

Beyond Expectations – Learning Environments

Our academies develop and devise their own policies for teaching, learning and the curriculum. However, in formulating those policies and procedures, there are certain expectations that we all subscribe to in order to ensure that we are all going beyond expectations in offering the very best opportunities to our children and young people.

We recognise that the quality of the learning environment affects the quality of children's experiences every day. Children deserve an environment that is vibrant, welcoming, engaging and facilitates their learning in creative ways. We believe that a well organised and stimulating environment has a direct impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, supporting the raising of standards and develop children's independence. We believe in a healthy mix of teaching resources and celebration of children's learning.

Classrooms will vary according to the age of the children being taught and must be inclusive of the needs of all children. We respect and value the individuality of staff in creating these environments. They should be visually stimulating and lively and be equipped with resources that will support high quality teaching and learning. They should be free from unnecessary items and clutter, such that children value the available resources. We would expect to see the following:

- A good quality working wall which changes with the teaching from day to day;
- Prompts, ideas and good examples of work that can be generated during lessons are displayed and referred to, to support future learning;
- Children's work displayed;
- Wider curriculum work linked to various topics;
- Evidence of children's targets in books / by other means;
- Clear evidence of learning objectives / success criteria in line with the agreed policy;
- Well displayed names on children's trays and books – showing care and respect;
- Stimuli to support children's reading, writing and mathematical development;
- Maths areas that include the likes of Times Table grids, number lines etc;
- Visual timetables for those who need them; (particularly important for SEND pupils);
- An area for reflection and calm (demonstrating Christian distinctiveness in our church academies);
- Evidence of values, rewards and the behaviour policy;
- An exciting and enticing reading corner in which reading and books are clearly valued.

Book corners should be inviting, stimulating places in which to read and learn. The use of soft fabrics, cushions and plants can 'soften' the area making it more inviting. Any books in poor condition should be removed from book areas.

Pupils' exercise books and other resources should always be stored in neat, accessible, pupil friendly ways, using storage containers, table trays or individual pupil trays. This ensures that pupil books are always maintained in good order – the use of suitable covers is encouraged.

Where items are displayed, this should be done so tidily, using suitable mounting techniques and generally using appropriate staples. Staff are expected to use appropriate backing paper and borders so as to create a stimulating environment. Displays should be updated regularly and there is an expectation that classrooms will be engaging from the very beginning of every academic year.

Surfaces are expected to be used for displaying suitable resources and should be kept in good order. They should not be used excessively for storing stationary items, including teacher resources. Teacher desk / storage areas, including cupboards, should be kept tidy as a good example to the pupils.

The academy will maintain an annual programme of updating furniture and resources in order to provide a modern, clean learning environment. The same high standards are expected in the corridors, hall spaces and communal areas.