

## **Teaching and Learning Handbook**

### Introduction

This handbook sets out the Academy's view of effective learning in general terms and how we work towards our aim of highly successful learning for all. The general aims of the Academy, based on our vision, are:

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- We are aiming for every child at The King's Cross Academy to be a highly successful learner, engaged in, and excited by learning and to develop understanding of how they learn best.
- We recognise that highly successful learning will be different according to the particular needs of the child i.e. what is exceptional for one child may not be exceptional for another.
- We are aiming for every class at The King's Cross Academy to be an effective collaborative learning group and for children to 'love learning together'.

## **School Aims**

The aims listed below show that highly successful learning is at the heart of our vision:

## We all aim to make The King's Cross Academy a place where we:

- 1. ...learn a wide variety of things;
- 2. ...learn with others and by ourselves; (collaboration)
- 3. ...learn how to learn and explore new ways to learn;
- 4. ...know how our feelings affect our learning;
- 5. ...enjoy learning and know that it needs our personal effort;
- 6. ...will be known and respected for who we are;
- 7. ...aim to achieve a high standards for ourselves supported by others:
- 8. ...work together to create a safe environment that helps us learn well;
- 9. ...know that you can learn anywhere and all through your life.

## What would highly successful learning look like at the Academy?

Highly successful learning is active, often collaborative, independent, learner driven, learning-focused, can be outside the classroom, always relates to 'real life' (purposeful) and involves leadership.

- ACTIVE: learners are engaged, thoughtful, motivated to learn, take responsibility for their own learning and seek to participate in all learning opportunities; learners develop understanding of the sequence of planning – action – reflection – application across the curriculum;
- **COLLABORATIVE**: learners often participate in joint learning projects with others; classrooms are collaborative learning groups in which knowledge and understanding are developed and shared together; assessment is often collaborative;
- LEARNER-DRIVEN: learners have some degree of choice in their approaches to learning and are involved in planning their learning; they know what their next steps are in order to improve;

- LEARNING-FOCUSED: learners talk about their own learning and that of others; there is ongoing emphasis on understanding how you learn best and how to improve your learning.
- **PURPOSEFUL:** The learning relates to real life, children are aware of the purpose of their learning and that it can be transferable and will impact on their future life.

# What learning approaches and skills could we promote across the curriculum at the Academy?

To support children's thinking about, articulation, planning and assessment of their own learning, we will use the 'Academy Learning Toolbox' this is a structure which sets out examples of key learning skills and approaches suitable for high quality learning across the curriculum (see Appendix 1).

The 'Academy Learning Toolbox' is made up of six main learning toolsets which incorporate skills children need to develop in order to succeed in their learning and in future life: Communication, Social & Emotional learning, Creativity, Thinking, Physical Learning and Learning about Learning.

# What attitudes to learning could we promote across the curriculum at the Academy?

Highly Successful learning is also supported by positive learning attitudes which need to be nurtured across the curriculum, including:

- **Resilience:** exploring mistakes as learning opportunities rather than losing motivation when things do not go as planned;
- Resourcefulness: using initiative and creatively adapting learning resources to meet particular needs;
- **Confidence:** stating views clearly; not needing to prove competence by winning (having an 'open mind-set');
- **Persistence:** sustaining concentration and motivation over extended periods;
- Curiosity: relentless desire to learn about the world;
- **Willingness to question:** refusal to take things for granted, even though they may have been presented by an authority;
- A belief in the value of effort: commitment to improve through personal application rather than a fatalistic belief in 'ability' and 'natural talent'

These attitudes are often classed as 'soft skills'. The Academy recognises their importance in learning in the primary phase but also as life skills that will help children in the future world of work. These skills will be assessed through lesson observations, book scrutiny and pupil voice.

# How could we plan the curriculum to promote highly successful learning at the Academy?

- Use the National Curriculum as a basic structure.
- Providing guidance and training for staff in planning with children using **the Learning Toolbox**.
- Developing a detailed curriculum map which sets out each learning project, giving guidance on best practice in each subject area, suggested activities that incorporate the

opportunities on offer in the King's Cross community (i.e. with learning partners such as Waitrose, Google and UA)

- Maximising the **involvement of children** in planning their own learning.
- Ensuring that learning experiences are planned to be active, collaborative, learner-driven and learning-focused as well as providing opportunities for children to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in all six areas of the Learning Toolbox.
- The learning experiences of children need to incorporate challenge and complexity from Nursery to Year 6, though we should expect more sophisticated articulation of their thinking as they progress through the school. By planning for collaborative learning experiences, over-dependence is avoided.
- Learning experiences are planned to enable all children to learn in the most appropriate ways and at the most appropriate level; different approaches can used with different children.
- Guided Learning sessions planned in every lesson. These are personalised, small
  group learning activities where the teacher focusses on the learning needs of that
  particular group after the 'shared' whole class session has concluded. This provides
  opportunity to support pupils as they apply new learning and to identify and address
  misconceptions in order to encourage independence. The small group nature with low
  pupil/teacher ratios supports rapid progress, encourages exposure to the use of
  transferable skills and strategies and breaks down barriers to learning.
- Reciprocal teaching used as a tool to develop children's reading.
- Describing and evaluating learning, especially through **self and peer assessment**, needs to be an integral part of **every** planned learning experience.

### **Learning Questions:**

- We will organise learning projects and activities around 'Learning Questions' because
  questions are intrinsically more motivating and invite children to share their existing
  knowledge, skills and understanding (compared to 'learning objectives' which are
  'closed' and can limit the learning).
- A question also emphasises that the teacher may not know everything already about the learning topic – new understandings may emerge in the class.
- Learning Questions can be broad and act as a theme for several weeks or specific and form the focus for a single session.
- Learning Questions need to be sufficiently focused to promote meaningful inquiry but should also be adapted or extended when children's own thinking and learning demands a change of direction.
- Asking questions is a fundamental element of learning; children's learning experiences need to be built as inquiries and to be steered by children's personal questions. As children move through the school, we should expect their questions to be framed more precisely; however, children in the Nursery often ask the most complex and philosophical of questions.
- Learning experiences need to sustain curiosity and fearless engagement with complexity and mystery.

#### Well planned success criteria: (see the Academy's Assessment for Learning Policy for further details)

- All pupils are clear about how they will achieve the learning question through the use of progressive success criteria – competent, accomplished and exceptional
- Success criteria's are displayed for the children to follow during the lesson or drawn up with the children, e.g. Steps to success.
- Weekly planning includes success criteria for each learning question.
- Children use the success criteria to self-assess their own or other children's work (peer assessment) and have time to improve.

 Children are reminded of the success criteria during the lesson and are given time to reflect – often children's work is used by the teacher to illustrate the success criteria in action.

### **Project-based learning:**

- Learning is often more effective when it involves several subject areas within a theme. A
  theme helps children to make connections between different aspects of their learning
  and helps them see the 'bigger picture' rather than focusing on fragmented single
  lessons.
- There are four themes that each year group explores in different ways through learning projects lasting half a term people, places, change and food (these themes fit in particularly well with the locality of the Academy and the learning opportunities available).
- Additionally, year groups from Year 1 to Year 6 will spend a whole term working on a project supported by a 'learning partner' e.g. a graphic artist from UAL, a computer programmer (coder) from Google or a planner from Argent.
- Projects will effectively use the learning spaces provided in the Academy and the surrounding location (Camley Street Nature Park, Cubbit Park...). We will ensure there are opportunities to use spaces in which children can think, explore and create more freely than is always possible in a classroom.
- The involvement of practising artists/experts (from King's Cross organisations / companies) in learning projects enriches the learning experience, allows access to new skills and approaches, develops the practice of staff and provides role models for children.

There will also be opportunity to develop collaborative projects that encompass the above with children from Franke Barnes School for Deaf Children.

### 'Real Books' learning

In English at the Academy we will use well-written and powerful children's books that
give the learning a context. Similarly in Maths, we will use quality books to support
learning in maths. Both strategies provide opportunities for the teacher and children to
explore learning in these areas collaboratively through the texts emphasising the
importance of language in communicating and exchanging ideas.

#### Discrete learning:

- Not all learning can be part of the thematic learning projects. There are many elements
  of each year group's curriculum that need to be taught discretely. For example, much of
  mathematics, PE and Science does not relate to the learning projects. The curriculum
  map guides teachers on where a subject is best taught discretely and where there are
  genuine and productive links with the learning project.
- Discreet teaching of maths will be planned through the use of a maths framework which maps the progression in key concepts and ideas over each year group.
- Grammar will be taught discreetly as well as through real writing opportunities across the curriculum.

#### Language Learning

- All children from Nursery to Year 6 will learn \*\*\*\*\*\* I (to be decided)
- The language will be incorporated into the daily life of the school and as many immersive experiences provided as possible e.g. children will be expected to ask for their lunch in the language
- Children will learn British Sign Language (BSL) to level 1 at the Academy

 Teachers will be expected to have a minimum of level 2 BSL with support staff a minimum level 1.

## Who will lead the learning at the Academy?

The headteacher will have ultimate responsibility for the teaching and learning at the academy through:

- reviewing this teaching and learning policy with the governors on an annual basis
- monitoring the teaching and learning with Phase Leaders
- developing a CPD programme focussing on the teaching and learning needs of the school (primarily lesson study)
- recruiting highly motivated and qualified staff with a passion for learning
- reviewing the strategic teaching and learning direction of the school with the leadership team and developing a development/improvement plan
- consistently reviewing pupil data, reporting to governors and formulating plans where expected progress targets are not being met
- keeping updated with new research and global learning trends

Each subject area will be 'held' within a 'curriculum team' linked to the toolbox e.g. Art in the 'creative team', English in the 'communication team' etc. It is important to note that although the subjects are categorised into a skill from the toolbox they are not the only skills used in that subject e.g. English does not just involve communication skills, creativity as well as thinking skills are also required to be successful in this subject.

Each team will have a team leader who will lead a curriculum team with specific responsibility for the subjects within their toolbox skill set. The team will consist of teachers and support staff that work across the full primary school age range (a list of the teams and subjects can be found in appendix three).

## How could we organise the learning environment to promote high quality learning?

- The table 'Thinking about Learning and the classroom Environment' (Appendix two from 'Effective learning in Classrooms' by Chris Watkins) shows three views of learning and the types of classroom environments that might result from each. Our aim is to develop classrooms in which learning is experienced more as 'co-construction' than 'transmission' whilst maintaining a rigorous approach to the core skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening and mathematical calculation. Such an environment will result in a higher level of learning, preparing children more effectively for the future.
- A co-constructive model of learning suggests that learning is 'creating knowledge with others'. This leads to a view of the classroom learning environment as a learning community children will 'love learning together'.
- In a learning community, knowledge is generated together, groups and networks change, the adults are also learners, time is less significant in organising learning and learners have access to resources from whatever source is relevant to the learning.
- The classroom environment needs to allow for different types of learning across the Learning Toolbox and for flexibility in grouping.
- Displays need to capture the ongoing learning of the class and show the processes involved in learning rather than just presenting products (although there should be inclusion of 'best product' displays around the Academy as well). The emphasis must be on how the visual resources of the classroom are used by children in their learning. There should also be opportunities for children to evaluate each other's learning and for

- these comments to be displayed. The classroom then acts as a public record of the cumulative learning of the group.
- Using a virtual school (in which examples of learning across the Toolbox are captured online) will provide a means to share effective learning within the school and the wider community.
- Outdoor space will be utilised to enhance learning throughout the school. This includes dedicated spaces for the EYFS classrooms and the use of spaces in the King's Cross development – Camley Street Nature Park, Gas Holder No.8 Urban Park, Cubbit Park, the Skip Garden...

## How do we monitor and evaluate the quality of learning at the Academy?

Rigorous monitoring and tracking ensures that all pupils make expected progress including SEND, Gifted and Talented and those who are in any identified vulnerable group e.g. Free School Meals (FSM), English as an additional language (EAL) and recent joiners. The Academy will use the following strategies:

- Children assess their own learning and that of their peers (self and peer assessment);
- Joint observations in classrooms focus on the quality of learning using 3 bases of evidence – observation, pupil's records of learning and pupil data;
- Observations will link with teacher's appraisal which will include a focus on the quality of learning in a particular classroom.
- Developmental monitoring a cyclical programme (4 weeks every term) with phase teams / curriculum leaders monitoring different aspects of learning through learning walks, pupil voice, pupils records, planning and book scrutiny.
- Pupil Progress Review meetings each half-term explore the learning of each child from a broad perspective with the Headteacher, senior leaders and teachers in each year group;
- Pupil progress reviews will link with appraisal which will include a focus on the teachers' assessment of learning in their class;
- Lesson Study gives an in-depth perspective on specific aspects of learning as well as more general features such as children's capacity to learn collaboratively, the level of confidence, resilience etc;
- A School Council will be set up where pupils have regular opportunity to discuss features of learning that are going well and explore areas to develop.
- The Academy will use surveys such as the Index for Inclusion, pupil and parent voice to periodically collect views of children, parents and staff on the quality of learning;
- The Academy will use a 'Professional Partner' (independent of the academy) to complete a Joint Action Review annually and explore an elements of learning in depth.
- Data on progress will be tracked and managed through a data management system that will feed directly into a parental portal. This portal will provide parent with direct access to pupil progress information as well as attendance and behaviour records.
- The Academy will participate in cross school moderation of assessment data with other schools as part of the 'Camden School Led Partnership'

## How would the Academy's Governing Body evaluate the quality of learning?

- The Headteacher would report to a governing committee that is dedicated to learning termly on different aspects of learning (learning and teaching committee);
- The Headteacher and chair of the learning and teaching committee reports to Full Governing Body termly;

- A Professional Partner would work closely with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors with a learning focus and reports to Governing Body annually;
- Appraisal of the Headteacher by Governors and professional Partner is focused on the impact on learning;
- Visits by Governors to the Academy can inform discussion ('Governor Sample' days).

## How will we report pupil's progress in learning to parents?

Progress is reported to parents in meetings which are held each term:

- **Meeting 1: 'Meet the teacher**' (start of autumn term): An opportunity for the parents to meet their child's new class teacher and discuss targets for the year ahead. It is also a chance to suggest ways the parents can help their children at home with their learning and introduce the virtual school.
- **Meeting 2: 'Early Review'** (October / November) An opportunity to review the first half term, how their child has settled into class and to discuss / adjust targets if required. It is also an opportunity to give more specific, targeted suggestions of how parents can help support their child in their learning at home.
- Meeting 3: 'Mid-year Review' (February/March). This gives opportunity for teachers
  and parents to discuss progress so far, address any concerns and to decide on the
  focus for the rest of the year.
- Meeting 4: 'End of Year Review and Future Focus' (July). This meeting is held after the end of year written reports have been distributed. It gives parents and teachers the opportunity to discuss the reports and celebrate progress over the year and decide on targets for the following year.

In addition, at the end of each academic year, parents receive a full written report detailing achievements and identifying targets. They will also have access to an online parental portal linked to the school's virtual learning environment. Here parents can view information relating to their child's progress throughout their time at the Academy as well as data on attendance and behaviour.

**EYFS reporting** – In the Early Years and Foundation Stage parents will be invited every half term to discuss their child's progress during 'focus meetings' with the teacher and support staff. Pupil progress observations will also be recorded by the teacher in an e-profile which will be emailed on a half termly basis (those parents with no access to email will be provided access at school and/or provided with a printed report). Children will also have a 'special book' which will contain key examples of learning that will be shared during the 'focus meetings'.

In addition to the above the Academy will hold an annual 'Open Day' in the spring term. Parents, governors, learning partners and representatives from the local community will be invited to share in the learning at the Academy, observe lessons and participate in learning activities. Learning projects will also include a presentation of the learning from that project each term that parents will be invited to view.

## How will we engage parents in their child's learning?

Parents will be informed of what their children are learning in any given week on the Friday prior to that week. They will be sent a 'Learning for the Week ahead' slip that will headline the

learning in the core subjects – English, Mathematics and Science, as well as in the projects. Parents will be encouraged to discuss with their child the learning for the next week i.e. what they already know about the learning (prior knowledge), what they would like to know, what they are most/least looking forward to etc.

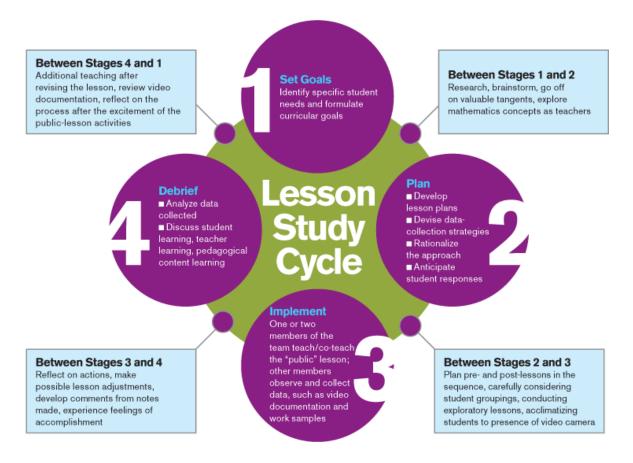
The curriculum maps for each term will also be published on the school VLE – parents will have access an overview of the learning for each term. The VLE will also include published children's learning in the form of photos, videos and learning examples together with learning forums that extended the learning outside of the classroom and both parents and children can respond to.

Parent workshops will be held in the Academy's adult learning room to help parents understand how certain areas of the curriculum are taught and best ways of helping their children at home.

## How will we continually develop Teachers and Support staff as learners?

King's Cross Academy will use 'Lesson Study' as its main vehicle for continual professional development (CPD). Lesson study is a powerful, professional learning approach that dramatically improves learning and teaching and the practice and subject knowledge of teachers and support staff.

This diagram illustrates the cycle of lesson study that the Academy will use:



'Lesson Study' not only produces dramatic improvements in pupil achievement and professional learning.

## **Document Control**

Written by	Emyr Fairburn			
Ratified by Governors	September 2016			
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Signed – Chair of Governors				
Signed – Headteacher				

#### **LEARNING TOOLBOX – TOOLSET 1: COMMUNICATION**

- This toolset includes: Speaking & listening, reading, writing, ICT, demonstrating, creating visuals such as posters and artworks, using tables, charts and diagrams etc.
- By focusing on communication with others, we encourage children to see a purpose in
  what they are learning and build a sense of audience. The so-called 'basic skills' of reading
  and writing are a means to an end: to express your own ideas meaningfully and to
  understand the ideas of others. Speaking and Listening are emphasised as key tools in
  developing your own thoughts as well as central means of communication in life.
- Children need to evaluate how well they are communicating individually, in groups, as a
  class and begin to decide when to use different forms of communication e.g. ask children
  how and to whom they think they should communicate a piece of learning.

#### **LEARNING TOOLBOX – TOOLSET 2: THINKING**

- This toolset includes: questioning, comparing, debating, explaining, problem-solving, logical/chronological thinking, reasoning, separating fact & opinion, weighing up evidence
- By focusing on thinking skills, we help children to develop different approaches to different learning situations as well as sustaining curiosity and willingness to challenge authority and ask for evidence to back up opinions.
- ➤ Philosophy for Children (P4C) is an excellent model for developing children's thinking across the curriculum (generate questions from a stimulus or theme, group and categorise the questions, then decide which question to examine and discuss in depth, helping children to make connections between different children's ideas).
- Children need to evaluate how well they are thinking individually, in groups, as a class and begin to decide when to use different approaches e.g. ask children what thinking skills they need for a particular piece of learning.

#### **LEARNING TOOLBOX - TOOLSET 3: CREATIVITY**

- This toolset includes: risk-taking, generating ideas (brainstorming, hypothesising, speculating), making interesting connections & unusual comparisons, looking at everyday things in original ways, asking unusual questions, setting personal criteria, creating art.
- By focusing on creativity, we help children to develop confidence in being original or different and willingness to try things out and make mistakes. Creativity is about exploration and curiosity about the world.
- Creativity is not just about art you can be creative in Maths, Science and all subjects. For example, Einstein and Marie Curie were highly creative thinkers Einstein often visualised his ideas on sub-atomic physics in terms of images and metaphors.
- Children should become increasingly aware of what creative learning is like and learn to talk about their own creative learning.

#### **LEARNING TOOLBOX - TOOLSET 4: SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL**

- This toolset includes: self-awareness, self-control, empathy, social skills, sharing, turn-taking, co-operation, leading, negotiating, playing, following rules.
- ➤ Children can't leave their emotions outside the classroom and learning is often a very emotional experience (excitement, frustration, elation, fear, panic etc).
- > Children need to learn to understand their own emotions and realise that emotions are not bad but sometimes need to be managed or channelled.
- ➤ 'Emotional literacy' and 'emotional intelligence' are different names for the same idea: we need to be more aware of how our emotions affect us so that we can express them in ways that help our learning and development.
- Older children could explore whether there is such a thing as positive anger e.g. anger over injustice or poverty or positive fear e.g. fear of danger so that we stay safe.

#### **LEARNING TOOLBOX - TOOLSET 5: PHYSICAL**

- This toolset includes: role-play, drama, simulations, collaborative games etc.
- > Children need a balance of physical and intellectual learning activities every day. Learning is better when it is varied and broken up by physical activity.
- Simulations: finding physical ways to represent concepts e.g. children show physically (linking arms, running about etc) the difference between water, ice and water vapour by representing how the molecules relate in each state.
- Extended simulations: e.g. re-enacting the voyage of the Tudor explorers to Virginia in the 1580s; planning the supplies needed, role-playing the key characters etc.
- Collaborative learning approaches often involve moving around e.g. jigsaw, snowballing
- > Techniques like frozen pictures, forum theatre etc can be used across the curriculum.

#### LEARNING TOOLBOX - TOOLSET 6: LEARNING ABOUT LEARNING

- > This toolset includes: reflecting, evaluating, planning, sharing, choosing strategies etc
- > Children are able to think and talk about their own learning even in the nursery. As they get older they get more articulate and can explain their thinking in more detail.
- > Talking about their learning enables children to identify how to apply skills, knowledge and understanding to different situations.
- By making it easier to explore learning openly, including mistakes, children can become more confident and prepared to risk sharing their thinking with others.
- In a classroom where it's the norm for there to be ongoing talk about learning, a shared understanding of what learning means can develop. Children begin to see themselves as contributing to a learning community.
- Learning about learning helps children to see the purpose of being at school and then to take responsibility for moving forward in their learning, accessing the resources they need. Children's understanding of learning is something that will help them in their lives beyond school.

#### THINKING ABOUT CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS & LEARNING Transmission model of learning: 'learning = being taught' Teacher instructing, organizing, telling, judging, choosing resources, controlling Use by learners Organisation Learning messages Classroom is pre-organised Used in the way adults The environment is Unchanging layout decided by adult controlled by adults who determine only No involvement of children in the Displays do not help learning know best environment The environment cannot be so are unused Adult-led display questioned or changed Learners are passive in the Content and products emphasized; not Children do not know how environment because they process of learning they learn best have not contributed to it Limited scope for choice of activity; no Displays are to look nice, not Resources are either unused variety about learning or used only when adults Resources stored away for tidiness Children cannot choose how direct or suggest their use rather than accessible to learn Learners remind themselves Rules and compliance emphasized in Adults control resources of rules rather than how to posters, notices etc Classroom is about following learn rules and compliance Construction model of learning: 'learning = individual sense-making' Teacher as enquirer, understanding key, longer time blocks, learners access resources Organisation Learning messages Use by learners Children have some input on the The environment is there to Learners refer to displays and classroom environment support learning and children other resources to support Resources are accessible have a stake in it them while they are learning There is some flexibility in layout and The main focus of the Children make decisions choice of activities e.g. an attractive environment is the process about resources and have reading corner, listening corner of learning – *how* we learn some control over their use Process is emphasized though and improve Learners come up with ideas products are celebrated Learning is a team effort to improve the learning Children are involved in display Learners know that environment Posters, notices etc reflect a learning interesting learning will be shared and celebrated focus Co-construction model of learning: 'learning = creating knowledge with others' Knowledge generated together, groups and networks change, teacher as learner, time less relevant, access to the world of resources Use by learners Organisation Learning messages All children and adults work together to Children and adults establish The learning environment is create the learning environment they created by the whole class classroom organisation need to enable high quality learning community to support their together and review it Layout is adaptable to learning learning about learning regularly nothing is fixed permanently; grouping Learning can happen in Children monitor how they are is flexible different places and in making use of the Children and adults use display different ways environment to support their actively to capture/share current and The learning of the learning and suggest changes cumulative understandings of the community is shared and Learners have opportunity to whole group in different ways added to throughout the year choose how to learn and how Children's voice is prominent e.g. their Children's ideas and views of to use resources writing, agreed learning practices etc learning matter Children refer to ideas from

the class community to help them learn e.g. methods in Maths, strategies for learning

## Appendix Three – The curriculum Teams

Curriculum Teams	Subject Area		
COMMUNICATION	English (including speaking and listening, reading and writing) Foreign Language BSL		
THINKING	Maths RE History		
PHYSICAL	PE Science Geography		
CREATIVE	Art and Design Music Design Technology		
LEARNING ABOUT LEARNING	These tool sets do not have specific subjects assigned to them – skills from these tools sets		
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL	should be observable in all learning.		