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Learning and Teaching Policy within Jupiter Community Free School (JCFS) 2014 Date adopted by the Governing Body – June 2014

Philosophy

JCFS uses much of the national curriculum but does not follow it in total. Nonetheless there is a rigorous, comprehensive curriculum with a social and academic approach to education. It is designed to develop the character, mind and resilience of the whole child and incorporates the core beliefs and values of the school. National assessments are undertaken at age 5 (EYFS), age 6 (Phonics screening) age 7 (End of Key Stage 1) and 11 (End of Key Stage Two) so that it is clear how well the children are attaining and achieving and the performance of the school can be benchmarked against that of others. We wish to ensure that every child understands the importance of learning and as a result they will develop a love for learning that is lifelong. We believe that we are responsible for enabling children to reach their full potential in life, transcending any limitations imposed externally. We strive to make all teaching creative, inspirational, motivational, excellent and enjoyable; catering for the needs of every unique individual.

Vision

The vision for the school clearly establishes the strapline 'for a better future' and the main drivers for the curriculum:

- a strong drive on improving learning and engagement in the local community underpinned by the principles of: equality and diversity; respect for local people, local culture and local values; citizenship in the local, national and global context;
- building children's repertoire of spoken and written language so that they become confident and effective communicators;
- specialism in science and technology (including IT) to develop skills for learning, life and the future economy;
- aspiration and enterprise so that every child: wants to succeed; knows how to achieve well academically and become socially competent; participates, is creative, is able to express their voice, contributes responsibly and has a sense of what it means to be a democratic citizen; believes that they are on the road to college, university or a good job;
- a strong focus on the whole child and their physical, social, spiritual, cultural and emotional wellbeing that means that they: are well placed to learn; will make good progress; will develop the emotional resilience to succeed even in the face of adversity.

West Herts Community Free School Trust

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Jupiter CFS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, parents, volunteers, visitors and contractors to share this commitment.

Aims

- To ensure that every child enjoys learning and has a desire and willingness to learn;
- To equip children with the skills to engage with the local community respectfully, building on knowledge and understanding of the locality;
- To develop effective communicators who are confident in both oral and written methods;
- To provide equal learning opportunities for all children which are based on high aspiration both from within the child and those that surround them;
- To instil a love for learning through so that children will be curious to discover something new every day;
- To foster resilience in order to cope with difficulties as they arise;
- To ensure that all children, regardless of their age, ability, gender, ethnicity, culture or special educational or physical needs, are able to learn effectively;
- To enable every child to reach their full learning potential in all areas of school life by recognising and catering for their individual needs and learning styles;
- To offer provision that shows that every child matters;
- To celebrate children's successes and achievements;
- To make provision for children which is creative, motivational, inspirational, and enjoyable;
- To carefully plan an alluring, broad and balanced curriculum that will ensure effective learning and teaching;
- To develop skills for life and the future economy through highly effective learning and teaching in our specialist areas of science and technology (including IT);
- To encourage all staff to employ quality first teaching strategies that are creative, innovative and inspiring in order to make learning exciting;
- To utilise a variety of assessment tools, including 'Assessing Pupils Progress' (APP), to inform planning, teaching and evaluation;
- To continually monitor, evaluate and review learning and teaching to ensure continued improvement that builds on the very best practice locally, nationally and internationally;
- To ensure that appropriate resources are available in order for staff to deliver excellent learning opportunities;
- To ensure that the learning environment is creative, inviting and stimulating and reflects the children's learning journey as they move through the school;
- To enable all members of staff to feel knowledgeable, confident and enthusiastic about learning and teaching;
- To ensure that all members of the school community are given the opportunity to learn and develop professionally;
- To include parents/carers in their child's learning through highly effective communication systems;
- To utilise the wider community to enhance the excellent curriculum provision.

Curriculum

For the curriculum to fully engage the children and promote high achievement there must be exceptional teaching and learning. In order to ensure this there is a programme for nurturing and developing teachers so that children have high quality educational experience. The school is also a research environment in which everyone reflects on their practice and makes things better than before.

Children are taught as a whole class, in groups and, where appropriate, individually. Strong relationships, engagement and participation set the context for learning in all classrooms.

The curriculum is designed to be creative, challenging and inspiring; the children will be inspired by the range of themes and activities. Staff will plan a creative thematic curriculum, based on the interests of the children, ensuring that elements of the National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage documentation are met, whilst children enjoy learning that is motivational and engaging.

We will build on the skills needed for learning in all the eleven subjects but link them in a way that the children can make connections across the disciplines as more rounded learners. We will use information technology as a tool that allows our children to function in the new technologies of the twenty first century. We believe that enquiring minds are crucial for our children to have “a better future” and this will be fostered through our science curriculum. Working as an effective team member is a significant way for each child to believe in themselves as part of a community of practice there is no stronger link than through the creation of music together. We want our children to keep healthy and daily physical activities will energise our children. Through the learning of our main second language of Spanish and the introduction to others we will explore cultural awareness and tolerance as we establish our new vocabulary and sentence structures in our conversations.

Characteristics of teaching and Learning

Set out below are the other key features that characterise teaching and learning JCFS.

Teaching is characterised by:

- exceptionally high expectations and a relentless focus on social skills, literacy skills and the teaching of reading;
- good learning relationships and a broad and engaging range of teaching styles and strategies;
- teachers who know really well the individuals in their class so that they can provide the right opportunities to promote outstanding progress in lessons and the right follow-on work to maintain the excitement at home;
- strong subject knowledge with a clear emphasis on English, science and mathematics;
- regular assessment and good feedback which lets children know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve;
- personalised learning programmes which are designed to accelerate progress particularly for: children from low income backgrounds; children who are gifted and talented; children with special needs and disabilities; children with English as an additional language; children in care and those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties;
- at least good progress made by all children in lessons;
- creative use of resources including IT to support and extend the learning objectives;
- activities which capitalise on children's curiosity;
- parents and other community members learning or supporting in the classroom.

Children's learning is characterised by:

- the mastery of basic skills and good achievement now and in the future;
- positive attitudes to learning, strong relationships and exemplary behaviour;
- hard work, perseverance and a clear belief that they can succeed even in the face of adversity;
- caring for others and their environment (behaving like good citizens);
- the ability to work independently and in collaboration with others;
- the ability to identify and use a range of resources to support and enhance their learning including IT;
- confident use of the language of learning;
- a creative approach to identifying and solving problems and the ability to think like scientists;
- a reflective and evaluative approach that helps them and others to improve;
- the pursuit of learning beyond the classroom;
- knowledge of big ideas and the things that shape our world.

Planning and Preparation

Staff plan a detailed 'learning journey' for each theme, ensuring that all areas of the curriculum are fully covered. They begin with an explorative question to discover the knowledge and understanding of the children about the theme and then front load with expert knowledge either through the use of visitors or educational visits to spark the children's curiosity about the theme to be studied.. They identify clear learning objectives, learning outcomes, activities, differentiation, specified groups, resources (such as IT etc) and assessment opportunities. Members of staff work closely together to ensure progression of

learning skills through the years. Teaching strategies and resources are varied and appealing to ensure that they will engage the children's interest and cater for a range of learning styles. All members of staff prepare carefully and in good time for each lesson so that lesson time can be used highly effectively. It is our understanding that children learn more effectively in a safe environment that is tidy, bright and inviting each day.

Resources

The subject leaders and other identified members of staff ensure that their subjects are well resourced. For each subject or theme high quality resources are developed and readily available and are returned complete and fit for purpose after use. Members of staff ensure that they choose resources that are appropriate to the theme, including the use of visits and visitors. These are collected and prepared prior to using them for teaching and learning. Resources are used to motivate the children and spark their imaginations.

Assessment for Learning

Members of staff carefully and regularly assess the learning of children in order to establish their current levels of attainment and progress. 'Assessing Pupils Progress' is one of the assessment tools utilised by school staff. This information is used to adapt/develop future planning and will ultimately create a curriculum, which caters for the needs of every child. This will enable them to reach their full potential. Further information about assessment procedures can be found in the school's Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy.

Catering for Individual Needs

The careful assessment and detailed planning produced by each teacher will show how the needs of all children will be met. However, teachers are aware that on occasions this will not be sufficient and other strategies will be utilised to support individual needs, including those that are emotional, social, behavioural and academic. This may apply to identified groups of children such as those with special educational needs, in vulnerable circumstances, those with English as an additional language, and those deemed gifted or talented.

Environment

A stimulating environment is vital if learning and teaching is to be effective. Members of staff strive to create an environment where the children can feel safe and excited about coming to school to learn and which reflects their 'learning journey' in each of the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and in every theme.

Continuous Professional Development

It is understood that for learning and teaching to be excellent, members of staff must be given the opportunity to develop professionally. This may be through coaching and mentoring, training, observation, discussion or by other means and may be arranged for the whole staff, groups or individuals. Performance management is vital to ensure every member of staff have a voice in their own professional development opportunities. Every member of staff is valued and is recognised as a continuous life long learner.

Parental Involvement

Parents/carers are viewed as active partners and supporters of learning in our school. They are encouraged to be part of school life through a range of activities, such as attendance at class assemblies and other community events. They also receive regular correspondence to keep them informed about school matters using a variety of multi media approaches which guide them with their child's future learning.

Parents/carers have regular contact with the staff and are able to discuss their child's progress on a regular basis. Additionally, the school requests that every parent/carer support their child by working with them at home on open ended activities that are designed to be fun for a family learning together. We will celebrate the outcomes of the families learning together tasks by including them in the themed sessions.

Additionally, parents/carers can become involved in their child's education by accessing activities through the school's learning platform, the Friends of JCFS, the Parents/Carers' Forum or extended services.

Community Links

Links with the community are recognised as vital if children are to learn about being a good citizen. We will strive to utilise the expertise in the community, which we believe can enhance and improve the curriculum provision. Examples of this would be involving our immediate neighbours, other local pre-schools, the family of primary and secondary schools, our strategic partners of the University of Hertfordshire and the local authority, national and international school partners.

NB All staff ensure that where there are links to the outside world that matters relating to safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and children are well protected.

Monitoring and Review

All learning and teaching is regularly monitored by the Principal, Senior Leadership Team, Subject Leaders and Governors. This monitoring enables the school to review and improve current practice on a regular basis. All members of staff are aware that we are continually trying to improve all aspects of learning and teaching to ensure excellent provision for children. Children are also given the opportunity to evaluate both the curriculum and their own progress; the feedback from this is used to mould future learning and teaching targets within the school development plan.

This policy will support the school development plan, curriculum map, subject schemes of work and assessment, recording and reporting processes.

Dr Sue Attard
Executive Principal
2 June 2014