



PUPIL VOICE POLICY

Article 12: (Respect for the Views of the Child)

Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.



OVERALL PRINCIPLES

Whitchurch Primary School values the views of all its members. This policy outlines how learning at Whitchurch Primary School is enhanced by exploring the thoughts and feelings of pupils within the school. Pupil Voice is embedded in all aspects of school life. We provide children with opportunities to contribute to school improvement because we believe listening to learners is fundamental to their wellbeing.

Our school aspires to enhance each child's self-esteem; providing a safe and secure environment in which they feel confident to take risks and strive to reach their full potential. Through recognising and celebrating achievement, we encourage every child to view themselves as a successful individual.

We believe that engaging our children in 'learning about learning' enables them to develop a deeper understanding of themselves as learners and therefore equips them with a greater capacity to learn. Our school ethos and the positive relationships established within our school community promote the value of learning and create a desire for children to become Lifelong Learners.

Whitchurch Primary School believes:

- Every child has an entitlement to personal, social and intellectual development and must be given an opportunity to achieve his/her potential in learning.
- Every child is unique in terms of characteristics, interest, abilities, motivation and learning needs.
- Education systems should be designed to take into account these wide diversities.
- Those with exceptional learning needs and/or disabilities should have access to high quality and appropriate education.

OUR VISION

“The development of Pupil Voice will enable learners to explore and share their views of the school learning environment and their experiences as learners. This will enable the school community to ensure pupils have greater involvement in establishing an ethos of mutual contribution and increased ownership of their learning experiences, therefore engaging and motivating learners to achieve.”

(Whitchurch SLT, September 2017)

The underlying vision of child-centred schools is of an education system that helps to create a democratic, people-oriented society that respects the differences and dignity of all beings.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- **Entitlement:** Children have a right to participate and to be listened to. When developing educational policy, local and central government must ensure that consulting with children is at the heart of all multi-agency planning.
- **Empowerment:** All children need to feel that they are valued and important and can make a difference. Being consulted and allowed to make choices from an early age helps to develop emotional growth and self-awareness. Directly involving pupils in their education enhances their engagement and promotes active learning. This expands their horizons and increases the choices open to them about their future. It helps to ensure that the education they receive is relevant to their needs.
- **Equal opportunities:** Consulting effectively with pupils is challenging for staff, particularly when communication with younger children, those with significant learning difficulties and those who have become disengaged from education

for a number of reasons. In order to make this a meaningful task, attention must be paid to language so that young people understand what is available and can make informed choices. The curriculum needs to be properly differentiated and resourced to address pupil's individual learning patterns and interests. Alternative options needs to be properly resourced to allow each child, wherever possible, to fulfil his/her potential.

- **Raising Attainment:** Pupil participation can help to raise academic standards. Progress is also supported by a curriculum that meets individual needs. Careful consideration should be given to pupil's groupings to ensure that those with learning, emotional, social or behavioural difficulties do not feel marginalised or de-motivated.
- **Protection:** Promoting pupil participation is an important aid to their self-protection. Apart from parents and carers, it is staff in schools that are best placed to notice early signs of distress and symptoms of abuse. A recurrent theme of successive inquiries into abuse has been the failure to listen to children.
- **Democracy:** Involving pupils in decisions about their learning and the educational environment will help to prepare them for making important choices as adults. Giving more power to pupils can lead to more motivated and engaged children and less staff/pupil contact. Representative democracy is strengthened as young people gain greater skills in communication, listening, negotiation, and peaceful conflict resolution.
- **Respect:** Pupil Participation can only flourish in an environment where teachers and other staff have a shared sense of responsibility for supporting and learning from one another and where young people are encouraged to build collaborative relationships with their peers.

PUPIL PARTICIPATION AIMS

Whitchurch Primary School believes that we should:

- Regard the involvement of pupils in decisions about their education as essential to good practise.
- Include pupils in assessing and monitoring their own progress. This involves reducing barriers to participation, with attention to language and level of understanding. Pupils should be helped to set targets for their learning and behaviour and be provided with opportunities for on-going review and feedback.
- Foster a whole school ethos in which all pupils are valued and encouraged to express their opinions, and take decisions from an early age. Create structures and mechanisms for listening to pupils and responding to their

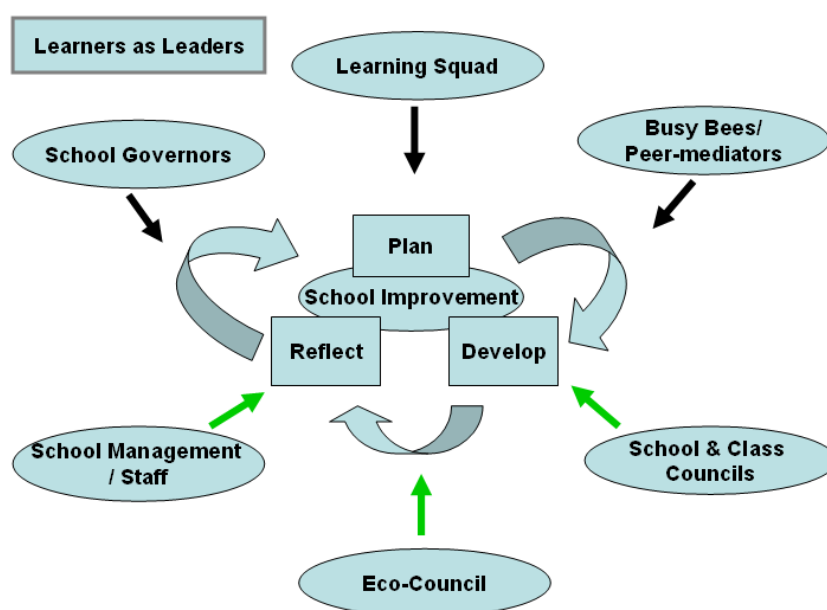
views, and monitor their effectiveness. Develop constructive alliances between pupils based upon tolerance and respect of individual differences.

- Recognise that pupil participation can only become a reality in an environment where all staff are valued and involved in decisions affecting the school community. Relationships between adults should act as the model for the desired relationships between young people.
- Provide training and professional development to assist staff in developing models of good practise that support the inclusion of children with disabilities and those with emotional and social needs, e.g. 'Circle of Friends'.
- Carefully prepare pupils when attending reviews so that they can fully participate, offering facilitation for those less able to cope with meetings. Create a positive climate where children and parents are made to feel welcome.
- Ensure that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, properly resourced with a wide range of social opportunities. Put in place systems which allow pupils to have a greater say in the content of the curriculum and how it should be taught.
- Offer guidance and support to both new and experienced staff in managing diverse classrooms and in developing individualised learning programmes.
- Act as an empathic guide and advocate for the child equipping him/her with skills to respect different opinions and diverse cultures. This includes learning how to negotiate with others, and to make compromises when appropriate.
- Work in a partnership with parents whilst, at the same time, exercising sensitivity when pupils views differ from those of their parents.
- Collaborate with other agencies to ensure a 'holistic' approach. Exercise care and sensitivity when sharing information, in order to respect confidentiality without compromising the safety of the child. Help other agencies to recognise that there are usually educational implications when children are experiencing health or social problems.

“Pupils who participate in decision-making enjoy enhanced self-esteem and motivation, gain important personal, social and organisational skills, and become familiar with group and democratic processes. At the organisational level, pupil involvement in decision-making leads to better relationships, more relevant and effective policies, and better learning. In the best scenarios, pupils and adults work together as partners to ensure that their school provides the best possible learning environment for all. Pupils have an important part to play in helping their school to improve in every aspect of school life.”

(Pupil Voice Wales Website, 2010)

The following diagram illustrates our philosophy towards pupil participation within school.



Whitchurch School Council

Our School Council provides pupils with the opportunity to express their views about school life in a forum where they will be listened to and action taken when appropriate. It will also enable them to actively participate in improving the school community. The School Council meets regularly to formulate and then implement a school action plan for improvement. Whitchurch School Council is made up of representatives from each class. An election is held in September each year with any child who would like to stand for School Council being given the opportunity to present their manifesto. Elections are then made by secret ballot. A pupil may be elected to the school council for 2 consecutive years. (After a 1 year break they may stand again if they so wish). A Chairperson and Secretary will be elected by school council representatives. During meetings a teacher representative will be present (non-voter). School Council meetings are held regularly with each meeting following a set agenda, which includes addressing issues raised at the last meeting and bringing to the meeting any new suggestions. A School Council Suggestion Box is accessible to all pupils within the school if they would like to make suggestions or raise issues. Minutes will be taken at every School Council meeting. These will be displayed on the school council notice board. School council representatives will be given the opportunity to report back from meetings and discuss issues with their classmates at regular class meetings.

Whitchurch Eco-Council

Our school Eco-Council was set up with student representatives from each class throughout the school. The school's Eco Council meets regularly to formulate and then implement a school action plan for environmental improvement. Children discuss ways of improving their school environment from litter collection to establishing ways of conserving energy in the school. They also work alongside teachers, parents and governors to implement initiatives such as our school travel plan. Whitchurch has received their second Platinum Green Flag Award for continued work in the environment. Eco-council members elect a Chairperson and

Secretary who oversee the meeting format. Minutes are completed with agendas continuing student issues. This is a valued activity as it gives students a voice in a different setting where they are able to directly affect the sustainability of the school environment.

Whitchurch Learning Squad

Our school values the views of all its members; we believe learning is enhanced by exploring the thoughts and feelings of pupils within the school. Whitchurch Learning Squad is made up of children in Years 4, 5 and 6 who would like to become involved in improving our school. In September each year Learning Squad members are recruited. Members are asked:

Do you have the skills and commitment needed to:

- investigate issues about our school?
- plan and carry out your own research projects?
- share what you find out with others in order to make changes?

Our Learning Squad meets on a weekly basis with the Deputy Head teacher. During this time they explore issues raised by pupils across the school and identify aspects of school life they would like to research and improve. The Learning Squad formulates and then implements a school action plan for improvement.

Pupils are encouraged to become independent thinkers who ask questions, carry out research methods, analyse and share their findings with a number of audiences, including: other pupils, teaching and support staff, PTA, Head teacher and L.A.

Schools. Members of the Learning Squad are encouraged to consider the impact of their research projects and evaluate the improvements that have been made.

Whitchurch Peer Mediators

Peer Mediation is a process in which two pupils who have been trained in mediation skills encourage students who are in conflict to find ways of solving the problem they face or to explore new ways of looking at the situation. Whitchurch Busy Bees are trained peer mediators. At the beginning of Year 5 children are given the opportunity to apply if they would like to undergo peer mediation training. They are asked to complete an application form and to give a reference from member of staff, stating why they would make a good Peer Mediator. These applications are then approved by Whitchurch's School Council. Once qualified, the peer mediators are available on the yard at lunchtimes to guide other pupils through a structured mediation process with the aim of helping those involved to find their own solutions to the conflict.

Pupils will be able to:

- Understand and resolve conflict more constructively without intervention from staff.
- Take ownership of problems.
- Develop skills to enhance their social, emotional and mental well-being.
- Transfer these skills outside school and later on in life.
- Be more accepting of people's differences.
- Show empathy to their peers.
- See other people's points of view.
- Learn to respect and value themselves and others.
- Recognise the effects of their actions on others.

The training links in with PSE and ESDGC education. It fosters a healthy school environment which will help to reduce absenteeism and bullying. The training

promotes positive life skills such as: speaking and listening, critical thinking, negotiation, teamwork, respect and tolerance.

Criw Cymraeg

Two children from each class are elected from KS2 to form our Criw Cymraeg to promote the use of the Welsh Language in our school. Pupils can:

- come up with ways to promote the language.
- help choose a “cwestiwn cymraeg” for our web site.
- run playground games in Welsh.
- reward the use of Cymraeg being spoken through Tocyn Iaith.
- report back in assembly on Tocyn Iaith.

WHITCHURCH PUPIL VOICE & WELLBEING FRAMEWORK

Our Pupil Voice & Wellbeing Framework was developed primarily to make clear links between pupil voice opportunities within school and their direct relation to pupils' wellbeing. Based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, our Pupil Voice & Wellbeing Framework illustrates what Pupil Voice looks like within our school and HOW pupil voice activities have been built into all aspects of school life. In this framework Pupil Voice has been organised under three main headings: The Learning Environment – Feeling Safe and Comfortable

- Building Collaborative Relationships – Making a Positive Contribution
- Developing Children's Capacity to Learn – Learning about Learning

Our Aspirations for the framework:

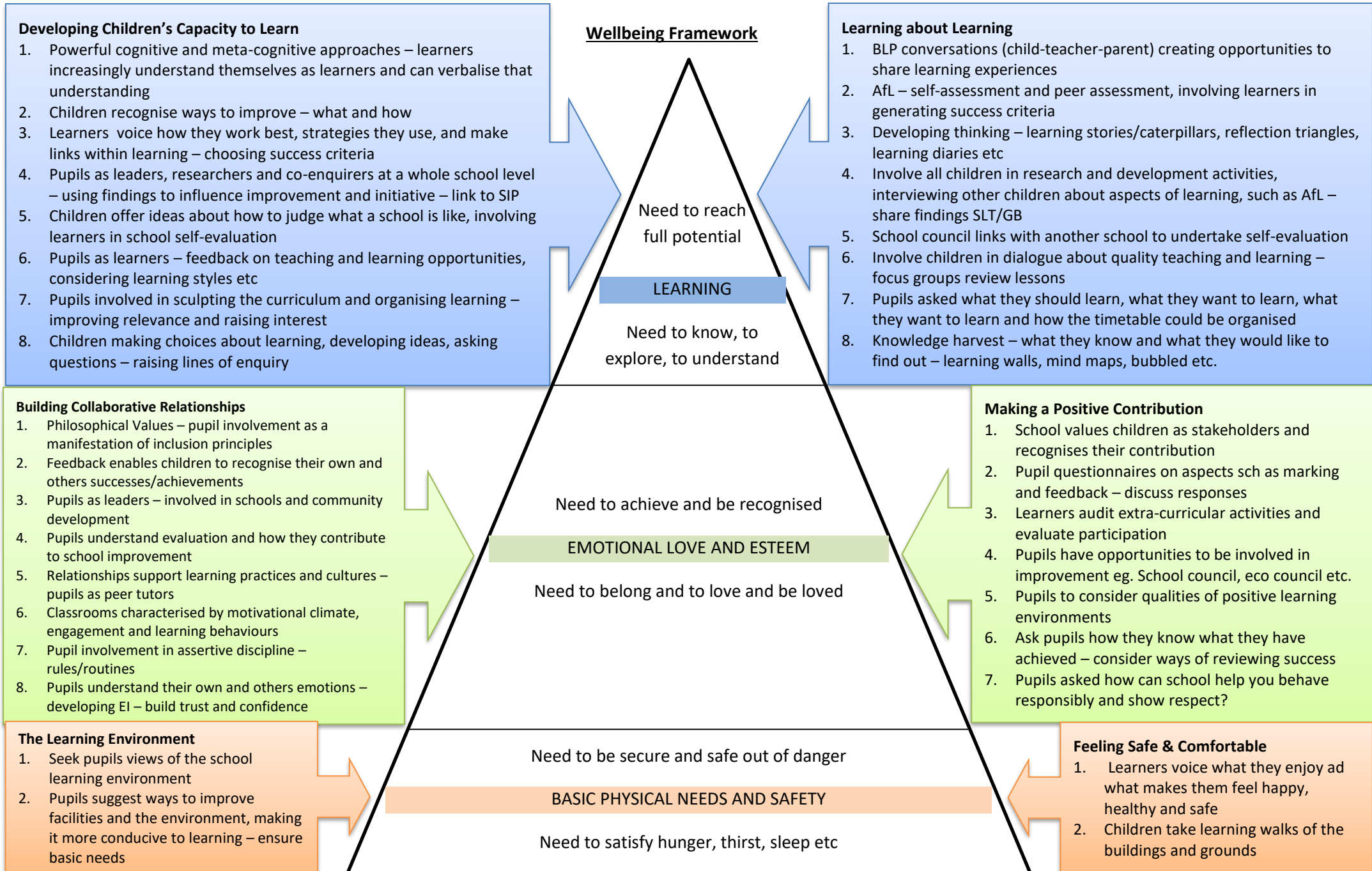
- Encourage independent learning
- Improve achievement
- Develop skills and confidence for active participation
- Improve student/teacher relationships and behaviour
- Encourage sense of belonging and increase self-esteem
- Develop links with the community and increase school profile
- Recognise wide range of achievement and promote inclusion
- Improve school democracy
- Deliver the PSE/ESDGC curriculum
- Develop enterprise skills

The framework can be seen on the following page.

What it can look like?

Whitchurch Primary School

How it can be achieved?



OUR CURRICULUM

Involving Parents - When beginning anew context for learning, a curriculum letter is made available to parents, sharing forthcoming learning opportunities. This letter encourages opportunity for children to discuss with their parent what they would like to learn. The children's responses are recorded on a Thinking Map and displayed in the classroom so they can be referred to throughout the project.

Knowledge Harvest - At the beginning of each project the children should experience an Entry Point, followed by a Knowledge Harvest. The Knowledge Harvest should be used as an opportunity to elicit the children's existing skills, knowledge and understanding. Approaches such as: Thinking Maps, KWL grids, thought bubbles, etc, should be used to record what the children know and what they want to learn. Choices about HOW they want to learn should also be considered. This activity will usually be recorded in the children's project books or in some cases a class book. Ideas and questions generated from the Knowledge Harvest should be added to the class Learning Wall of questions or to ongoing project displays.

Informing Planning - Short Term Planning: includes pupil voice opportunities based on the children's initial and on-going interests/suggestions. Alongside influencing curriculum content, pupil voice opportunities may also include children choosing HOW to learn and WHO to learn with.

'Flexibility and choice need to be encouraged as part of the personalisation of the curriculum at all phases, as they promote motivation.'

(MAURICE SMITH, HMCI)

Evaluating Learning - Throughout a project and at the end of a project, children are given opportunities to evaluate their learning and reflect on the questions they raised at the beginning of the project. Questions and ideas may be added at various points during a project as learning takes place. Children should use AfL strategies, Thinking Skills, Habits of Mind, etc, to reflect on their learning (meta-cognition). Opportunities for children to evaluate their learning should be planned for and evident within their project books/class books.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Pupil Voice is embedded in all aspects of our school life. We provide children with opportunities to contribute to school improvement because we believe pupil participation is fundamental to children's wellbeing and development as successful individuals and to the success of our school. Through pupil participation we encourage all pupils to think about their rights and responsibilities and those of others.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people a comprehensive set of rights. It sets out in detail what every child needs to have a safe, happy and fulfilled childhood regardless of their sex, religion, social origin, and where and to whom they were born. The Convention gives children and young people over 40 substantive rights, including the right to:

- special protection measures and assistance
- access to services such as education and healthcare
- develop their personalities, abilities and talents to the fullest potential
- grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding

- be informed about and participate in achieving their rights in an accessible and active manner.

At Whitchurch Primary School we are committed to the UNCRC and to its implementation. We aim to ensure that pupils are aware of their rights as stated in the UNCRC. We encourage the children to recognise and value their own rights and the rights of others. We believe our pupils are treated fairly and with respect; we strive to support children in overcoming challenges and give them the confidence to reach their full potential, in a safe and secure environment.

The Welsh Assembly Government's approach to children and young people's participation is based on the principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The National Children and Young People's Participation Standards for Wales have been developed to improve the process of children and young people's participation in decision-making. The Participation Standards measure the 'quality' of the process of children and young people's participation against key agreed indicators. At Whitchurch Primary School we use the National Participation Standards as a framework against which to self-evaluate pupil participation in our school.

HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE BECOME BETTER LEARNERS

Through "Habits of Mind" children are given opportunities to learn about their learning.

The 16 Habits of Mind are the characteristics found in independent, self directing learners. They offer a framework for learners of all ages to decide how they can behave intelligently when facing many choices, when stuck, when planning a complex task, when working collaboratively or when needing to tackle a new challenge. They provide a framework or compass for students to refer to when needing to direct the next steps in their learning. They remove dependency on the teacher and overtime become internalised, habituated approaches to taking the lead in one's own learning even when the way forward is not clear or is in unfamiliar territory.

"Habits of Mind are the characteristics of what intelligent people do when they are confronted with problems, the resolutions of which are not immediately apparent." (Prof Art Costa)

A.L.N.

For learners working significantly below the expected levels at either FP or KS2, we use the needs of the learner as a starting point and adapt the curriculum accordingly. Sufficient flexibility exists within the curriculum to meet the needs of learners and promote inclusion. For more-able and talented learners working at higher levels, we provide greater challenge by using material in ways that extend breadth and depth of study and opportunities for independent learning. The level of demand is also increased through the development and application of literacy, numeracy, thinking, and ICT across the curriculum.

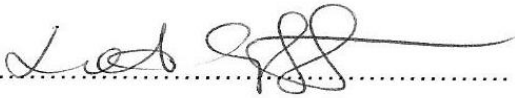
EQUALITY STATEMENT

OUR VISION FOR EQUALITY AND COMMUNITY COHESION

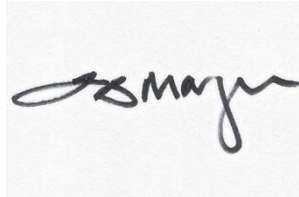
We seek to remove barriers to learning with imaginative curriculum delivery that will use the best of innovative educational practice and enterprise to transform learning and teaching. We seek to provide an inspirational learning environment based on a personalised style of learning. Learning is at our core and we believe it will broaden horizons, raise aspirations and enhance students' self-confidence as successful learners, both now and in the future. Students will have every opportunity to achieve standards that match their potential and to gain successes as effective lifelong learners. We are committed to equality of opportunity and access for all our learners and to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equalities Act 2010. We further recognise the 9 protected characteristics as

detailed in the Act. We will advance equality of opportunity between all learners and foster good relationships between all our learners and our stakeholders.

Signatures:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ann Griffin', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Ann Griffin – Headteacher
February 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Morgan', written on a light grey rectangular background.

Jonathan Morgan – Chair of Governing Body
February 2022

Work Together – Play Together – Succeed Together
Gweithio, chwarae a llwyddo gyda'n gilydd