



Journey of Learning January 2023

Learning in Primary 1/2

HOW DO CHILDREN LEARN IN PRIMARY 1/2?

In a typical day children will learn through a range of learning approaches depending on the needs of the pupil. There may be a whole class lesson, small groups, one to one sessions and Play. They are all of equal value.

Have tos

There are some things pupils simply need to do/learn. Children need to learn to read, write and develop numeracy skills. But choice is also important.

To help develop meta-cognitive skills, pupils are supported to manage their time. In addition to learning in the ways already mentioned, pupils need to complete additional learning that pupils named STAR activities. Pupils decide when to do these deciding if they should be completed straight away, or play first then complete it later. Sometimes these activities need to be completed in pairs or a small group, giving children opportunities to manage time as well as negotiate with others.

LEARNING THROUGH TOPICS and CHILDREN'S INTERESTS

Using a topic is a great way to learn something new, especially if the topic is something the child has chosen to learn about.

There may be a whole class topic such as the nativity, where pupils learn about the traditional Christian, Christmas story as well as performing, listening and talking. This learning is not negotiable and pupils must take part.

LEARNING THROUGH TOPICS and CHILDREN'S INTERESTS

At the moment the topics are based on pupil interest are Fairy Houses, Polar Animals, the Animal Hospital, Worms and Compost.

So far, we have read some books to learn about worms and compost and made a list of things needed to make a wormery. We are busy collecting these items and when the weather changes we can collect worms through Worm Grunting. We are also collecting food waste to add to the composters. Pupils are excited to see what will happen and have begun making hypothesis – What will happen next?

LEARNING THROUGH TOPICS and CHILDREN'S INTERESTS

By using this approach, personalisation and choice, relevance, challenge and enjoyment are embedded within the class, providing rich and meaningful learning experiences. Parents often report their children say they are 'just playing' all day. Play allows children to process issues, practice skill, learn about friendships and different roles at their level. Often parents ask, if time is given to play, will this hold back learning or will there be less time for 'real' learning? In fact the very opposite is true. Through developing pupil interests, children see the relevance of what they learn and are much more motivated to learn. For example, pupils want to make Fairy Houses so are motivated to make templates before going on to make the real thing, learning about shapes and using number skills.

LEARNING THROUGH TOPICS and CHILDREN'S INTERESTS

PREVIOUS APPROACH TO LEARNING VERSUS a PLAY APPROACH

Learning in the past has heavily focused on the transmission of knowledge. For example, being able to recite the order of kings and queens. Today, learning needs to equip pupils with SKILLS. These skills will help children to adjust to and cope with our ever changing and fast paced world. Children may never need to know the order of kings and queens. Google can give us that information at the touch of a button or two.

LEARNING THROUGH TOPICS and CHILDREN'S INTERESTS

Having a deeper understanding of how children learn and using a range of approaches can help motivate learners and focus on skill development. Through play and tasks that support learning, there is less focus on getting the 'right' answer and more on open ended learning, that fosters thinking skills and creative approaches that again, will help equip children with the attitudes and skills needed for life long learning.