



Classroom Learning Environment Policy

Purpose

At Market Weighton Infant School, the classroom environment is seen as a learning tool and a way of engaging children and celebrating their success. An effective classroom environment is an interactive resource, supporting teaching, learning and assessment. It creates a sense of ownership and builds a community feeling.

Clean and tidy classrooms contribute to a purposeful learning environment. All staff should take responsibility for our physical environment, including areas beyond the classroom such as corridors, cloakrooms and the school hall.

This policy draws on research from the [University of Salford's "Clever Classrooms" report \(2015\)](#) to help ensure that our practice is rooted in clear evidence that will make a difference to our children's daily learning. The report found that:

"The single most important finding reported here, is that there is clear evidence that the physical characteristics of primary schools do impact on pupils' learning progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This impact is quite large, scaling at explaining 16% of the variation in the overall progress over a year of the 3766 pupils included in the study."

Principles for classroom design

We follow the three SIN design principles as set out in the Clever Classrooms report which are in order of importance and influence:

- Naturalness: light, temperature and air quality
- Individualisation: ownership and flexibility
- Stimulation (appropriate level of): complexity and colour

All staff should be aware of these principles and base their classroom design on them. Teachers will need to be familiar with **Appendix A: "Checkpoint for Teachers"** which provides a practical guide to help them adhere to the SIN design principles.

It is expected that the staff in each year group will work together so that strong similarities exist between year group classrooms. Differences between year groups will be distinct to allow for progression in learning.

Careful consideration should be taken with regard to what is being displayed and whereabouts in the room it is displayed to ensure maximum access for the children. For example, some words may be more effectively accessed on the children's tables than as posters with print which is too small to read from a distance. Teacher information, such as the class timetables and class lists etc. should be stored in an easily accessible folder rather than on a wall display.

Working Walls or “Washing Lines”

- The classroom learning environment for literacy and numeracy is based on the ‘working wall approach’ where teachers’ modelling and prompts are displayed as part of ongoing learning in each classroom.
- Children’s work will be used to affirm features of work that are desired.
- Only display current work.
- Work on working walls is not necessarily mounted as it is expected to develop rapidly and change frequently
- Teachers and children may write captions and posters by hand (make sure handwriting is readable) as part of the lesson, which are then put on the wall for reference

Maths and English Prompts

All maths and English resources should be accessible for all children. Consideration should be taken about whereabouts they are being displayed and how accessible that are.

See Appendix B for further information about English support for each year group and Appendix C for maths support.

“Showcase” Displays

“Showcase” displays are a celebration of work- this is likely to be linked to topic work or areas of interest. These displays can show the breadth of the curriculum that has been taught during a topic of interest, such as in the example below which shows work from art, DT and English.



- Make sure a range of abilities is evident not just work from the highest achievers.
- Displays should introduce key vocabulary linked to topics. The school handwriting font can be used as follows:
FS- use the Nelson font 'NTFPrint' - at least size 120
KS1- use the Nelson font 'NTPFPrecursivefk' - at least size 120.
Vocabulary can also be written by children.
- Captions to explain the learning process, pose questions or provide contextual information should be part of the celebration display. This can include “pupil voice” through speech bubbles or labels etc.
- The use of artefacts to make display 3D is welcomed.

- Displays should change at least termly, some more often, when it is quick and easy to do so. Displays backed with hessian and black borders / mounts are time-saving ideas.
- A range of photographs of exciting school displays is available on the staffshare server- Display- for reference. This includes imaginative ways to display pieces of work.

Celebration Displays

“Celebration” displays are designed to value the children’s independent work- produced either at school or at home.

- In the Foundation Stage and Year 1, it is especially important to display independent writing to encourage the children to write.
- Captions to explain the learning process, pose questions or provide contextual information should be part of the celebration display. This can include “pupil voice” through speech bubbles or labels etc.

Resources- what to use and how to do it

- Use hessian backed boards wherever possible, with a good quality border. This will add to the “naturalness” of each room, with the colour coming from the children’s work and mounting paper.
- Some work/prompts may be displayed on “blackboard” style displays.
- Pre-cut mounting paper is available from the resource cupboard.
- Ways should be found to ensure that displays look highly effective without the need to spend a large amount of time producing them. For example, a class art gallery with pre- drawn picture frames. It is not expected that all work is double mounted, although some may be for added effect.
- Ensure that work on the board is straight or that any work displayed at angles can clearly be read or seen.
- The use of fonts may vary depending on the display although this is expected to be clearly legible. It will often be appropriate to use our school handwriting script.
- Wherever possible, children’s work should be named clearly and neatly.
- Work on display for long periods – such as handwriting alphabet or phonic sounds will be mounted and laminated
- Finally stand back and evaluate the display – has it worked? Are the children using it or talking about it? Is it a useful tool for teaching? Has it made a child feel proud?

Monitoring

Staff meetings may take place in different classroom enabling the class teacher to share the main display features and classroom organisation with colleagues. This helps provide constructive feedback to the individual teacher and shares ideas with the rest of the staff.

Reviewed: Spring Term 2023

Next review: Spring Term 2026

Equality Analysis Impact

This policy was written with reference to and in consideration of the school's Equality Policy.

Does the policy have an adverse effect on employees, pupils or the wider community and therefore have a significant effect in terms of equality? **No**

Does the policy have an adverse effect upon a group with protected characteristics? (sex, race, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, age) **No**

Any questions or concerns regarding this policy should be made to the headteacher.

APPENDIX A

Checkpoints for Teachers

Naturalness	Light	• Keeping glazing clear, by minimizing occlusion of the windows can maximise environmental benefits from natural light. • Access and active use of the blinds/curtains is needed to address problems with glare. • Careful siting of high power projector to minimise need to close blinds. • Shrubs or planters placed outside south-facing windows can reduce glare.
	Air Quality	• A typical classroom with thirty pupils will normally need active ventilation within a 1 hour lesson. Avoiding obstructing access the window openings is important. • Excess CO₂ can cause drowsiness and inattention and a CO₂ meter in the classroom can give teachers an indication of an air quality problem.
	Temperature	• If local temperature control is possible (using a thermostat) the classroom should be kept cool, but comfortable, for optimum learning conditions. • If sun heat gain is a problem and there is no external shading, then active use of blinds and ventilation is essential to mitigate the problem.
	Sound (secondary factor)	• The effect of adding sound-absorbing treatment to rooms is significant. Soft furnishings and posters are good sound absorbers. • Rubber feet on movable furniture can buffer any noise generated, if maintained. • Small carpeted areas can make a positive difference to noise attenuation.
	Links to Nature (secondary factor)	• Views through windows of green areas, thought to be of benefit, can be hindered by occlusion by window displays and furniture. • Natural elements in the classroom such as plants, wooden chairs and /or desks allow pupils to experience natural elements.
Individualisation	Flexibility	• Well-defined and age appropriate learning zones are important to facilitate learning.

		• Younger pupils need several well-defined zones for play-based learning activities. • For older pupils simpler space configurations support more formal teaching. • Lower height furniture provides more wall area available for varied displays.
	Ownership	• A classroom that includes pupil-created work in displays will provide a sense of ownership. • A classroom that is distinctly different (using displays) creates a sense of familiarity. • Allowing pupils to personalise aspects of the classroom, such as lockers, coat pegs or drawers, creates a sense of belonging. • Quality ergonomic furniture and equipment can be used to create a child centred space.
	Connection (secondary factor)	• Ideally corridors should be kept sufficiently clear for ease of circulation. • Distinctive displays outside the classrooms or at junctions create orienting landmarks and avoid an institutional-style effect. • “Corridor libraries” are both orienting and a good use of wide corridors spaces.
Stimulation – Appropriate level of	Complexity	• A mid-level of Complexity is sought for an effective learning environment. • Displays should be designed to provide a lively sense to the classroom, but without becoming chaotic. As a rule of thumb 20-50% of the available wall space should be kept clear. • In deciding how much extra visual complexity to introduce, the basic characteristics of the room should be taken into account.
	Colour	• A mid-level of stimulation overall is sought for an effective learning environment. - First assess the colour elements in place that cannot be readily changed - Then decisions can be taken about how much bright colour should be introduced into other aspects • The aim is increase stimulation in a dull classroom, or reduce it if it is already too bright.

APPENDIX B

English Prompts

WALLS

- Friezes should be easily visible and accessed if used.

Read, Write, Inc Graphemes:

- Foundation Stage – Display the full set of RWInc sounds to cater for all abilities. Encourage the use of RWInc sound mats when writing or display and refer to the Simple Speed Sounds Chart.
- Key Stage 1 – encourage children to use the RWInc sound mats (A4) at tables so that there is no need to display the frieze around top of classrooms or display and refer to Complex Speed Sounds Chart.
- Alphabet mats are in staffshare server – English – Handwriting.

Working walls:

- Only display current English text.
- Ensure writing is large enough for children to read from tables. Place sheets in order they were introduced to show the progression of skills.
- Vocabulary relevant to the focus of the learning will be evident. For example, key character names, vocabulary, and grammar points e.g. adjectives, text order – story boards etc.

WRITING AREAS

- All equipment should be readily accessible for children to use during ongoing provision and/or lessons as appropriate for year group.
- Drawers / containers should be clearly labelled as appropriate for the year group.

APPENDIX C

Maths Prompts

WALLS

Number:

FS – large 0-20 numeral cards should be displayed in the classroom as introduced

Y1 – large 0-20 numeral cards and numbers in words

Y2 – large 0-30 numeral cards and numbers in words

All to be displayed so easily visible for the children

Teaching 100 square to be displayed in the classroom to support teaching.

Time:

Teaching clock to be displayed in all classrooms near to teacher chair (please note that this is in addition to the general classroom clock).

FS – general classroom clock to be labelled with o'clock

Y1 – general classroom clock to be labelled with o'clock and half past

Y2 – general classroom clock to be labelled with o'clock, half past, quarter past and quarter to

Working walls:

Only display current/recent Maths topic support

Display maths symbols and vocabulary as introduced

Display examples of children's recent work, especially problem solving

Include a simple interactive element e.g. sorting numbers into pockets (less/more than, odd/even, multiples of x), matching resources to a number responding to a question/problem

Shape (during/post teaching):

2d shape

FS – display picture, shape names and children's "everyday" vocabulary for properties - circle, triangle, square, rectangle (rhombus optional not "diamond" please)

Y1 – display picture, mathematical vocabulary, different sizes and orientations - circles, triangles, squares, rectangles, pentagons, hexagons (rhombus optional not "diamond" please),

Y2 – display picture, mathematical vocabulary, different sizes and orientations – circles, triangles, squares, rectangles, rhombuses, pentagons, hexagons, octagons.

Where possible display photos of 2d shapes in local environment.

3d shape

FS – display shape & everyday object, shape names and children's "everyday" vocabulary for properties – cube, cuboid, cone, sphere

Y1 – display shape & everyday object, mathematical vocabulary – cubes, cuboids, cones, spheres, pyramids

Y2 – display shape & everyday object, mathematical vocabulary – cubes, cuboids, cones, spheres, pyramids, prism

MATHS AREAS

All equipment should be readily accessible for children to use during ongoing provision and/or lessons as appropriate for year group.

Drawers / containers should be clearly labelled as appropriate for the year group.

Maths equipment should support the full range of maths covered by the National Curriculum.