



Vale of Evesham School

'a specialist school for cognition and learning - enabling inclusion in the community'

Learning and Teaching Policy

Date: October 15

Review Date: October 17

Staff Responsibility: Judith Syvret

Key principles underpinning our teaching and learning policy

At the Vale of Evesham Special School we believe that:

- Pupils learn effectively in a climate where they feel **emotionally and physically safe and secure**
- Every pupil has an entitlement to a **broad, balanced and relevant curriculum** which is appropriate to their individual abilities and personal qualities.
- Educational experiences should be provided to make learning **enjoyable** and provide the appropriate amount of **challenge** so that pupils can develop to their full potential.
- Staff should **identify barriers** to pupils' learning and participation, and provide appropriately to meet a **diversity of needs**.
- All pupils should be encouraged to participate fully and be **actively involved** in their own learning.

Engagement

At the Vale of Evesham School we consider outstanding lessons are characterised by an engagement by all students with a **high level of independent child led learning**.

Pupils are more likely to be engaged in their work when:

- They are **clear about its purpose** because the work has been well explained and structured.
- The work builds on their **prior attainment** but provides **challenge**. We teach and encourage children to be **happy about making mistakes** and learn from them.
- The presentation, variety and structure of work generates **curiosity and interest**. We endeavour to provide opportunities for **awe and wonder**.
- Pupils have opportunities to **ask questions and pursue their own interests** within topic of the task.
- They can **see what they have achieved** and how they have made progress.
- They can discuss their learning and what their **next steps** should be.
- They get a feeling of **satisfaction and enjoyment** from their work.

Sometimes playing background music can help students to engage in their learning but it is not appropriate for the screen to be on as background.

Communication

At the Vale of Evesham School we consider outstanding teaching is characterised by an effective use of **Total Communication** to support expressive and receptive language needs and by a high quality of **responsive questioning**.

Strategies include:

- Use of object cues
- Objects of reference
- Photos
- Symbols
- Sign
- Use of key word language (it is essential that all staff know and use the appropriate level of key word language)
- Teach subject specific words and signs
- Blanks levels questioning

Questioning needs to be at the appropriate level at all times and staff need to be aware of each student's level. The school adopts the **Blanks levels** descriptors to ascertain pupils understanding and provide a developmental approach to graduated questioning.

Pupils need to have an **effective means of contributing** to the lessons.

Strategies include:

- Objects
- Pecs (*Picture Exchange Communication System*)/Communication books
- Word bank
- Symbols
- AAC (*Assisted Augmented Communication*)

Lesson Structure

At the Vale of Evesham School we consider outstanding lessons will be well planned with **clear, focussed and appropriate learning objectives**. They will provide varying **levels of challenge** and give students the opportunities to **solve problems, make connections, generalise and apply** learning with increasing **independence**. All lessons are **differentiated** to meet pupil's needs.

We are not prescriptive but for core subjects we usually follow this structure:

- **Starter** – brief and for all (*need not necessarily relate to subsequent learning, can be a recap or settling activity*)
- Communication of differentiated **Learning Objectives**
- **Main Activity** – (*could be whole class but more likely in groups or individual*)
- opportunities to **assess pupil progress** and understanding built into the lesson
- **Plenary** (*Might be whole class, in groups or individual and can happen at different points in the lesson, not necessarily at the end of a lesson. May involve setting **next steps**.*)

In lessons we expect to see opportunities for **movement, independence**, an appropriate **pace** and an appropriate use of IT to support learning, for an appropriate proportion of the lesson.

Timings:

- First school lessons are 30 minutes except for some practical and off site activities.
- Middle school lessons are either 30 minutes or an hour.
- Upper school lessons are mostly an hour but some are longer.

For some of our pupils this lesson structure may not always be appropriate and their needs may be met with:

- TEACCH approach
- Sensory Diet
- PMLD (*Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties*) curriculum

See also Assessment for Learning, Autism, Fundamental British Values, Equal Opportunities, Behaviour Management, PMLD, Early Years and Curriculum Subject Policies.