



'I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand' Confucius.

1. Rationale

- 1.1 Learning is life-long.
- 1.2 Learning is not linear and does not necessarily follow an upward trajectory.
- 1.3 Learning is developmental. Different children's knowledge, understanding and skills will develop at different speeds and in different ways.
- 1.4 Intelligence is understood as 'the capacity to act (in certain ways)'. It is not a fixed attribute.
- 1.5 Our knowledge and understanding is constantly growing and changing.
- 1.6 Learning in all areas of activity develops through a process of increasingly accurate approximations.
- 1.7 Social, emotional, physical and spiritual learning –as well as academic and intellectual – are all important.
- 1.8 Children are encouraged to work together to solve problems and to view learning as interdisciplinary.
- 1.9 Park School is a Human Scale Education school – see Appendix 2 and the website for further explanation of this, together with information about Holistic education and our democratic processes.

2. Guidelines

- 2.1 Children are encouraged to thoughtfully question their own and other's viewpoints.
- 2.2 'Getting things wrong' is viewed as a creative process.
- 2.3 Independent learning and action are encouraged from the beginning.
- 2.4 A range of teaching approaches will be used depending on the relationship between the children, the teacher and the learning, which are assessed when appropriate.
- 2.5 Children are given time, personal and physical space, and opportunity to pursue learning and encouraged to develop their own learning skills (see Appendix 1). The general approach to teaching is therefore practical, negotiated, investigative, collaborative and often open ended.
- 2.6 Children are encouraged to pursue their own interests within the framework of the curriculum and the need to equip them for secondary education.
- 2.7 Children are supported to always take pride in both the process and outcome of their work and encouraged to share it with others.
- 2.9 Learning is viewed as an exciting challenge to be explored – not a prescribed set of data to be handed down.
- 2.10 Learning often occurs through both implicit and explicit means – including social and emotional learning.
- 2.11 Children should be as well prepared as possible for the secondary school of their parents' choice. As learning is seen as developmental, children will be at their own stage whenever they leave the school. Parents should be aware that as time is spent developing the whole child, a more rounded individual leaves Park School.
- 2.12 Learning should be multi-sensory, to take into account different learning styles (see Appendix 2).

APPENDIX 1
LEARNING SKILLS

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| <p>CRITICAL THINKING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse Argue Classifying Compare and contrast Defining Describing Evaluating Explaining Problem solving Cause & effect | <p>CREATIVE THINKING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm Creating Designing Entertaining Imagining Innovating Overturning Problem solving Questioning |
| <p>COMMUNICATING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse situation Choose a medium Evaluate managers Follow conventions Listening actively Reading Speaking Turn taking Technology Writing | <p>COLLABORATING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocating resources Brainstorming Decision making Delegating Evaluating Goal setting Leading Managing time Resolving conflicts Team building |

APPENDIX 2:

LEARNING STYLES

| Auditory Learners | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| What you need to know: | Creative things you like to do: | The best sort of teacher for you... | Danger signs for you: | Increase your learning power: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you usually trust what you hear • you can be a bit of a chatterbox • you find it easier to take verbal instructions • you enjoy classroom discussions • auditory learners often have a good way with words • you don't mind background noise • 32% of learners are strongly auditory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell jokes • Tell stories • Create music • Debate • Sing • Discuss | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaches through role play • allows classroom discussion • encourages group work • respects your need to ask questions • reads passages aloud • makes you recite things to increase your recall • tells you lots of interesting facts related to what you're learning • does not need absolute silence in the classroom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no opportunity to discuss things • being scared to ask questions • working continuously on your own • not reading books or instructions before you start something new | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repeat everything • take part in class discussion • ask questions • tape information and listen to it • have background music on while you study • discuss homework and projects with friend • make up songs, rhymes and raps to help you remember things • get someone to ask you questions if you are studying for a test |
| Kinaesthetic Learners | | | | |
| What you need to know: | Creative things you like to do: | The best sort of teacher for you... | Danger signs for you: | Increase your learning power: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you like to feel or touch things • you have a good long-term memory • you tend to talk at a slower pace • learning for you has got to be active • you tend to jump right in and try a task on your own. Making mistakes is part of the learning process for you • clothes need to be warm and comfortable • 34% of learners are strongly kinaesthetic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modelling • Drama • Making things • Dance • Sports • Gardening | <p>One who.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourages good note-taking • allows regular, short breaks every 15-20 minutes, so you can move around without disturbing others • uses Post-Its and flash cards for noting and sorting ideas • encourages learning by doing, not just sitting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being asked to sit still for too long • reciting information in order to learn • feeling uncomfortable in your surroundings • a teacher who talks too quickly • not getting an opportunity to become physically involved in what you're doing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be comfortable when you work • break up your study time and move around • volunteer for demonstrations, role-play and learning activities • develop good note-taking skills • write out the word to know if it feels right, when working on spellings • draw images, numbers and diagrams on paper that are connected with the learning |

| Visual Learners | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| What you need to know: | Creative things you like to do: | The best sort of teacher for you... | Danger signs for you: | Increase your learning power: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you usually remember faces, but maybe not names • you will recognise places, but maybe not names of towns or streets • you may talk quickly • making pictures in your head is easy for you (imagining or visualising) • you prefer your clothes to be colourful, fashionable and coordinated • 29% of learners are strongly visual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doodle • draw • paint • write • trace • design • take photos | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses pictures • draws on the board • uses a video • asks you to visualise (picture) a scene, or successful outcome to a lesson • gives you time to sketch out ideas • allows time for note-taking • encourages use of coloured pens • likes to have a colourful classroom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sitting near a window - you may be distracted • being accused of daydreaming • teachers who teach mostly by talking • teachers and others who speak more slowly than you • studying with the radio or TV on | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write down information • use Post-Its • use coloured pens, highlighters and unlined paper • use spider charts or mind maps • watch a video or demonstration • use a computer • make mental movies of important facts or visualise spelling in your heads • use drawings and visual aids |

Human Scale Education

Human-Scale is an approach to understanding our world that uses the human as a unit of scale. How many humans make the ideal community, a functioning country or an ideal school? In terms of use for institutions or design, it deals with the belief that there is a proper scale that defines its limits by the well-being of both the person and the planet and the ability of the person to seek wholeness. It can be seen today in the call for architecture, economics, politics and schools that are created as if people matter. It is an organisational principle that understands there is a balanced relationship between the needs and wants of the personal and the communal. Therefore community institutions at a human scale should be created with the person at their centre.

At Park School, we have three fundamental questions that we ask of the children; are you looking after yourself, are you looking after others and are you looking after your environment? If they are doing these things then we often don't need too many other rules. These three principles address the inter relationship between the personal and the communal.

We can allow children to make wise decisions as to how best be in their school within the parameters set by these guidelines. And it is because we are a school at a human scale that it is possible to put children first and allow them this level of freedom and trust.

If the wellbeing of children does come first then we have always felt that we need to be at a size that facilitates the best of the human scale philosophy. Although there has never been an accepted magic number that creates the ideal size for a teaching community, many educators agree that our present Primary Schools are far too big. At Park School, we have the privilege to investigate the potential of truly small schools and attempt to keep our numbers below seventy five across the three to eleven age range. Still large enough for healthy social groups but small enough to ensure every child's talents can be developed and ensure that all, adult and child can be heard and contribute to the functioning of the school.

How will you see the human scale manifested in the day to day running of the school? Children communicate well and learn to argue and resolve their disputes with kindness. They talk about the way they want things to be, talk to adults as friends and talk to all ages as if they are equals. They talk a lot. Adults are able to teach to each child's strength and help them face the challenge of their weaknesses without comparison to others and to national norms. The classrooms are relaxed and informal and you are as likely to see children playing with Lego as sitting in front of a Smart board. They play a lot; they can run around bare-footed: they laugh and smile often. And guess what? They learn a lot and sometimes complain that it is the end of the day!

Human Scale can mean small, but more than anything it means respect. Respect for children as humans with needs as important as adults and the right that their school environment and experience should be tailored to them and not them tailored to an educational outcome. Teachers are also respected in this process, their creativity allowed free rein and their needs as professionals understood. A school co-managed by all for the benefit of all. An educational village with children in mind.

Holistic education

Park School offers a rich and innovative education which stimulates and nurtures the whole child – academically, emotionally, physically, spiritually and socially – by positioning them central to their learning. In order to support this we have a thematic approach to planning the curriculum. We have a rolling programme of topics based on our science scheme of work in the main school, which also features elements from various world religions woven in. The Early Years have a rolling programme of topics based on the seasons and use of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

Alongside these themes the children have two other ways that we help them to learn. There are 'stand alone' lessons in mathematics and literacy. These are used when the themes do not lend themselves to a natural connection in these subjects. The final but equally important way is the child's 'own learning time', when the child is encouraged to follow their own interests outside the written curriculum, both in and outside lesson times, supported by their teachers where possible e.g. sewing, mathematics, cycling, drama etc. This encourages independence and focus in learning: children learn best what they most want to know.

Park School's views on holistic learning means that we do not always separate subject areas and therefore we do not allocate percentages of curriculum time for each one. There are so many overlaps because this is how we believe children naturally learn, rather than by pigeon-holed, discrete subjects.

However, Park School has written policy document for Mathematics, Literacy and Environmental Studies, and schemes of work in these. The creative arts, technology, physical activities, knowledge and understanding of geography and history, emotional intelligence and a modern foreign language are woven into these schemes by the

class teachers. Teachers use their knowledge of the individual children and the schemes of work to write a termly plan. They plan their specific curriculum around the needs of their particular class with regard to both short and longer term planning, but this is within the overall curriculum framework. This also allows for children – and parents by invitation – to make a contribution to deepen the class' work.

In addition to the class teachers and assistants, parents offer help where appropriate and expert members of the local community (e.g. from Schumacher College) are encouraged to enrich the curriculum.

Within holistic education is an understanding of developmental learning. Our view is that a child's social, emotional, academic and physical development along these integrated domains will be personal and uneven, not linear and age-related. The teaching and assessment emphasis is placed upon the observation of children. This is done both formally and informally through detailed knowledge of the learning needs of each child (see our Assessment Policy), to construct a picture of the whole child. This in turn encourages the child to become a social, active, confident and independent learner. These are lifelong learning values which the child continues on their own and support their transition to a range of secondary schools aged 11 years.

Democratic processes

Communication is central to learning and there are many opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. The school encourages children to develop their own voice and identity in the context of responsibility within the whole school community. This happens on a daily basis by the way children and adults all interact together. However, there is a structure that supports this. Each class in the main school has class meetings to discuss issues important to children and staff. These can then be raised at the weekly school meeting to be discussed further should the need arise.

The weekly school meeting is a time when the children in the main school, and the older Early Years children, meet together. An agenda is drawn up by the staff and children to discuss positive and negative issues within the school. The meeting is a place to encourage the child's voice and the responsibility each person has to make the school work well. Issues are discussed with a 'no names' policy (except for praise time), which encourages a 'no blame' atmosphere in the school, and the idea that we can all make mistakes and learn from them, i.e. what matters is not who is doing a negative behaviour but the reason why we don't want the negative behaviour to happen. Staff rotate chairing the meeting, with a child leading a point during the meeting if they want to.