

CHILD-LED LEARNING

IN SEPTEMBER WE CHANGED THE WAY WE TEACH MATHS, AND WE ARE ALSO BEGINNING TO SEE THE APPROACH WORKING SUCCESSFULLY IN OTHER AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM. THIS SHEET EXPLAINS MORE ABOUT CHILD-LED LEARNING

WHAT IS IT?

Personalised teaching that focuses on each child's learning and gives children the opportunity to select tasks that offer appropriate challenge for them.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Teachers pitch lessons based on what they know children are able to do, just like with previous approaches within school. But now, rather than giving work to children in ability groups, children are given choice over their level of challenge.

There are usually two or three levels of challenge, called layers. Children decide which layer they'd like to start with, then look at the task or the questions within that layer. If they start with Layer 1 and think it looks too easy, they'll give the Layer 2 questions a try. Likewise, if they start with Layer 2 and think the questions are too difficult, they'll go back to the Layer 1 questions. If a child finds Layer 1 too tricky, the teacher identifies this and works with the child to help them to access their learning. Once a child is no longer feeling challenged within a layer, or completes the task, they move on to the next layer.

HOW DO TEACHERS KEEP TRACK OF PROGRESS?

When a lesson starts, teachers and support staff see very quickly which children can/can't do something, and they keep an eye on this throughout the session, guiding children where appropriate to help them make the best progress possible.

WON'T CHILDREN JUST DO THE EASY STUFF?

Experience tells us that children like a challenge! Plus, teachers are actively involved in the children's level of challenge and regularly prompt them to choose a certain layer – or, based on their assessment, can ask children to start at a lower layer or to work with them. Children still work towards individual targets so there is no scope for sitting back and coasting.

HOW DO WE KNOW IT'S WORKING?

The senior leadership team (SLT) regularly observe lessons to ensure children are always appropriately challenged.

Teachers also regularly meet the SLT to discuss children's progress. As we are a small school, staff all know the children very well so can easily spot if a child isn't progressing as expected.

WHY ARE WE DOING IT?

This way of working doesn't label children or pigeonhole them into streamed groups, which improves confidence and self-esteem, minimises feelings of inadequacy and removes competition about streams. Layers are constantly changing. One day, Layer 3 might be achievable, the next day, Layer 1 may be enough of a challenge.

This constant change means children don't feel they've failed if they work at a different layer in different lessons. It also prepares children well for secondary school because they self-assess, and have ownership of their learning and increased self-awareness – which will be expected of them in Year 7.

Finally, because children have to master a concept before moving on, they should have no gaps in their knowledge when they leave us at the end of Year 6, reducing the need for extra help/tutoring.

AND WHEN CHILDREN HAVE COMPLETED ALL THE LAYERS...?

In some classes children can select problems from a 'challenge box' to really embed the concept covered. Other classes provide challenges in other ways. Either way, there is always another challenge for them to get their teeth into!

AND FINALLY...

Nonsuch is an outstanding school and it's in our nature to try to improve further. We believe child-led learning will do just that. After all, it's not just about getting results – it's about the children too.