



Soaring High Montessori School

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

Introduction

At Soaring High we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the idea that both adults and children can learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should include elements of fun.

Through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

Aims and objectives

We believe that people learn best when they have different ways to learn, so we provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners;
- foster children's self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people;
- develop self-respect and encourage children to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others, whilst upholding British values;
- show respect for all cultures and, in so doing, promote positive attitudes towards other people;
- enable children to understand their community and help them feel valued as part of this community;
- help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.

Effective learning

We recognise the need to develop strategies that allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them. The psychologist Howard Gardner identifies seven main areas of intelligence: linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal/group working, and interpersonal/reflective. We take into account these different forms of intelligence and the learning styles that people can have when planning teaching and learning styles.

Soaring High School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

We offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways. These include:

- investigation and problem solving;
- research and finding out;
- group work;
- pair work;
- independent work;
- whole-class work;
- asking and answering questions;
- use of the computer;
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- creative activities;
- watching specifics through varied media and responding to musical or tape-recorded material;
- debates, role-play and oral presentations;
- designing and making things;
- participation in athletic or physical activity.

We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way they learn, and to reflect on how they learn – what helps them learn and what makes it difficult for them to learn.

Effective teaching

When teaching we focus on motivating the children and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. We use the school curriculum plan 'Learning Journey' to guide our teaching. This sets out the aims, objectives and values of the school and details what is to be taught over the course of a child's time in primary school.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's level of attainment. Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge and skills of the children. We try to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability. When planning work for children with special educational needs we give due regard to information and targets contained in the children's Education Healthcare Plan (EHP), and enter specific targets onto their plans. We have high expectations for all children.

We plan our lessons with clear learning objectives. We take these objectives from the Montessori Curriculum. Each of our teachers makes a special effort to establish good working relationships with all children in each group. We treat the children with kindness and respect. We treat them fairly and give them equal opportunity to take part in class activities. All our teachers follow the school policy with regard to discipline and classroom management. We set and agree with children the class code of conduct. We expect all children to comply with these rules that we jointly devised to promote the best learning opportunities for all. We praise children for their efforts and, by so doing, we help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general. We insist on good order and behaviour at all times. When children misbehave we follow the guidelines for sanctions as outlined in our school behaviour policy.

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We ensure that all tasks and activities that the children do are safe. When we plan to take children out of school, we first inform parents using the prior consent forms, obtaining their permission.

Our classrooms are attractive learning environments. We ensure that all children have the opportunity to display their best work at some time during the year. All classrooms have a range of dictionaries and fiction and non-fiction books, as well as the opportunity to display work relating to literacy, numeracy and other subjects. We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning, and an exciting classroom promotes independent use of resources and high-quality work by the children.

All our teachers reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and plan their professional development needs accordingly. We do all we can to support our teachers in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice. We conduct all our teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all.

The role of parents

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:

- sending information to parents throughout the year in which we outline the topics that the children will be studying;
- holding parents' Montessori curriculum evenings to explain our school strategies for teaching particular subjects – e.g. literacy and numeracy;
- holding parent interviews twice a year to review children's progress;
- explaining to parents how they can support their children with homework. We suggest, for example, regular shared reading with very young children, support for older children with their projects and investigative work, Great Lesson Learning Conversations;
- sending annual reports to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can improve further.

We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We would like parents to:

- ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible;
- ensure that their child arrives at school on time;
- ensure that their child is equipped for school with appropriate clothing, PE kit and equipment;
- do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
- inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour at school;
- promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general.

Monitoring and review

We are aware of the need to review the school teaching and learning policy regularly so that we can take account of new initiatives, changes in the Montessori curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school.

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