

Vision Statement

'Building the Foundations for Life Long Learning'

Aims for the Pupils

Bowsland Green school promotes high achievement and learning for life by working with children to:

- < develop the skills required for success within the modern world.
- < develop self confidence and respect of self, others and the world we live in.
- < establish high expectations of self.
- < develop a spirit of enquiry and curiosity.
- < become successful and motivated life long learners.
- < be able to work independently and collaboratively.
- < seek to extend themselves in mind, body and spirit.

Mission for the School

We believe that every child will succeed through experiencing quality in:

- < a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment.
- < the growth of emotional well being.
- < diverse and stimulating curriculum delivery.
- < celebration of the achievements of the individual.
- < developing a reflective and committed staff.
- < an ethos of support, challenge and encouragement to achieve.

We demonstrate our commitment to working as a learning community by:

- < establishing learning partnerships between school, home and the community.
- < celebrating the richness of our multi-cultural society.
- < working collaboratively towards common goals.

*Our values: Respect - Honesty - Team work - Responsibility -
Enjoyment*

Our vision statement articulates the values that the whole school community shares. Yet values are not just words on a piece of paper. They are the actions taken and the words spoken by every member of the school community whether in the playground, dining hall or classroom. They are how we 'walk the talk'. Our values underpin the school; they are the foundation upon which all policy and practice is based.

Our Learning Policy is the tool we use to consistently translate these fundamental values into practice that is compatible with them. It makes the link between our values and our practice explicit. It is based on evidence from research, with a huge debt to the work and writing of Mike Hughes, and our own evaluations of the needs of our specific school community.

Rationale

This Learning Policy tries to capture some of our most strongly held beliefs about the way children learn and what those beliefs mean for the way we teach. It is not a policy to be shelved and to gather dust. Staff are expected to refer to it frequently and use it to help evaluate our provision and children's learning experiences.

We shall revisit the policy together annually to re-affirm our commitment to it's principles.

10 Interesting Things About Learning from Mike Hughes- Closing the Learning Gap

1. Learning is an active process and involves making personal sense of new information and experiences.
2. The brain needs fuel! Oxygen, water, protein and rest are required for the brain to function efficiently.
3. People do not learn effectively when placed under negative stress- low stress, high challenge is the ideal learning state.
4. The maximum time for which children can concentrate is approximately two minutes in excess of their chronological age in minutes.
5. People learn more at the beginning and end of a learning experience than they do in the middle (BEM principle).
6. People learn in different ways: some prefer to see information (visual learners), some to hear it (auditory learners) and others learn best by doing- touching, feeling or making (kinaesthetic learners).
7. Self-esteem plays a crucial role in learning.
8. People remember dramatic, emotional, unexpected experiences. They remember context much better than content.
9. Recall is dramatically improved when information is *regularly* reviewed.
10. People learn best when they *want* to learn. Motivation is therefore very important to effective learning.

At Bowsland Green we believe that what research tells us about learning, adjusted to our personal circumstances, should underpin everything we do. This policy is based on what research tells us about effective learning, professional discussion undertaken with colleagues in local schools and strategies trialled and found to be effective for our particular children.

Aims

Through this policy we aim to:

- establish an agreed range of practice in respect of learning and teaching
- improve the quality of learning experiences offered to students
- raise standards of attainment and gain consistency across the school
- provide an agreed focus for monitoring learning in action
- enable staff to identify aspects of practice which they wish to develop and in which they would welcome support

Definition of Learning

At Bowsland Green we define learning in the following way:

Learning is...

the active process of linking what we already know to new information and experience and making sense of it, through personal reflection, to create understanding that we did not have before.

Key Principles

Children learn effectively when they...

- want to
- feel safe and valued
- are relaxed yet alert
- are being asked to learn at a level *just* beyond their current understanding
- are learning in their preferred style
- are actively engaged i.e. doing something
- encounter something unusual, dramatic and unexpected
- regularly review and reflect on what they have learned

Conditions required for learning to take place are...

- a positive physical state- water, oxygen, breakfast and plenty of sleep
- a positive emotional state- relaxed, confident and motivated
- an atmosphere conducive to learning
- a stimulating learning environment
- a lesson structure that reflects the way in which the brain learns naturally

Key Principles in Action

Children learn effectively when they...	So we will...	By...
want to	encourage children to feel motivated about learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asking what children want to know prior to a unit of work e.g. mind mapping, KWL, the coloured paper process • Introduce a unit of work with a 'wow' activity • encouraging them to set personal goals e.g. pupil targets, next step marking, create 'challenge the teacher' opportunities like 'I bet you can't think of more examples than me' • providing some element of choice e.g. choose either exercise A or exercise B; either draw a labelled diagram or write a paragraph • bringing humour into our lessons e.g. making use of the exaggerated or absurd • helping them see the benefits of learning e.g. applying to 'real life' situations, celebrating achievements
are relaxed, yet alert	create a low stress-high challenge learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • smiling, a lot! • greeting children as they enter the classroom • praising, a lot! • avoiding putting children 'on the spot' unless we know they know! • using 'no hands up' strategies e.g. partner talk, 1 minute thinking time, use of individual whiteboards • encouraging collaboration and team work • encouraging children to verbalise e.g. Can anyone tell us how...? Who can improve what I just said? Who can predict what I am going to say next? • encouraging children to <i>ask</i> questions e.g. 'challenge the teacher'; hot seating; preparing questions to ask a visitor/another class • asking open questions that challenge students to think and deepen their understanding e.g. What if...? Why do you think...? How many ways...? Have you got any ideas about...? Why not?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • setting the timer and challenging children with a completion target • using 'challenge the teacher' e.g. 'Think of a hard question to ask me, so hard I can't answer it'
are being asked to learn at a level <i>just</i> beyond their current learning	carefully plan tasks, interactions (questioning) and interventions based on ongoing assessment of current learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessing what children know prior to a unit of work e.g. mind mapping, KWL, the coloured paper process • asking children to review/reflect on their own learning within lessons e.g. key points, partner talk, traffic lights • evaluate learning on an ongoing basis using Afl strategies e.g. open questioning, developmental marking
are learning in their preferred style	offer multi-sensory (hearing, seeing and doing) learning experiences and opportunities to work with others or alone (interpersonal/intrapersonal) preferably in every lesson, but at the very least in every unit of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • catering for auditory learners through activities that involve listening and speaking e.g. peer discussion, video commentary, guest speaker • catering for visual learners through activities that involve writing, visualizing and drawing images e.g. mind mapping, photo sequence on IWB, poster • catering for kinaesthetic learners through activities that involve making things, handling resources and moving around e.g. making models, role-play, demonstrating angles through turns of the body
are actively engaged i.e. doing something	place learning experiences in a context and make sure the learner has to 'do' something	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keeping direct teaching short and punctuating it with activity • providing activities that require students to 'make sense of something', to re-create (rather than reproduce) information • encouraging children to develop, demonstrate and use their understanding of material <p>e.g. through applying it- following a recipe, making a model to scale reducing it - reduce a paragraph to the 6 words you think are most important changing it - paint a piece of music, write about a graph teaching it - explaining calculation method to a peer simplifying it - reword a paragraph for a younger child summarizing it- retell plot of a play in 1 paragraph</p>

encounter something unusual, dramatic and unexpected	try to engage children's curiosity and emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exploiting the opportunity at the beginning of lessons to capture children's interest e.g. intriguing question, artefact or visual, quiz, identifying the key learning point of each lesson and finding different ways of covering it e.g. rap, teacher in-role, identifying the key learning point in each unit of work and making a conscious effort to introduce it in an unusual way e.g. visit, visitor, role-play, artefact, surprise activity
regularly review and reflect on what they have learned	Ask children what they have learned in every learning experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make good use of the last 10 minutes of a lesson so children systematically review or reflect on their work e.g. children identify the key point(s) using colour/visual images either independently or in a group, 'traffic light' identifying next step encourage children to systematically review their key points 1 day, 1 week and 1 month after the lesson e.g. post-it now start each lesson by reviewing the last make good use of the last week of a unit of work e.g. children prepare a review of their learning in their own way

Conditions required for learning to take place are...	So we will...	By...
a positive physical state- water, oxygen, breakfast and plenty of sleep	promote the children maintaining a positive physical state throughout the day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> encouraging water bottles on tables encouraging visits to water fountain during PE lessons and breaks using 'brain gym' and 'wake up activities' encouraging children to attend breakfast club and keeping 'emergency rations' available liaising with parents about sleep patterns educating children as part of PSHE and science curriculum
a positive emotional state- relaxed, confident and motivated	build children's self-esteem and belief in themselves as learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> showing interest when children talk to us listening to them when things go wrong being firm but forgiving

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking every opportunity to give positive feedback • valuing contributions/displaying work of all children • using 'can do' language- 'You <i>can</i> do this with help'; 'Oh so you haven't <i>quite</i> got it <i>yet</i>'; 'Which bit didn't <i>I</i> explain properly?' • using positive language- don't use BUT, use AND e.g. your work is looking good <u>and</u> now I want you to...; don't use 'I don't care', use 'maybe and now...' e.g. 'I'm just finishing this!' 'Maybe and now I'd like you to put your pen down' • Making links to learning from SEAL programme in lessons • choosing a star of the week and ensuring every child features
an atmosphere conducive to learning	create a calm, well ordered atmosphere so that learning is the absolute priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acting as a role-model for learning behaviour • using the word 'learning' in class/group/individual interactions <i>frequently</i> • maintaining high expectations of behaviour for learning • utilising the 'Good to be Green' system fairly and consistently
a physical environment conducive to learning	create a physical environment that supports and promotes learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thinking of creative responses to our biggest challenge- our cramped physical environment! • seating children to promote collaboration and take into account individual needs • providing learning aides e.g. displays, posters, word walls linked to current learning • providing access to a range of resources
a learning process that reflects the way in which the brain learns naturally	plan learning experiences that give children the optimal chance to learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making the most of the beginning of lessons e.g. start learning within 5 minutes of the bell, ask children to come in and immediately review key points from previous lesson, 'if you only remember one thing' • break learning activities into chunks of around 15 minutes or less to aid concentration (age + 2 minutes!) • ensuring regular review of learning • planning units of work/lessons utilising an appropriate, flexible structure across the school

The Four Phases of Learning

Learning is not always a sequential process and therefore the model we have adapted is a flexible framework that will be interpreted in different, creative ways to promote learning. The phases are not necessarily sequential and teachers may repeat phases within a lesson or unit of work or only cover 1 or 2 phases as appropriate. At times the boundaries between phases may be blurred. However, the key to effective learning is that the emphasis of the learning process is on phase 3, the making sense phase, and that the quality of the tasks and interactions including skilful questioning by the teacher, at this point enable children to develop their understanding.

The phases are as follows:

Phase 1: Set the Scene

- review and link to previous learning
- share learning objectives
- stimulate curiosity and provide a sense of challenge

(In a unit of work a pre-learning task would be undertaken with pupils in the prior term)

Phase 2: New Information (teaching)

- instruction, demonstration, input

Phase 3: Making Sense (learning)

- processing
- developing, demonstrating and assessing understanding
- doing

Phase 4: Reflecting on learning

- what has been learned
- how it has been learned
- preview future learning

(In a unit of work a review of learning would be undertaken by pupils, in preferred learning style, in the last week of the unit)

Criteria For Lesson Observation - Best Practise 4 Phase Learning

Phase 1 SETTING THE SCENE	EVIDENCE THAT SHOWS IT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher creates a relaxed yet purposeful atmosphere. • Pupils are engaged without feeling threatened • Work from previous lesson/s is briefly reviewed. • Lesson is linked to pupil's prior knowledge. • Specific learning objectives are shared with the pupils • Interest is generated, curiosity is stimulated. • A sense of challenge is established. • Open questions are asked to stretch the pupils thinking • Problems are posed to lead into the main part of the lesson. 	
Phase 2 NEW INFORMATION	EVIDENCE THAT SHOWS IT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is presented in short chunks • Exposition is kept brief and does not exceed students concentration span • Teacher frequently asks (closed) questions to check for shallow understanding • Teacher asks open questions to help students make sense of the information they encounter (for phase 3) • Modelling is focused towards success criteria and articulates thought processes • Inputs are punctuated by tasks and activities designed to develop understanding (for phase 3) • New information is delivered in a variety of ways, to suit students with visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning preferences 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher uses appropriate technical language/ subject-specific terms and checks pupil understanding of them 	
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Phase 3 MAKING SENSE	EVIDENCE THAT SHOWS IT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent teacher-student and student-student interactions High proportion of open questions Time allowed for students to think about and discuss their responses to questions Supplementary questions/tasks to extend understanding and questions that encourage students to reflect on their thinking <i>including greater challenge for higher attaining children</i> Opportunities for students to generate questions Tasks that require students to think, develop understanding and process information in their preferred style (VAK, choice) Opportunities for students to verbalise and demonstrate their understanding Tasks that enable the teacher to assess understanding An emphasis on students <i>re-creating</i> rather than reproducing information 	

Phase 4 SHARING LEARNING	EVIDENCE THAT SHOWS IT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient time devoted to reviewing what has been learned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students actively engaged in the review process Explicit reference to learning objectives Students encouraged to reflect on <i>how</i> they have learned Information provided in order to stimulate thought before the next lesson 	

Our policy is an ongoing, developmental document so still to come...

- Role and responsibilities of groups i.e. *Governors, parents, community and school*
- Link the policy explicitly to CPD
- Rules of thumb- to be developed with and shared with pupils

Policy Adopted: July 2010