



Learning & Teaching Policy

“Never forget that the job you have chosen is to shape the most delicate minds and the most vulnerable souls - you make the difference and change lives every day. Never forget.”

Our school is, 'All about learning'. We aim to develop confident, lifelong learners who are able to thrive in an information-based society. Everyone who works at our school is a 'teacher' and as a team, we work constantly to find out what works best for our children and act on our findings.

Our Core Purpose

- To nurture well-rounded pupils who are fully equipped to achieve their potential in the future, whatever it may look like;
- To provide a range of stimulating opportunities in a safe, secure & happy environment that will challenge & prepare pupils to be global citizens & intrinsic learners.

We are here solely to develop and en-skill our young people as best we can: To pass on the skills, attitudes and values that will enable them to live healthy, happy lives, now and in their futures.

Everything that we do, every system that we work to, every daily routine MUST work for the best of our children and their learning. If it doesn't we must be big enough to change it so that it does, because our pupils and their learning is what we are here for.



Our School Aims

- To give every child the opportunity to see and reach their own potential irrespective of their gender, race & socio-economic background;
- to ensure every child acquires high levels of literacy and numeracy skills and is able to use them effectively in a wide range of contexts and situations;
- to recognise & value academic and non-academic achievements equally;
- to develop, in every child, a sense of respect & responsibility towards peers, adults, themselves & the environment;
- to engender a passion for independent and collaborative learning and a willingness to make mistakes & understand how to learn and grow as a result of them;
- to encourage a balance between self-esteem, self-confidence, care, compassion & empathy;
- to help every child see themselves as part of a local, national and global community and understand the responsibilities that this places on them;
- to nurture children who are able to rise to challenges, take risks, think creatively, make informed decisions & take responsibility for their own actions;
- to provide a genuine and unconditional level of pastoral care and support for every child in our care;
- to provide a high quality, exciting, engaging environment and culture where children benefit from their teachers' continuous professional development and a culture of committed continuous improvement;
- to build confidence through patience, resilience & compassion;
- to prepare children for their future and, as staff, to commit to trying to foresee what that future might look like and require;
- to evaluate everything that we do so that we can do it 'even better next time'.

Skills for Today and Tomorrow

Learning for Tomorrow

Our Reception pupils in 2015 will enter the job market in 2032 & won't retire until 2076. What will their world look like? What skills will they need? We know that many if not most of the jobs that our pupils will do when they enter the workforce don't even exist yet. It follows then that we don't know what our children will need to know in their working and personal lives in the future. So, on that basis, our focus when considering what to teach them needs to shift from content to skills. That means that we need to show them HOW to learn for themselves so that they will be able to acquire further skills and information in the future. Adults don't get jobs just by knowing facts and information; it's the range and quality of their skills and their depth of understanding that will serve them well in all aspects of their lives.

The Skills We Value & Will Engender...



Intelligence

Traditional views of education and intelligence have always focussed on a linear or hierarchical arrangement where we can easily measure **how intelligent the child is**. Tests help to 'measure' this level of intelligence.

At The Dell Primary, we prefer the view that, while some children (& adults) will perform well, even excel in many areas of learning, intelligence is more about different aptitudes and skills. We should therefore look at a wide range of abilities and strengths and ask **how is the child intelligent**. If we focus on how intelligent a child is, we risk making a judgement about their ability & potential at an early age, categorising them and condemning them to low expectations and an artificial ceiling thereafter. There is a wealth of research that shows clearly that intelligence is modifiable and diverse.

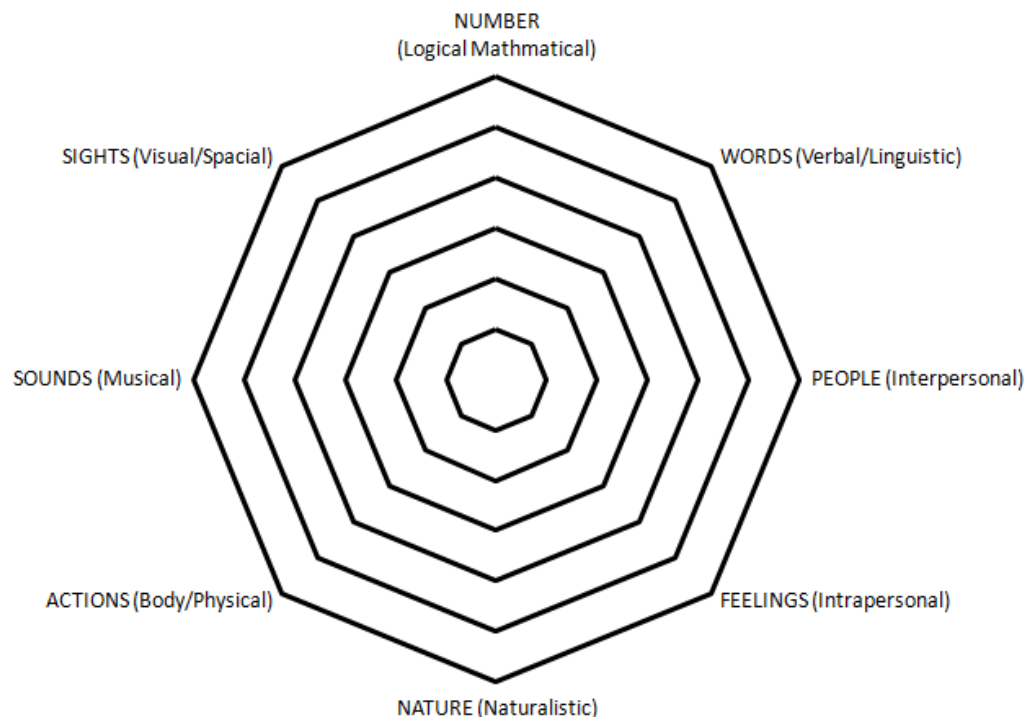
Traditional Linear View of Intelligence (Where on the line are you?)

Very clever



Not
clever

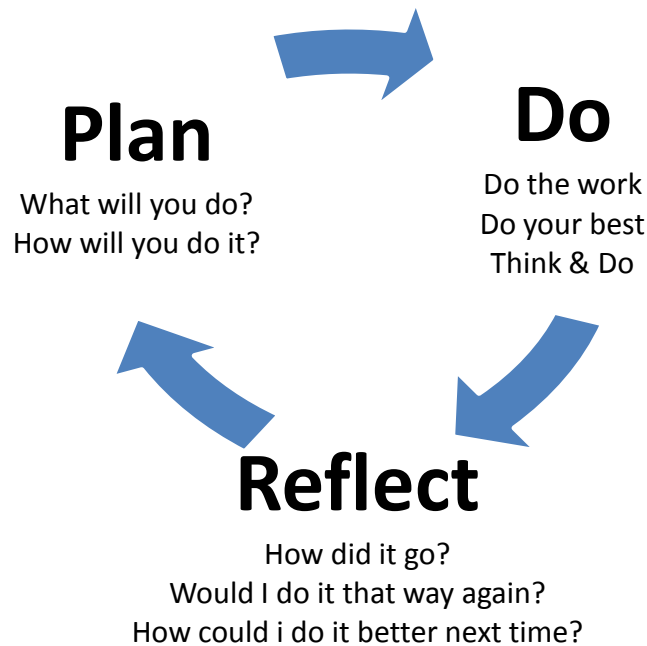
Different Types of Intelligence (Where on the web are you?)



We believe that education is about recognising and valuing a range of intelligences & skills. For example, if your car breaks down, you need a skilled mechanic; if your car crashes, you need a highly skilled rescue worker to assist you not a great mathematician. Similarly if you are being represented in court, you really need a good lawyer, not a great footballer on your side, great as his or her sporting talents may be. By recognising that being 'good' at something isn't just about being good at maths and English, we value and nurture the skills and talents of all of our school population and not just what have traditionally been seen as the 'bright' ones! We must move away from the notion of intelligence being hierarchical with sciences at the top and arts at the bottom.

Our key focus will always be empowering children to become highly literate and numerate but never at the expense of the diversity of skills that might better suit them and lead them to live happy, fulfilling lives.

In planning, teaching, learning, playing, thinking we try to engender the process of reflective thinking and critical awareness and refer frequently to the 'Plan, Do, Reflect' cycle which is displayed throughout the school.



Our Growth Culture

As a school, we believe that teachers and the quality of their work and interactions every day make the difference to the learning, well-being & futures of each child they teach.

- We promote a culture where we trust and respect teachers' experience and skills
- We offer many opportunities formal & informal, for them to see and experience 'excellence'
- We give teachers lots of room to be creative and experimental in their practice
- We understand that our first priority must always be learning and children.
- We understand that if we focus on servicing other demands on processes & systems, we lose the balance & won't have the time, energy & resources to prioritise learning for children.
- We aim to create a working environment where teachers and teaching assistants feel empowered and motivated because this culture breeds a desire to excel.
- We appreciate and understand that time and capacity are limited, finite and can't be used twice and that we must therefore prioritise learning and outcomes for pupils.



Characteristics of Excellence

Characteristics of effective Teachers	Element	Characteristics of effective Pupils
<p>Have high expectations of pupils' behaviour.</p> <p>Set clear rules and boundaries for acceptable behaviour and pupils' safety.</p> <p>Consistently apply strategies for managing and improving behaviour.</p> <p>Establish clear routines and practices to develop pupils' independence and responsibility.</p> <p>Establish effective relationships and conditions for learning at all times.</p>	BEHAVIOUR FOR LEARNING	<p>Accept and follow rules, rewards and consequences.</p> <p>Respond positively to prompts and instructions.</p> <p>Contribute to a safe, positive learning environment.</p> <p>Enable others to learn and thrive in an atmosphere of trust and respect.</p> <p>Allow lessons to proceed without interruption or disruption.</p> <p>Are punctual to lessons and arrive ready to learn.</p>
<p>Have consistently high expectations of all pupils in quality and quantity of their work.</p> <p>Have secure, up to date, subject knowledge.</p> <p>Act consistently as good language models.</p> <p>Plan learning based on prior skills, knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Plan and set challenging tasks for all pupils, matched to their ability.</p> <p>Use targeted support and intervention appropriately.</p>	SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE CHALLENGE AND EXPECTATIONS	<p>Respond positively to high expectations and have high expectations of themselves.</p> <p>Produce work of a high standard given previous skills, knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Demonstrate resilience and perseverance when faced with challenging tasks.</p> <p>Recognise the need for, and respond to, support when appropriate.</p>
<p>Use a range of appropriate strategies to generate high levels of enthusiasm for, participation in and commitment to learning.</p> <p>Use a range of methods and resources which interest, stimulate and challenge pupils to achieve highly.</p> <p>Promote independence and confidence.</p> <p>Make effective use of displays to engage pupils.</p>	ENGAGEMENT AND ENTHUSIASM	<p>Show readiness to learn and are engaged.</p> <p>Demonstrate positive and enthusiastic attitudes to learning.</p> <p>Work productively.</p> <p>Collaboration and co-operation.</p> <p>Enjoy making progress.</p>
<p>Create a learning environment which supports learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy.</p> <p>Ensure other adults contribute effectively to the learning of groups or individuals.</p> <p>Provide and use appropriate resources including new technologies to promote effective learning.</p> <p>Ensure that lessons have good pace and challenge and that most effective use is made of learning time.</p> <p>When home learning is set it is appropriate and is in line with school policy.</p>	RESOURCES AND TIME	<p>Demonstrate independence through selecting and using appropriate resources to support their learning, including new technologies where appropriate.</p> <p>Make best use of learning time and concentrate on task.</p>
<p>Check understanding and intervene where necessary.</p> <p>Listen to, carefully observe and question groups and individuals to reshape tasks, develop vocabulary and deepen understanding.</p> <p>Assess progress regularly and give accurate feedback about next steps in learning, orally and through marking.</p> <p>Set challenging and appropriate targets for pupils.</p> <p>Use assessment to inform future learning of all pupils according to their individual needs.</p>	ASSESSMENT	<p>Respond to marking.</p> <p>Reflect on and articulate the progress they have made in their learning.</p> <p>Develop assessment skills through self and peer assessment.</p> <p>Have clear understanding about their next steps in learning and what they need to do to make further progress.</p> <p>Play a part in target setting and show commitment in reaching targets (where age appropriate).</p>
<p>Know what expected standards and progress are for pupils at all levels and provide activities that are well-matched to their ability.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for pupils to apply previously taught literacy and numeracy skills at the appropriate level.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for pupils to apply previously taught skills in bilingualism, information technology and thinking.</p>	PROGRESS AND STANDARDS	<p>Demonstrate skills, knowledge and understanding appropriate to their age and ability.</p> <p>Learners (including vulnerable groups such as ALN, EAL/NTE, LAC, FSM) learn well and make progress from their starting point.</p> <p>Learners develop and apply literacy and numeracy skills.</p> <p>Learners develop and apply bilingualism, information technology and thinking.</p> <p>Are aware of the level they are working at and the progress they have made.</p>

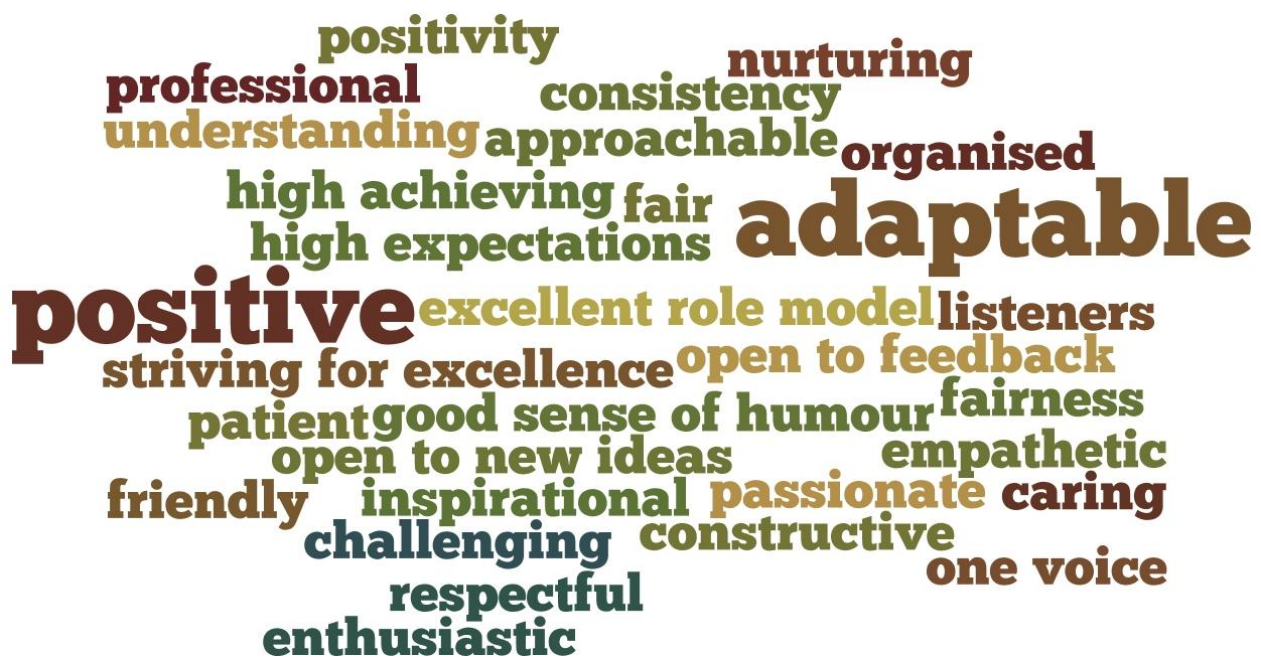
Based on the 'Excellence in Teaching Framework'

Teachers at The Dell

Because our pupils' learning is our core purpose and the biggest factor in their learning is excellent teaching, we are committed to ensuring that as teachers we:

- know what excellent teaching looks like;
- are creative in planning and delivery;
- are motivational in our delivery;
- enjoy teaching and have a passion for learning;
- continue to learn;
- are committed to high expectations and high achievement;
- understand how thinking and questioning develop learning;
- show total professionalism;
- understand the importance of multiple intelligences in order to engage all learners;
- seek out and accept constructive feedback from colleagues, pupils and parents;
- have opportunities to lead;
- involve parents in their child's learning;
- deploy agreed, active behaviour management strategies.

Staff Attitudes Which Drive Us...



Adults as Role Models

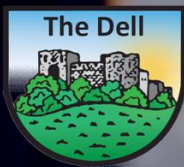
As staff we understand that we are all teachers; every child learns and shapes their understanding by everything they see, hear, feel and perceive. We realise that, whatever our role in our school, being a 'teacher' comes with quite a weight of responsibility. We understand that we are role models to our pupils and that they learn from not just WHAT we do and say but HOW we do and say things. We think about how we look, how we respond, how we act under pressure and how our actions and words set the standards of acceptability for the children in our care. We're opportunistic when there's a chance to explore an event or emotion and we celebrate human moments, happy to laugh at ourselves as appropriate along the way.

Every day we model...

behaviour
compassion tolerance
organisation manners
valuing effort emotions
work life balance enthusiasm
calm how to learn from others role model
courtesy how to learn from mistakes
how to listen respect appropriate communication
fun
helpful pride in achievement consistency
smart appearance fairness open mindedness
professionalism healthy eating politeness
understanding punctuality tone of voice
how to speak empathy
trust honestly hard work
humour kindness

Our teaching will be characterised by:

- Clearly planned lessons which take account of skills, abilities and core skills;
- enthusiastic, Inspiring and engaging delivery;
- a wide range of activities which keep pupils motivated and inquisitive;
- coverage of statutory and non-statutory curriculum frameworks;
- appropriate use of a wide range of resources to help children to learn;
- effective deployment of Teaching Assistants who are coached and clearly prepared for their work;
- the use of Assessment for Learning and its central role in ensuring learning & understanding;
- the highest expectations of every pupils.



Top 5 Best ways to Improve Learning

1. High expectations for every pupil
2. Effective feedback to teachers (Lesson Observations)
3. Quality classroom discussion
4. Effective feedback to pupils
5. Teacher- student relationships

John Hattie, 2009

The Learning Relationship

The relationship between pupil and 'teacher' is key. It will make or break the child's success and it is really important that every adult who works in the school understands this. Critically, children need to feel liked by the adults they work with. The teachers' role in learning is to do their best for every child, not just those who they click with, those who are bright, able, neat, tidy, funny, from good backgrounds, have supportive parents, have clear skills & attributes, have blonde hair, have particular skin colour etc. As 'teachers' all adults in the school understand that they are role models and the way they speak, look, react, respond to every incident, comment or question will have huge learning impact on the pupils in their care. It's a huge responsibility...but that's the role of the teacher. Similarly teachers realise that praise has the power to change children's lives and attitudes. One of the most effective strategies for modifying a child's behaviour in lessons or on the playground is to 'catch them being good' and letting them feel the teacher's praise. 'Teachers' must understand the life changing potential of even the smallest gestures and comments on their pupils.

Good Teachers:

- do what they need to do to get every child where they need to be;
- model exemplary behaviour in all that they say and do;
- never blame children, their circumstances or home life for their lower achievement;
- like children;
- make every child they teach feel liked;
- facilitate good learning more than they talk at children;
- allow and expect discussions;
- make a big deal of what they've learned when they make mistakes;
- use questions to get children thinking (more deeply);
- live the 'Plan, Do, Reflect' cycle;
- teach children skills;
- make sure children 'get it' before moving on;
- push children on and never hold faster learners back;
- use every opportunity to teach children things (bus journeys, inconveniences, visits, topical events);
- never do things for the sake of it, they do things well;
- lead teaching assistants & communicate effectively;
- are great at spotting children's strengths & spotlighting them;
- do it differently, creatively & dynamically & aren't driven by paperwork, tradition, dogma or fear.

Pupils at The Dell

Key messages for our pupils

- "You can get better at learning which means that you can learn more and better"
- "Learning is fun & exciting"
- "You can have dreams and ambitions for the future...but you'll only achieve them if you work hard"
- "It's absolutely fine to make mistakes. We want you to make mistakes because when you see how you did it wrong, it's easier to see how to do it right and then you understand. This is what learning is all about!"
- "Everything is learning."

Pupils will:

- Be actively encouraged to take risks in their ideas, thinking and methods;
- Be motivated to learn and achieve high standards;
- Be encouraged to be creative;
- Smile and laugh;
- Engage with learning and develop a full range of learning styles;
- Become questioners and be able to develop learning through thinking effectively;
- Give and receive feedback effectively;

- Enjoy learning and coming to school;
- Discuss their learning with their parents;
- Be life-long learners;
- Behave well;
- Achieve the best they can.



The Curriculum & Assessing Learning

A school's curriculum is the sum total of all the activities and opportunities that it provides for each child. It must teach the National Curriculum which is statutory but this only covers subject based skills and range and Personal & Social Education. The (statutory) National Curriculum is only a minimum entitlement for each child and, on its own, doesn't come close to producing the rounded, multi-skilled, confident, able and high-functioning individuals who'll be the citizens of tomorrow. If we want to develop children so that they have all the skills they need to live happy, healthy and fruitful lives in our society, we need a whole lot more.

The school curriculum is made up of the values, attitudes, aptitudes, competencies and skills that have been determined by the staff, pupils, parents & governors over time. While, in theory, every school should be striving to the same ends, it's vital that these curriculum components are evolved and agreed locally rather than prescribed centrally if they are going to be adopted and fully subscribed to by all in the school community. On that basis we need to identify values, competencies & skills THEN plan how these can be taught through the context of a topic or subject.

In this policy, we have not listed all the relevant documentation or subjects as they tend to change every few years and we wanted this policy to be a statement of our values, aims and intentions. As a team we will shape and apply these core values to facilitate updates and changes to the statutory (and non-statutory) curriculum over time.

Home Learning

We want children to love learning. We want them to understand the importance of learning new skills and how to effectively lead their own learning. For that reason we believe that we should use the word 'learning' instead of 'work' and we think that sending a child home with a sheet of 'work' presents more possibilities for failure and disillusionment than benefits. Homework that confuses parents (because it hasn't been explained to them or is different from methods they learned at school themselves) does little

to build & develop home- school relationships and because the teacher is not present when the 'work' is done, it usually gets marked by the teacher, again away from the child thus feedback has minimal if any impact. Homework can turn children off learning (mostly these are the children who teachers struggle to engage in the school) and engenders largely negative attitudes when, as 'teachers', our work is focussed on accentuating the positive and benefits of learning.

Our preferred method is to communicate to children and parents a little about what has been learned during the week alongside some helpful suggestions of how parents can reinforce this learning in the real world thus deepening purpose & understanding. In addition, a few notes about next steps in learning and areas for the following week allow the children to feel a little prepared & able to contribute to class discussions & build on what they already know. This process is also a really effective way of ensuring that parents are aware of what their children are learning on a week by week basis. In addition it helps them to provide further support for their child should they wish to.

Assessment

We recognise the importance of formative, summative and diagnostic assessment and plan opportunities for all three to take place. For details of how we assess pupils' learning, please read our Assessment, Recording & Reporting Policy.

Assessment for Learning

AfL is a rather unhelpful phrase which, by definition, doesn't convey the fundamental importance of the concept. AfL mustn't be mistaken for the latest initiative from above – it's so much more fundamental to learning. AfL is simply good quality teaching and the most effective form of learning. AfL means lessons where:

- children are focussed and understand throughout the activity what they are learning;
- children understand what their finished work should look like (not because they've been told, but because they've seen, discussed & understood it);
- children are the ones who decide whether they have achieved the lesson's objective and,
- children identify and understand what they need to do to improve further.

The key to effective learning is how well the child learned and understood the lesson's skills & content. Traditionally this was a judgement made by the teacher, seen as the best qualified to issue this decision. However if we want a child to learn, it's essential that s/he is at the centre of the process, rather than just being the recipient of external feedback which often happens long after the activity has been undertaken. Traditional 'marking' of work often has little or no effect on improving learning and understanding for the child.

AfL means that, while they are still involved in the task, they make their own judgements on how well they are doing but more than this, their peers and teachers provide more regular feedback to clarify & improve understanding

AfL	Traditional Assessment of Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate • Improves child's understanding • Child at centre of feedback process • Empowers child to be the expert • Informs achievement & understanding • More effective learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delayed • Often ignored by child • Child receives feedback from teacher • Teacher is the expert • Just about measuring achievement & understanding • Less effective learning

Feedback

- Verbal and/or written feedback will focus on the lesson's main learning objective rather than constantly correcting technical inaccuracies. If there are too many comments or annotations the child may find it overwhelming which may affect their motivation and self-esteem. Teachers therefore use their professional judgement to correct errors, e.g. spellings, grammar, punctuation, calculations and factual inaccuracies. We believe it is important to emphasise the positive aspects of a child's work to maintain their motivation.
- Work is marked promptly and discussed with the child where possible.

- Children need to understand the marking criteria so they know what the teacher's expectations are.
- Children need opportunities to read their teacher's feedback in subsequent lessons and be given the opportunity to respond and improve work. Comments are written in language which is easily understood by the child. It is not always appropriate or useful to mark every piece of work in depth but it is essential that the teacher acknowledges that the work has been viewed.

Parents

Children's learning is enhanced by a positive relationship between parents and school. Parents can make a huge difference to their child's learning by COMMITTING to the home/school agreement and:

- having a positive attitude towards school and learning, supporting and working with school;
- being interested in their child's learning;
- making sure that their child has the best attendance record possible;
- making sure that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and P.E. kit;
- informing the school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's learning or behaviour at school;
- attending progress meetings and parents' evenings.

Of course, parents know a great deal about their children; they have particular insights and knowledge about their strengths, skills, interests, preferences, aspirations, anxieties and difficulties. Accordingly, the importance of meaningful communications and co-operation between the School and the pupils' parents can hardly be over stated. Many aspects of well-being directly influence learning and so these aspects are common to both good teaching and learning.



You're only 4 once...

You're only 5 once...

You're only 6 once...

You're only 7 once...

You're only 8 once...

You're only 9 once...

You're only 10 once...

You're only 11 once.

'...all about learning'

www.dell.monmouthshire.sch.uk