

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

RATIONALE

The Teaching and Learning Policy provides the broad outline of the school's purpose and direction. This document forms the basis of all teaching and learning at Spensley Street Primary School.

We recognise that the first learning in a child's life takes place within the family.

Spensley Street Primary School is a community of learners - students, teachers, parents and carers. We are a community with a shared understanding that successful learning is a shared responsibility that requires active participation and commitment. This understanding underpins the organisation and operation of the school, the way we learn and the way we interact.

Policies and practices at the school are based on a multi-age philosophy.

The teaching and learning programs follow the principles of a developmentally appropriate and integrated curriculum.

DEFINITION

1. Multi-age Education

Multi-age education is the intentional placing of students of a range of ages and abilities in the same classroom. To enhance continuity of learning and the development of relationships, where possible, students spend more than one year with the same teacher.

2. Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

A developmentally appropriate curriculum views the child as a whole and takes account of each student's personality, biological maturity, social and emotional development, learning styles, interests, gender, family, ethnicity and culture.

3. Developmental Domains:

The five developmental domains are cognitive, language, physical, social and emotional.

4. Integrated Curriculum

An integrated curriculum is a learning environment that "...brings together various aspects of the curriculum into a meaningful association to focus on broad areas of study. It views teaching and learning in a holistic way..." (Shoemaker, B. *Integrative Education: A Curriculum for the Twenty-First Century*, 1989)

The aim of an integrated curriculum is to develop student understandings by integrating curriculum content with the development of skills and processes.

5. Inquiry learning

Inquiry learning is a student centred, active learning approach that takes as its starting point the natural process of inquiry, building on this to develop information processing and problem-solving skills. The focus is on 'how we know' rather than 'what we know', with students actively involved in the construction of their knowledge.

6. Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is a teaching and learning approach in which students work in cooperative groups that are learner centred with an emphasis on developing group processes and problem solving skills. Cooperative learning aims to enhance learning skills, self-esteem, social skills and a positive classroom environment.

PRINCIPLES

1. The school's multi-age school organisation and curriculum planning reflect our knowledge that children learn at different times, at differing rates and in different ways.
2. Policies and practices of the school follow the principles of developmental curriculum and reflect the five developmental domains.
3. Learning objectives recognise that children are individuals; the curriculum reflects the individual learning needs and interests of the children.
4. Effective teachers link values, beliefs, knowledge, and understandings in their teaching practice.
5. Teaching practices are informed and guided by the school's teaching policies and programs.
6. Teachers plan and work collaboratively, with students playing an active role in shaping programs.
7. Learning programs are underpinned by Brian Cambourne's Conditions of Learning (see appendix one).
8. Learning programs provide enjoyable, challenging and purposeful experiences.
9. Learning programs provide opportunities for individual and cooperative group work.
10. The school's assessment tools are embedded within everyday learning experiences, leading to improved student learning. Assessment informs ongoing curriculum planning.
11. Reporting provides parents and carers with clear information about children's achievements and needs against Education Department standards.
12. Learning is a shared responsibility between school, students and their families.
13. There is a respectful and strong partnership between school, home and the wider community.

GOALS

1. To maintain a child centred, broad curriculum that is based on understandings about how children learn
2. To promote a learning environment that
 - nurtures the whole child by providing opportunities for development in the emotional, social, physical, language and cognitive domains
 - is safe, engaging and challenging, where learning is meaningful and enjoyable, and curriculum decisions are based on students interests and needs
 - supports "hands-on" and active learning where students are involved in making decisions about their learning and where risk taking is encouraged
 - provides opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning, to experience success in a variety of ways and to participate in an assessment process that informs decisions about future learning
 - enhances strong partnerships between home and school, where families are informed and involved.

3. To support all students to develop the traits of successful learners, so that they become
 - **thoughtful** curious, reflective, critical, problem solvers, able to demonstrate judgment, to make inferences and provide reasons
 - **industrious** motivated, able to stay on task and show perseverance
 - **generative** creative, original, imaginative, fluent, able to communicate ideas
 - **empathetic** aware of and concerned about the feelings of others, able to get along with others
 - **risk takers** willing to try something new, to take informed risks
 - **strategic** organised, tidy, resourceful , able to set goals
 - **knowledgable** able to demonstrate expertise, understandings and skills and to use this confidently for appropriate purposes
 - individuals with a strong **sense of self** able to show feelings of self worth, self confidence and self respect

STRATEGIES

1. Provide a multi-age structure to meet the individual needs of students.
2. Establish planning and teaching teams to utilise the strengths of teachers and ensure their continued professional growth.
3. Plan a developmentally appropriate curriculum that addresses the five developmental domains, acknowledging that children learn at different rates and in different ways, and that builds on the needs and interests of the children.
4. Plan learning programs that will facilitate depth of learning and allow students to engage in meaningful experiences over sustained periods of time.
5. Plan an integrated curriculum that provides a meaningful and natural framework for skills development and curriculum content.
6. Encourage cooperative learning to develop and model learning strategies.
7. Use an inquiry-learning model to ensure children develop the characteristics of successful learners.
8. Encourage and enable teachers to participate in on-going professional development.
9. Use a variety of assessment methods that allow teachers to evaluate student learning, plan for further learning and provide clear information about learning to students and parents.
10. Assess student progress against current Education Department standards, and provide this information to parents.
11. Maintain open, democratic processes so that decision making about teaching and learning is a school community partnership of teachers, parents and carers and students.
12. Provide meaningful opportunities for parent communication, consultation, participation, information and education.

REFERENCES

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S.S.P.S. Assessment and Reporting Policy, 2009

POLICY REVIEWED AND PASSED 2009

APPENDIX ONE

The “Conditions of Learning”, as described by Brian Cambourne, outlines the classroom environment provided by teachers that encourages successful learning:

- IMMERSION
Children are surrounded with meaningful experiences.
- DEMONSTRATION
Children learn through modelling.
- EXPECTATION
Children are expected to learn, working at developmentally appropriate tasks.
- RESPONSIBILITY
Children share responsibility for their learning.
- ENGAGEMENT
Children are actively engaged in purposeful learning.
- APPROXIMATIONS
Children take risks, feel free to experiment, and are celebrated for their efforts.
- RESPONSE
Children receive positive and specific feedback.