

Pimperne CE VC Primary School

‘Why do we need Switched On’?

In September 2017, Pimperne CE VC Primary School launched our ‘Do I Switch On To Learning?’ project because our staff truly believe that we need to not just teach our children but equip them with the values and attitudes they need to live successful and happy lives.

Rationale: Over the last few years we have seen a significant shift in the needs of our children and in some cases their families too. More and more children need support to face challenges, whether these be the learning kind, the social kind or the life kind. Children between the ages of 4 and 11 have floundered when faced with ‘no’, ‘that’s not right’, ‘try again’, ‘work this out’. We, as a staff of professionals, have noticed and so have many of our parents, that our children are not equipped well enough for today’s life – therefore, we now seek to develop both emotional resilience and learning resilience in the same quantities.

Nationally, we are aware of the staggering need for early intervention in helping children to help themselves, to rebuild well-being and support good mental health. Some of this need, has occurred here at our school. Our aim, therefore, is to build our school and our curriculum around a firm base of skills, values and qualities that we believe will last our children their whole life’s journey.

Why is it becoming harder for children to bounce back after set backs?

Research into this area states that our society thinks that young people:

Need constant protection

Shouldn’t take risks

Can’t handle responsibility

Aren’t capable thinkers

Can’t be independent

Shouldn’t have any negative experiences

Are not able to behave well socially as they believe they are the only important one

Aren’t able to achieve more than their parents

Are pigeon-holed into accepting a pre-determined future

... But research shows, quite simply, that treating young people like infants makes them behave like infants!

The premise of Pimperne Primary School’s ‘Switched On’ vision is that every child takes responsibility for themselves. They will not have things done for them or to them. They will need to take account of their actions and attitudes, their behaviours and their values. It

underpins our whole ethos. It will be modelled by our staff and in time, we hope our families.

As a whole school staff, we will commit to making every effort in supporting our children, fuelling their interests, creating doors of possibility and believing in finding opportunities for every single child to potentially earn success. We do believe every child is unique, we do believe every child should experience success and we also believe that every child needs to make the effort to want to achieve themselves. As teachers, we are supporting learners to take control of their own learning and transfer skills across subjects and across domains, between home and school.

How can our Vision work?

It is our belief that qualities can change and that we can develop our intelligence and abilities. Recently, as a staff, we have learned much about 'Growth Mindsets'. We have asked ourselves is it better to consider intelligence or learned knowledge a priority (learning it parrot fashion) as this is sure to create its own ceiling eventually. Essentially, this 'fixed mindset' is about performance – what you can show you know (great for SATs and answering questions but not for learning and life). A 'growth mindset' is the understanding that personal qualities and abilities can change. It leads people to take on challenges, persevere in the face of setbacks, and become more effective learners.

'Growth mindset' focuses on the ways in which you learn, the capacity that you show for learning regardless of your ability. For example, persistence, questioning, open to challenge, using failure (First Attempt In Learning) as a tool and try again and the building of resilience.

A 'growth mindset', although seemingly the one we would all aspire to, is not the default setting in children or adults. At Pimperne Primary, we would like to challenge this. Our aim is to instil the 'Switched On' approach into our children's mindsets, so that they are never afraid to try, never worried about failing, but set out believing in themselves, to not give up at the first sign of difficulty.

We want our children to have 'bounce-back-ability'. We want them to be able to cope with negative experiences, adversity, failure, hardship and setbacks. We want more than that too, we want them to be able to carry on, to flourish and to find self-propelled success. We see our role as one set to challenge our children, create opportunities to learn the values and attitudes they need and to support them in their learning, facilitating their choices and providing a safe environment where children can learn to fail and try again.

Our Plan - to help us reach our Vision for the development of pupils, staff and families of Pimperne CE VC Primary School.

The school generates a vision and culture of learning by;

Leading to empower learning

- The school has a vision for learning (predicated on 'learning is learnable') which is embedded in its culture, policies and recognised outcomes
- Leading the development of learning becomes everyone's concern. School leaders, teachers and students work towards becoming leaders of their own learning in a school that learns
- Leadership styles foster dialogue and exploration, empower risk taking and self-monitoring becomes an act of discovery for improvement

Creating a culture of enquiry for staff

- The school supports teachers to form and sustain formal Professional Learning Communities to share, probe and deepen the 'learning how to learn' culture and classroom practice
- Teacher learning enquiries help drive the school's development
- Reviews of learning engage all staff and students to provide valuable evaluative data on which to build future development
- Learning reviews include observations of learning in classrooms, interviews with teachers, surveys of the learning environment. They are viewed as an important collaborative vehicle for teacher development

Teachers help pupils to stretch and develop their supple learning minds by;

Creating rich learning environments in classrooms

- The learning environment is used constructively to promote positive learning behaviours and reinforce positive messages about the nature of learning

- Classroom cultures promote: speculative approaches, challenging learning, the growth of learning mindset collaborative activity and positive messages about learning

Teaching the how with the what of learning

- Teaching methodologies and learning opportunities intrigue and motivate learners, develop effective learning habits **and** enhance content acquisition
- Teachers explain the nature of learning habits, train pupils to use them, design lessons to exercise them, generate feedback on the use of learning habits and model them confidently

Using a coaching approach to learning

- Teachers use a coaching approach with pupils: they stay curious, their questioning helps to unearth and progress pupils' learning behaviours, they join in a quest of discovery, they offer commentary and re-frame learning experiences and they secure a commitment to learning
- Pupils too are trained to act as coaches to each other and thereby encourage others to go beyond what they thought they were capable of

Involving parents in building their child's zest for learning

- The school works in partnership with parents and carers to develop learning dispositions in pupils
- Parents are kept informed effectively of their child's progress in developing learning habits
- The school offers guidelines and examples of how parents can best support the development of their child's learning habits in life outside school