

King's Meadow Primary School



Learning and Teaching Policy

Revised September 2013

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RATIONALE

'The purpose of the curriculum is to promote children's development and learning across a broad range of contexts in order to develop their thinking and learning and their physical, personal and social growth. Primary education.....should support children to develop and mature as independent and cooperative learners who contribute actively across a range of learning and social situations.'

Building the Curriculum 3 (The Scottish Government 2008)

In King's Meadow, we seek to create and implement a supportive learning environment which has appropriate pace, rigour and challenge for all learners in order to raise attainment and improve achievement. We also seek to ensure that all learners are treated with **unconditional, positive regard**.

In order to achieve this goal we believe that **all learners** should be encouraged to:

- *Be successful*
- *Be confident*
- *Be responsible*
- *Be effective*

AIMS

Through the development of a whole school learning and teaching policy we aim to:

- promote social inclusion and equality for all
- set high and realistic expectations for all
- actively engage learners and promote high self-esteem
- develop commitment, responsibility and independence in learners
- promote creativity, flexibility and innovation.

KEY FEATURES OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING AND TEACHING

- Effective planning
- The teaching process
- Pupils' learning experience
- Effectively meeting needs
- Effective assessment and reporting

Effective Planning

Effective learning and teaching requires thorough long and short term planning thus ensuring continuity, pace and progression. Programmes and learning experiences that are well planned should take place within an effectively organised learning environment. Outcomes should be clear and

regularly reviewed by all involved in the learning process. For effective learning and teaching to be achieved appropriate classroom management, structured activities and suitable resources that challenge the age and stage of all pupils are essential.

In King's Meadow we:

- plan a curriculum, using Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), which shows breadth, balance and cohesion
- develop clear and concise medium term, short term and daily plans which highlight what is being taught and when
- plan collaboratively with colleagues and specialists to allow continuity and progression
- plan teaching experiences which build on skills and knowledge which have been previously acquired
- organise resources and personnel in order to achieve the best learning and teaching possible
- plan homework opportunities which enhance learning and inform parents of school learning.

The Teaching Process

To maximise opportunities for all pupils teachers should adopt and implement a range of teaching styles appropriate to the learner. In order to promote higher levels of thinking or provide additional knowledge teachers should be able to interact with learners appropriately. This should increase the quality and complexity of learning. Clear, purposeful, skilled and varied questioning as well as the ability to listen and respond to learners accordingly will promote effective interactions. Content should be planned which connects with children's experience, learning and interests in and beyond the school. This should enable learners to understand the relevance of their classroom learning, for example seeing connections with experiences in their family or local community, the world of work, their experiences of travel or their interests in sport or media.

In King's Meadow we:

- use a variety of teaching approaches as a stimulus
- take account of differing learning preferences and adapt work appropriately
- establish classroom routines which are followed by each individual
- share learning intentions with pupils and use these criteria to gauge success
- use questioning to focus thinking and aid discussion
- communicate aims and intentions clearly to pupils ensuring they understand what is required.

Pupils' learning experiences

Effective learning should take place within an environment that is stimulating and challenging. It should allow pupils to work collaboratively involving groups of different composition and size. If learners are to be effectively engaged in a meaningful process, it is essential that the learning environment takes account of learning preferences, different aptitudes, emotional intelligence and self-esteem. Through effective use of praise in the classroom, teachers should aim to create an emotional climate that enables each child to feel secure and develop a sense of self-worth.

Teaching contexts should be relevant and interesting as well as maximising opportunities for active involvement and independent thinking.

In King's Meadow we:

- encourage children to make connections within and across learning
- develop classroom strategies which challenge and support all pupils
- make learning fun, interesting and worthwhile
- take account of individual needs and learning styles
- create a classroom environment which has a clear sense of ownership
- provide opportunities to work individually, with partners, groups and as part of a whole class
- encourage pupils to be involved in independent learning and take pride in their work
- make learning resources interesting, varied and widely available.

Effectively Meeting Pupils Needs

All learners should be encouraged to fulfil their learning potential regardless of gender, cultural language, religious diversity or life circumstances. Teachers should meet these needs through an equal and inclusive approach based on information gathered in the classroom and from parents and specialists. Choice of tasks, activities and resources can therefore be matched closely to the needs of each individual, connected to their stage of development, aptitudes and interests and differentiated appropriately.

In King's Meadow we:

- provide a caring ethos which values the importance of each and every individual
- recognise differing aptitudes and abilities and choose tasks accordingly
- use differentiation and setting to meet the needs of all pupils
- value every pupil's opinion and show respect for this
- take into account the social, cultural and individual needs of learners
- challenge prejudice and act in a fair, non - discriminatory way.

Effective Assessment and Reporting

Assessment is a key feature in maximising the learning potential for each individual. It should effectively measure progress, identify next steps in learning and meeting learners' needs. A variety of assessment is essential to acquire an accurate understanding of the individual's overall ability and provides a clear framework for planning and reporting.

In King's Meadow we:

- provide clear aims of what should be learned and how pupils will know they have succeeded in learning this
- give quality feedback emphasising the positives of the piece and how pupils can make it better
- use peer and self-assessment to identify progress made by pupils themselves and other
- use formative and summative assessment to gauge how effective the learning and teaching is
- evaluate and assess learning and teaching and provide next steps accordingly
- keep records of assessment to aid planning and provide information for pupils, parents and other professionals
- provide parents with an annual written report which provides comments on each curricular area.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Senior Management (SMT) will:

- support and advise teachers in implementing this policy
- ensure that this policy is understood and implemented by staff, pupils, parents and others
- monitor effectiveness and encourage regular review through the procedures set out in the Quality Assurance Policy.

Teachers have a central role to play in the delivery of learning and teaching and will:

- manage and implement this policy in their classrooms for the benefit of their pupils
- communicate information about pupils' learning to the pupils themselves, to parents, to SMT, to teachers and to other people concerned.

The pupil should always be the focus of learning and teaching and should be given opportunities to:

- discuss her/his own learning with the teacher and parents
- set her/his own learning targets.

Parents should have:

- opportunities to work in partnership with teachers
- a right to receive information about their child's learning and teaching.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with all staff. However, promoted staff will, through routine quality assurance procedures seek to ensure that it is put into practice. All staff will be involved in evaluating the effectiveness of this policy.

LEARNING AND TEACHING (DEFINITIONS AND PRACTICAL IDEAS)

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

In King's Meadow we strive to provide a learning environment that is safe, secure and well ordered. This involves a quality of classroom organisation where pupils are purposefully active and know what they are doing and what is expected of them. Staff also promote acceptable standards of behaviour by having agreed rules/systems which reflect the school's behaviour policy.

Physical Environment

In King's Meadow, we try to ensure that:

- children have their own seat/desk area, labelled drawer and coat peg, which they are encouraged look after;
- resources and equipment are in good order, labelled, tidily stored and accessible to children;
- water is easily accessible and pupils /teachers are encouraged to drink throughout the day;
- the class is set up in clear identifiable areas e.g. library, topic tables , art and craft (space permitting);
- children's work is displayed attractively and is clearly captioned
- displays are changed regularly and are linked to topics, school initiatives and seasonal activities
- the temperature is comfortable and, when possible, natural light is used
- music is used as a tool - calming, throughout a task to stimulate thinking, signal end of task/tidying.

Emotional/Social Environment

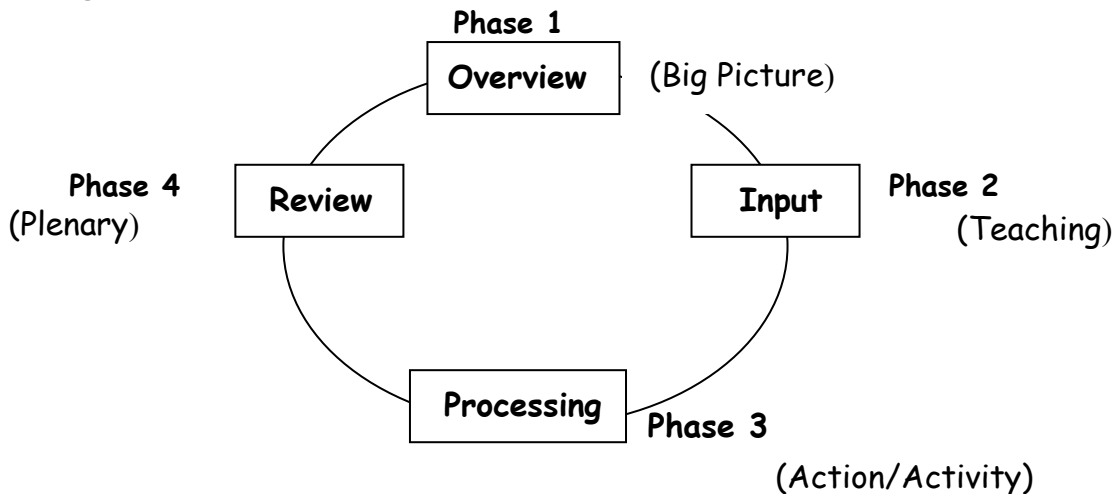
A positive emotional /social environment within a school is also very important as it creates a learning atmosphere which develops emotional literacy and builds self-esteem. In King's Meadow, at class and school level, we use the following to create this environment:

- tasks are varied in order to allow pupils to work in a variety of ways - individual, groups (which can be mixed, ability, friendship) and whole class;
- pupils are made to feel important - have a sense of belonging, feel safe, be motivated;
- a reward systems is in place (in line with behaviour policy);
- achievement is celebrated - positive referrals, House Points, House Cup, Golden Pupils etc
- PSD and Circle Times are planned in order to develop self worth and discuss feelings and problems;
- rules are agreed/accepted by the class/school;
- pupils are greeted and shown out at the end of the day;
- pupils are lined up in an orderly way and move around the school quietly;
- politeness and manners are taught and encouraged;
- staff are consistent when teaching or dealing with problems;
- positive feedback is an integral part of teaching;
- all opinions and contributions are valued;
- pupils have a say in school developments eg School Parliament members are elected by class members and meet regularly with a member of promoted staff, year group responsibility etc;

- **SMILING** - it is the simplest and one of the most effective strategies to enhance the state for learning.

ORGANISING/PLANNING A LESSON

Effective teaching and learning is more likely to occur when lessons are well planned and organised. The 4 phase model for learning¹ is a flexible framework which helps to guide the planning and organising of lessons.



Common Features of the Four- phase Model

Phase 1 - Overview/Big Picture

- Lessons are linked to the pupil's prior knowledge.
- Lessons are placed in a wider context - an overview given.
- Learning intentions are shared with pupils.
- Interest is generated (can be through pictures, videos, objects, pieces of information, text).
- Questions are used to stimulate thinking and recall information.
- Success criteria are discussed.

Phase 2 - Input (Teaching)

- Exposition period (remember to keep brief and not exceed concentration span).
- Key information is given (preferably in short, easily remembered chunks).
- Questions are asked to check understanding.
- New information is delivered in a variety of ways (using the VAK preferences).
- Teacher checks that all pupils understand technical language and subject-specific terms.

Phase 3 - Processing (Action/ Activity)

- Frequent teacher/pupil and pupil/pupil interactions.
- Time allowed for pupils to think about and discuss their responses to questions.
- Opportunities for pupils to generate questions.
- Tasks that enable the teacher to assess understanding.
- Pupils given opportunities to process information in their preferred style.

¹ Tweak to Transform. Improving Teaching: A Practical Handbook for School Leaders. Network Educational Press Ltd 2002

- An emphasis on pupils recreating rather than reproducing information.

Phase 4 - Review (Plenary)

- Sufficient time devoted to reviewing what has been learned.
- Pupils actively engaged in the review process to inform next steps.
- Explicit reference to learning intentions/success criteria.
- Pupils encouraged to reflect on how they have learned.
- Information provided in order to stimulate thought before the next lesson.

Although the whole of a lesson is important in the learning and teaching cycle, research has shown that most learning occurs within the first part of a lesson and during the review stage. It is therefore important that learning experiences are maximised at these times. Some effective activities include:

Starting Activities

- Think, Pair and Share - Think about what has been asked, pair up with a partner, share your ideas and share with the class
- Carousel - In small groups, decide on 3 comments/phrases related to the question/topic. All groups then move round and add 2 more to the next chart (making sure they are different from what has been written previously) and finally move again and add one more idea. This will provide a variety of ideas to discuss.
- Challenged Brainstorm - Groups record and feedback what they know about a new topic (in a given time).
- Walk/Talk - move around the class stopping to discuss an idea when the teacher signals. The pupils will move around a number of pupils until a number of ideas have been developed
- Snowballing
- Envoying

End Activities

- Each one, Teach one - In pairs, each pupil takes turn teaching their partner a key point they have learned from the lesson
- 2 Stars and a Wish - As individuals, pairs or groups, identify 2 star facts/points which have been learned and 1 wish which describes something they would like to have learned
- Hot Seating - pupils can question the teacher or other (willing) pupils on what they have learned (the pupils must know the answer to the questions themselves).

TEACHING STYLES

There are a variety of teaching styles which can be adopted by teachers. Many of these will be more suitable for certain areas of the curriculum but as teachers we must try to combine different approaches which in turn will help motivate and encourage learners. Examples of these include:

- Direct instruction
- Direct interactive
- Facilitator
- Co-learner

Teachers should also consider the way in which we teach and use a variety of approaches such as:

- whole-class, group and individual teaching methods
- using a variety questioning techniques (see page 18) to develop understanding
- differentiated learning (including setting, supporting individuals, groups, varied questioning to suit ability, differentiated work)
- using circle time to enhance self esteem
- effective use of specialist skills (e.g. specialist teacher, support for learning)
- using ICT to enhance learning and teaching
- modelling of good practice
- setting homework tasks which are purposeful and linked to classroom learning

CO-OPERATIVE/ COLLABORATIVE GROUP WORK

Children need help to learn the social skills which they require to work confidently and happily with others. These skills begin from as early as the nursery but they will be continually developed throughout their life. These Social Skills can be divided into three areas which will aid group work

Basic skills:

- Getting into groups quickly
- Bringing necessary materials with you
- Stay with your group until the task is completed
- Talk in quiet voices
- Listen to your partner(s)
- Call your partner(s) by their names

Functioning Skills:

- Taking turns
- Contributing ideas
- Encouraging others to contribute
- Knowing your task
- Asking for help when you need it
- Complimenting each other's contributions
- Supporting your points with evidence
- Checking for understanding
- Keeping the group focused

Higher Order Skills:

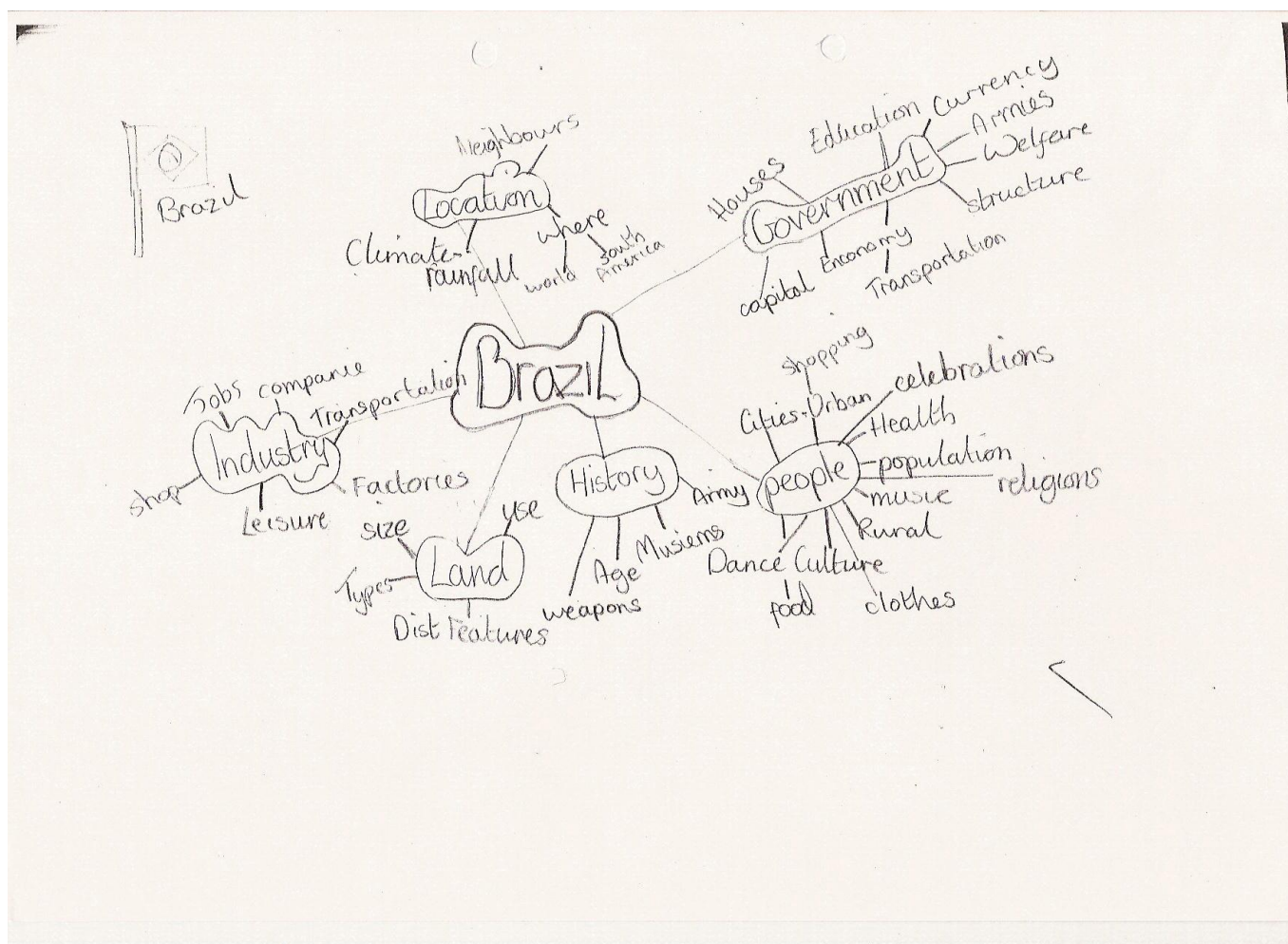
- Asking for and providing clarification
- Building on another person's ideas
- Paraphrasing to show understanding
- Analysing your group's process
- Coming to consensus and synthesising several ideas
- Evaluating the group's work
- Criticising the idea, not the person who presented it

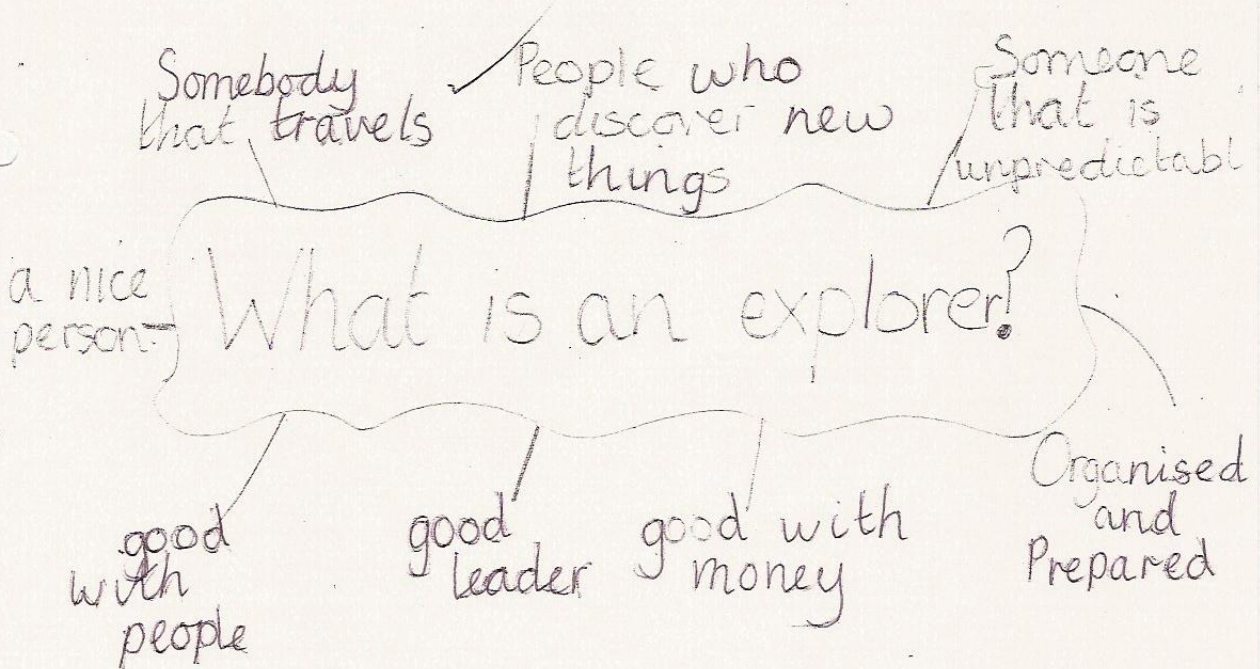
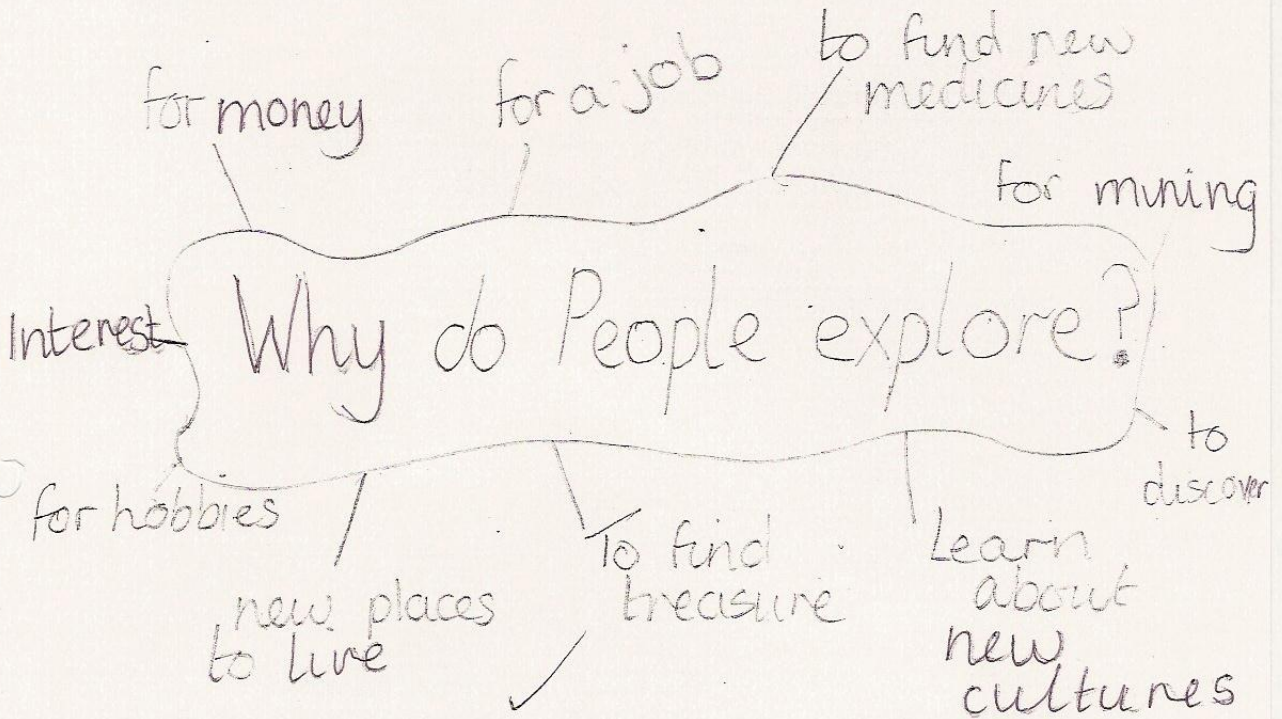
MAPPING

Mapping is an extremely useful learning strategy which can be taught at all ages and stages. When developed successfully it has many uses and can involve all aspects of learning e.g. suits all learning styles (VAK), improves motivation, improves retention, can be used to review and assess, allows pupils to be actively involved in their learning. It can be used to:

- assess prior knowledge (therefore allowing you to pitch/pace your next steps accordingly);
- introduce a topic or gauge understanding at the start of a topic or process. This can be done as a whole class, in groups, pairs or as individuals;
- assess knowledge and understanding at the end of a topic (a comparison can be made from the beginning to end of a topic);
- plan ideas e.g. in writing a story or piece of information it can be used to section paragraphs/ key points. In Science, Design or Problem Solving activities it can be used to stimulate thinking or as key headings e.g. Aim, Resources, What We Will Do, Outcomes;
- brainstorm ideas quickly before using the information more effectively.

Examples of successful maps can be seen below :





All pupils work in different ways and have a preferred way of learning. This may be very apparent in some pupils but mixed for others. The VAK model breaks down learning styles into three areas. These are Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic. Although these are very distinct learning preferences, they can change and pupils can be a mixture of 2 or 3 of them. It is therefore important that we do not label pupils or only teach to one style. We should try to take into account all 3 styles when planning lessons or sequences and ensure there is a VAK balance.

The following gives ideas on how to best aid each of the VAK areas:

Visual Learners

- Display pictures and photographs
- Use labels around the classroom
- Use puppets, props and toys to tell stories and aid learning
- Use videos, OHP, PowerPoint and Data Projectors
- Ask pupils to visualise/draw outcomes
- Complete mind maps of information (see information on mind maps)
- Use coloured pens/pens and paper
- Have colourful displays
- Encourage work with jigsaws/picture puzzles
- Make posters which demonstrate what has been learned
- Use visual recall questions e.g. What did you see?
- Use the computer
- Make collages

Auditory Learners

- Teacher led instruction
- Paired, group and class discussion
- Presentations
- Question time
- Listening to texts, tapes/CDs, others speaking, music
- Recitation of things to increase recall - repeat
- Tell jokes, stories,
- Make up raps, rhymes, songs to remember things
- Encourage pupils to talk about what they are doing
- Allow lots of time for oral review

Kinaesthetic Learners

- Design and make activities
- Physical modelling
- Visits to places
- Mime and drama activities
- Movement
- Brain Breaks
- ICT

Multiple Learning Styles

In addition to the VAK model, Dr Howard Gardner from Harvard University has developed a more specific model of how we learn. This is called the Theory of Multiple Intelligences. He suggests that learners use the human brain in a number of ways and again we should try to vary our teaching in order to include all types of learners. The intelligences are:

Multiple Intelligence	Characteristics	Associated Strategies
Linguistic (Word Smart)	Enjoys language; good with words	debates; diaries; stories
Logical / Mathematical (Number Smart)	Good with numbers	flowcharts; mindmaps; story boards
Visual / Spatial (Picture Smart)	Good at Art; visualisation; model-making	mindmaps; visual triggers; video
Musical (Music Smart)	Good at Music; sensitive to music; rhythm	raps; background music; use of voice for effects
Bodily / Physical (Body Smart)	Good at sport; movement; dance	role-play; physical activity cards

Multiple Intelligence	Characteristics	Associated Strategies
Interpersonal (People Smart)	Sensitive to others; good communicator	collaborative work; peer tutoring
Intra-personal (Self Smart)	Good at self-analysis; aware of emotions; draw conclusions from experiences	reviews; learning logs; self-evaluation
Naturalistic (Nature Smart)	People who like and respect the environment	outside activities; use of real contexts

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Formative assessment refers to all activities, which involve the teacher and the pupils in assessing themselves. This includes observation, discussion, written work and homework. All of these are used so the teacher and pupil can find out what the pupils know and which next steps need to be taken in teaching and learning. Through Formative Assessment we can therefore judge progress and difficulties and adapt work to suit the needs of the pupils.

Shared Learning Intentions

All lessons should have a clear, focused outcome, which is shared and on some occasions agreed with the pupils. These should:

- use language appropriate to the child and words associated to the learning;
- be introduced at the beginning of lessons and highlighted throughout the lesson;

- be **SMART** - **S**mall, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**imed;
- be separate from the activity - the activity is not the learning intention, it is what we will do in order to achieve the success criteria;
- be displayed for the pupils or discussed orally.

Displaying Learning Intentions

Learning Intentions should be displayed and Success Criteria developed following discussion with children at the end of Phase 1 of a lesson. Although there may seem to be many aims in a lesson we have to limit what we and the pupils want to achieve. This will allow a more focused approach and give the pupils opportunity to work on one or two goals (instead of thinking punctuation, spelling, grammar and handwriting in one lesson).

Self / Peer Assessment

Self assessment is an important tool which enables pupils to look more closely at their own learning. On the whole pupils enjoy marking and talking about their own work and, as studies have found, they are on a whole "honest and reliable" when it comes to self and peer assessment.

Strategies We Use:

- Teacher Modelling - showing the pupils how to complete a task, making them aware of skills needed and on some occasions show a completed version
- Sharing good practice - sharing/showing work which is good quality and has achieved the success criteria
- Sharing work with others - Talking/sharing/showing work with others
- Discussion of tasks while working
- Smiley Face- as above but using a happy face, straight face or sad face



- Thumbs Up/Down - The pupils can signal if they understand (thumbs up), mainly understand (thumbs middle) or do not understand (thumbs down) when they are asked about a task.
- Checklists - Using checklists to check they have successfully included all information or have succeeded in the success criteria
- Swapping work - Swapping work with a partner to allow them to check they have been successful (checklists, traffic lights, smiley faces can be used to show success)
- Marking Together - marking together as a class (IWB/enlarged text can be a useful tool to show/highlight areas)

Feedback

This must focus on the individual child's work (not compared to others) and give both positive comments and advice on how to improve. This can be in both written and oral form and should be planned in a time effective way e.g. focus on one group, have set feedback time. Consideration could also be given to marking in rotation eg if you have 3 groups, 1 group would receive quality marking, 1 group would receive 2* and a wish or pink and green highlights and the remaining group would receive a comment. Teachers should also remember that the quality of feedback is much more important than quantity and this should stop marking becoming too time consuming. Also, we have to decide whether to mark with a mark or a comment only as children will always look at the mark first and decide how good this is, ignoring any comment or feedback you try to give.

Feedback must cover three elements -

- Desired goal
- Present position
- A way to close the gap

Ideas:

Comments on Written Tasks - feedback given on individual tasks (written in jotter or discussed with the pupil)

Sticky Notes - these can be stuck in the book and when the advice has been taken, pupils can take the label out.

Questioning

In all aspects of teaching, questions are used to aid learning. These may be to check understanding, gain opinions, assess pre-knowledge, impromptu interventions and many more. Using a variety of questioning techniques can improve learning and overall understanding of tasks.

Some ideas for these are as follows:

*Use Wait Time

Studies have shown that many teachers leave only one second after asking a question to gain an answer. Give the pupils extra time to think and encourage hands down.

*Questioning Styles

Try to use a variety of questioning techniques e.g. Closed/open questions, Closed- has only one correct answer, Open- can have a variety of answers (can promote discussions, giving opinion and feelings)

*Pass the Question Around

Ask a question and pass it round a number of pupils to get a variety of opinions, feelings and response. Answers can also be developed and discussed.

* Discuss with a Friend

Instead of seeking answers from individuals ask the pupils to share with a friend and then report back. Works well for group work (see further on) and in class discussions.

*Direct/Indirect Questioning

Most teachers open questions to all pupils but then rely on a small group to give the answers. Direct the question by naming the pupil first or selecting an area of the group.

*Framing Questions

Asking questions which are worthwhile and explore issue which are critical to the development of pupils' understanding.

*Impromptu Questioning

Asking questions once pupils are engaged in an activity. Making the pupils think about what they are doing and how it could be improved.

*No Hands

Children are asked not to put their hands up and all are expected to be ready with an answer. Particularly good for PSD, problem solving, etc where there are no right and wrong answers.

*V shape

Look beyond your V shape. Pupils who do not like to answer tend to sit outwith your natural line of vision so you will not notice them unless you change your position or look around. Try to direct questions to other children who are not normally eager to answer.

MOTIVATION

Motivation is a crucial element in the Learning and Teaching process. Unless pupils and teachers are motivated, progress will be minimal.

In King's Meadow we aim to motivate through:

- activities which challenge
- a stimulating and comfortable environment
- rewards - Positive Referrals, Golden Pupil, Golden Time
- competition - Sports day, class rewards, classroom challenges, problem solving, House Points, Interscholastics, variety of sporting activities
- encouraging ownership - personal responsibility for the class and school.

TRANSFERRING CORE SKILLS

In King's Meadow, teachers follow curricular policies and specialised plans to ensure continuity and progression throughout the school. Through use of On Track with Learning and other tracking systems we are able to ensure that skills are passed on throughout the levels. Teachers also pass on information throughout the school in the form of:

- Assessment files
- Individual pupil files (including examples of work, SAI information, IEPs etc)
- Moderation
- Previous forward plans
- Teacher notes
- Informal conversations