

Art 8: Every pupil in Sperrinview has the right to be a part of a community and to have their identity protected. (RRS team, 2015)

Art 23: All pupils in Sperrinview have the right to lead a full and decent life with dignity and independence and to play an active part in the community (RRS team 2015)

Art 28: Every pupil in Sperrinview has the right to an education which will be differentiated to meet their individual needs (RRS team 2015)

Sperrinview Special School Environment and Society Policy

Rationale

Through providing the pupils with the experience, skills and knowledge necessary for daily living we will develop an awareness and understanding of the society, culture and environment in which we live, in both a local and wider context.

Aims

Through the Programme of Study for Environment and Society we aim to:

- encourage investigation and exploration of environments and artefacts, past and present
- develop and extend awareness of the passage of time
- promote awareness of the environment
- assist pupils to talk about past and present experiences
- provide pupils with a range of sensory experiences/materials
- extend the life experiences of pupils
- stimulate the imagination of pupils
- develop listening and observational skills
- develop language and communication skills

- provide resources for the curricular needs and interests of all pupils

Organisation and Methodology

The Environment and Society is taught and reinforced within each of the classes, the school and also in a variety of settings in the wider community:

- on an individual basis
- in small group lessons (size, flexibility and composition will be determined by the class teacher)
- paired work (similar ability or less experienced pupils with more experienced pupils)
- whole class teaching
- using a thematic approach where appropriate

Classroom organisation is determined by several factors:

- The individual needs of the pupils
- The number of pupils
- The nature of the activity
- The diverse range of resources available (human and physical eg standing frames, wheelchairs, work stations etc)

The classroom team consists of a class teacher plus classroom assistant(s).

At the age of 16 students enter the School Leavers' Programme. Environment and Society is expanded to encourage students to develop an outlook on World Awareness and Biodiversity.

Development work with the Young Enterprise and Eco Friendly School schemes help provide cross curricular links.

Developmental milestones are not reached at predictable times, therefore teaching approaches must be flexible. These include:

- modelling
- sharing
- guiding
- visual approaches (for pupils within the Autistic Spectrum)

The emphasis will be placed on promoting pupils' learning through the provision of quality, concrete, active experiences across the curriculum eg multi-sensory experiences, structured play, environmental visits etc.

Teachers' expectations will ensure that all tasks will have clearly identified learning outcomes and are matched to pupils' abilities and interests.

Roles and Responsibilities

The co-ordinator for Environment and Society is Mrs Laura Grimley.

The Principal has overall responsibility for the implementation of the policy.

Teachers, when planning, will take account of pupils' needs, Programmes of Study and the NI Curriculum. These will be reflected in the Schemes of Work and Individual Education Plans.

Each teacher presents the co-ordinator and the Principal with termly topic webs and half-termly planners. These, along with discussion between the co-ordinator and teacher(s), are used to determine continuity and progression.

Parental Involvement

We recognise the importance of meaningful, regular and positive communication between parents and teachers. Parents are provided with opportunities, formally and informally, to discuss their child's progress and to become familiar with and involved in the work of the school. This happens through:

- Home/School books
- Homework (see Homework Policy)
- Telephone contact
- Parent meetings
- Parent Workshops

Staff Development

The co-ordinators will keep abreast of current developments and ensure that staff are updated through:

- School-based INSET
- EA Southern Region-based INSET
- External courses
- Educational journals eg Special Children

Also see document "The Role of the Co-ordinator"

External Support

Parents

Local community

EA Southern Region

Teachers' Centre

Developments

New resources have been purchased to help pupils understand recycling and waste management. The Wormery links with Science and

helps to maintain our status as an Eco school. We have recently expanded the use of our own school grounds as a resource and learning environment.

The Tree Trail enables pupils to access the mature trees in the grounds. Pupils are encouraged to identify trees through a series of seasonal activities. The trail is portable and it can be changed to help maintain interest and provide variety.

The Woodland Classroom is a unique development, possibly the first in a school ground - others exist in Parks. This area allows all-weather access to a natural environment where pupils are encouraged to explore and take (assessed) risks through experiential play. It is also a learning process for teachers and assistants who will need to learn to stand back and allow our pupils to experience the sense of freedom with minimum support.

The Math Trails are another development which utilise the school grounds and encourage education beyond the classroom.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Environment and Society Policy will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis through consultation with pupils, staff and parents. (Also see Assessing, Recording and Reporting Policy).

Examples of evidence include records of educational and environmental visits, Sperrinmag, photographs, video footage, class-produced books, news books, wall displays and any other relevant materials.

Review

A sub-committee of the Board of Governors will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy as part of a timetabled, on-going process.

Signed: _____ Date: _____