons and displayed for reference to support future learning
- Display key questions
- Contain curriculum displays that include statements and questions to highlight key learning points
- Display key words and technical vocabulary for a variety of curriculum areas
- Display collections of words or phrases that are updated regularly to support learning e.g. sticky notes, cards and pocket chart
Teachers will plan learning environment to:

- Communicate creativity
- Communicate precision
- Communicate high standards
- Communicate respect
- Communicate challenge

Teachers will:

- Use surfaces creatively
- Ensure displays are precise
- Use language for purpose
- Communicate high expectations

Displays of learning are crucial in our efforts to raise standards of attainment and to foster high self-esteem. Displays celebrate learning of the highest standard and provide a platform for rewarding effort.
To ensure displays are of the highest quality, all teachers will:

- Plan them out and discuss their ideas with phase leaders

- Move beyond the board so that displays are 3D and encourage exploration and interaction

- Choose colours carefully so that they complement each other and display the learning at its best

- Mount work precisely; double mounted, black first to create effect, even borders (narrow first, wider second), only use Pritt Stick so that learning does not bubble, glued to the edge so that learning doesn’t curl back

- Think about positioning of the learning so that it guides the eye. Learning will be spaced carefully and will include different sized pieces and a mixture of media

- Ensure learning is personalised and will avoid children producing mass versions of the same ‘blue print’

- Contextualise, question, explain and include pupils reflections
Learning Walls

At Woodhill Primary School and Foxfield Primary School we believe that learning walls can make a positive contribution to children's learning. The core purpose of a learning wall is to:

• support children's understanding in the process of learning
• provide a visual resource and a reference to scaffold learning
• support current learning and pertinent prior learning
• represent the work in progress, the learning journey steps
• model specific unit modelling for children to access, including children’s examples.
• help independent learning
• show progress in learning concepts or steps
• model essential concepts, processes, vocabulary.

Where should learning walls be displayed for maximum impact on learning?

At Woodhill Primary School and Foxfield Primary School, learning walls will be displayed where they are visible and accessible for pupils to see and use. This means displaying them in a central place (e.g. next to the white board) where most teacher led input can be seen and where the eye is drawn. A learning wall should be the focal point for whole class learning.

How are learning walls presented?

Learning walls should be handwritten using cursive script. They should be written using large sheets of sugar paper or flip chart paper. They should represent “real time learning” and be current to the learning area in focus. (E.g. part of a current topic or unit).

How does a learning wall lead to quality outcomes for learning?

• Learning walls are supportive and interactive
• They are part of the planned learning experience and referred to continuously
• They are referred to by children
• Children can see their work contributing towards the learning wall
• They provide ‘stepping stones’ for children
• Learning walls can help children think through ‘higher order thinking skills’, especially when they contain open questions.
Interactive Displays
Why are interactive displays important?

- They encourage children’s thinking from enquiry and engagement with learning
- They support the development of sustained, active thinking
- Interactive displays can provide next steps for learners. (E.g. form an enquiry or homework opportunity)
- Interactive displays help extend learning beyond the teacher modelling
- They support deeper learning and reinforce key language development

How we use learning questions to promote learning?

- Every display to include open questions
- Linked to AFL, linking learning, applied in different contexts
- Relevant and accessible
- Develop deeper thinking
- Differentiated outcome
- Child friendly and include challenges for more able
- Time to explore and demonstrate how to use (problem solve)

*Open questions are planned for and displayed
*Apparatus to demonstrate; whiteboards, tray of tens and units, variety of structured number car
Use of Topic Tables and Interest Tables In Classrooms

Topic tables and interest tables create an instant reference to a learning theme. They promote enquiry and stimulate the senses, drawing learners in.

Topic and interest tables provide a variety of opportunities in the classroom including:

• stimulating discussion in lessons linked to a curriculum theme
• generating enthusiasm towards a topic area or an aspect of a topic theme
• providing children with concrete examples / artefacts that prompt thinking
• role play and drama opportunities
• opportunities to display learning questions and link learning across curriculum areas.

At Woodhill Primary School and Foxfield Primary School we expect all learning environments to contain topic or interest tables linked to a current or ‘live’ topic. They are used as a reference point by teachers and children to plan learning opportunities around and should be stimulating and inviting parts of our classrooms.

Below and right we have shown some examples of topic and interest tables linked to termly topic themes. Please note the use of key questions and vocabulary linked to the topic.
Book Corners

Book corners should be inviting, stimulating places to learn to read and learn. They should be organised using the Woodhill Primary School and Foxfield Primary School book corner labels (available from the Literacy Co-ordinator).

The use of soft fabrics, cushions and plants can ‘soften’ the area making it more inviting. The use of key questions, interactive author focus displays and displays of featured genres can all enhance the learning experience for pupils using a book corner well.

Any books in poor condition should be removed from book areas and reported to the Literacy Co-ordinator. Children found deliberately mis-using books will receive letters to their parents requesting the replacement of books.

Note below (right) how the use of an author focus table can create interest around the book corner.
Modelling Handwriting

Our agreed expectation for teacher modelled handwriting is that:

- we use cursive handwriting at all times
- all adults model handwriting cursive script when writing anything for children
- we talk through it, consistent. At all times by every adult
- teacher written text must be cursive
- everybody does the same

Our non-negotiables for modelled handwriting are:

- examples of handwriting available, children’s displayed work shows good example of quality handwriting
- cursive letters are on display. This includes pupils’ work, teacher’s writing, mark in cursive script on display
- all handwritten work and labels in cursive script
- cursive posters displayed
- all work in books in cursive script
- high expectations from all staff
- all adults to model
- lots of praise for good presentation
- adult written marking is in cursive script

We achieve consistency through:

- High expectations
- Regular reminders
- Modelling and sharing examples of quality handwriting
- Publishing
- Celebrating good examples
- Children know steps to improve
- Non-negotiable rules / guidelines
- We insist every piece of work is in cursive writing
Woodhill Learning Environment Expectations

Key Message:
The learning environment is the visual representation of all that we value in our school. It cannot be separated from teaching and learning - it is the embodiment of all we aspire for from learners. Learning environments should be consistently excellent and enable children to become independent, successful learners, with the highest expectations for themselves and each other.

Learning Environments Will...

- Always be clean, tidy and organized so that children feel safe and can access resources independently
- Stimulate thinking and promote language through artefacts, high quality displays, quality books and well organised spaces
- Provide learning prompts, models and information which children can use to support learning
- Serve as a continual reference point in lessons, be referred to and refreshed to reflect current and new learning
- Reflect learning across the curriculum
- Display key learning sequences being taught and extended
- Enable pupils, staff and visitors to gain insight into the learning taking place, including published learning
- Contain examples of pupil/parental reflection and feedback

What this means for children:
“We all know what good learning looks like”. “Everything in my classroom helps me become a better learner”. “I feel proud to see my best efforts celebrated on display”.

“The beauty we’ve designed into our centre isn’t window dressing; it’s an essential part of our success. It nourishes the spirit, and until you reach that part of the spirit that isn’t touched by cynicism or despair, no change can begin”. Bill Strickland
Woodhill Learning Wall Expectations

Key Message:
The learning environment is the 'second skin' of the teacher. It sets the tone for shared expectations, provides rich learning models to support independent learning and thinking as a resource, and maps the journey of the learning towards excellence.

Learning Walls Will...

- Celebrate children's ideas, learning connections and learning starting points
- Model key vocabulary, sentence structures and handwriting
- Display high quality expectations
- Capture 'live' learning by progressively adding children's thinking and references
- Reflect learning across the curriculum
- Develop the key learning skills being taught during the learning sequences
- Support pupils in self and peer assessment by acting as a reference
- Value children's thinking as learning evolves

What this means for children:
"Learning walls show me what I need to do and how to do it".
"Learning walls give me clues, ideas and words I can use in my learning".
"I feel proud to see my ideas on learning walls".

"Where deep practice builds learning incrementally, planned modeling and representation of excellence, fires signals and subconscious forces that lead us to say 'I can do that too - that is what I want to be'"  
Daniel Coyle The Talent Code
FEEDBACK

PLANNED FOR IN ADVANCE
REFERENCES LEARNING
PROVIDES AN ACTIONABLE TASK
IS ALWAYS ACTED UPON
CAPTURES THE JOURNEY

With clear learning intention, separate from the context
Linked to clear and measurable process driven success criteria
Which extends thinking, and links progress with the marking response
Creates routine & shared responsibility for learning success, making progress visible
Pupil response builds a dialogue between teacher and learner

John Hattie
“The most powerful single modification that enhances achievement is feedback. The simplest prescription for improving education has to be dollops of feedback”

Daniel Coyle
“Experiences when you are forced to slow down, make errors and correct them, end up making you swift and graceful without realizing it”

Ron Berger
“How do we get inside students’ heads and turn up the knob that regulates quality and effort? Is this good enough? Does it meet my standards? Changing assessment at this level should be the most important goal of school”
Modelling Excellence:
Multiple models to scaffold learning

Give pupils opps to adapt modeling flexibly so not to restrict learning. Provide opps to apply & extend.

Planning identifies modelling opportunities & intended outcomes before teaching sequences are introduced.

Be clear in advance which aspects of learning modeling will exemplify.

Ensure adult modeling focuses on concepts that pupils can build on / adapt.

Plan how modeling will capture learning journey and expected outcomes.

Use pupils' models of excellence and refer to them continuously.

Link modeling to learning intentions and model the steps to success.

Capture, from the beginning of learning journey, language and vocabulary pupils will use in final outcomes.
Use of Success Criteria and Modelling ‘What Makes Good’

It is important to display examples of what makes good features of current learning because:

- Children can access WMG and know what they are learning towards
- It models high expectations, to show what success looks like
- Shared understanding of judgement criteria
- Know what it looks like – successful model
- Show key features, aims and reminders of current learning, so children can see where they are and next steps
- Provides a reference to success for pupils
- When pupils encounter problems – they can self check and improve

We ensure that WMG / success criteria are understood by children by:

*Introducing at start of unit
*Discussing, referring to in lessons and expanding with children
*Consistently referring back to, referencing throughout the learning process
*Placing them in child friendly speak and modelling
*Using pictures, symbols, photographs
*Developing a consistent format
*Model learning using them
*Using as in-lesson assessment tool
*Ensure vocabulary is accurate and understood
*Collaborative checklist and SC, modelling examples of adjectives etc.

Our shared agreement at Woodhill Primary School and Foxfield Primary School about using success criteria is:

- We identify them in our planning
- We always share with children and encourage them to generate their own success criteria with staff
- We always display them
- We write success criteria using cursive script as a model for children
- In Foundation Stage, we link learning outcomes to the EYFS planning tools and publish the related developmental stages