

Inquiry Learning Policy

Rationale

Inquiry-based learning is a student centred or active learning approach that takes, as its starting point, the natural process of inquiry, building on this to develop information processing and problem-solving skills. The focus is on 'how we know' rather than 'what we know', with students actively involved in the construction of their own knowledge through active involvement. There is a shift away from a content driven approach towards one that provides children with the skills and resources to discover knowledge for themselves. Children are posed a question and given the skills and resources to explore, investigate and search for answers. They plan and carry out their research, come to some conclusions and decide how they could make change happen. They convert information and data into useful knowledge. Ultimately, the importance of inquiry learning is that students become life long learners and learn how to continue learning.

Aims

The aims of an Inquiry Learning Approach are to:

- Nurture and develop the students' natural inquiring mind, helping them to become life long learners who continue to learn how to learn.
- Develop the students' ability to pose questions and plan, research, investigate and search for answers and solutions.
- Develop the skills needed to convert information and answers into useful knowledge that can be applied to new situations and prompt further learning.
- Provide students with different ways of viewing the world, communicating about it and successfully coping with the questions and issues of daily living.
- Develop an understanding that all knowledge changes over time as people challenge, shape and contribute to it.
- Demonstrate that there are often multiple perspectives for looking at, analysing and understanding things.
- Provide learning opportunities that are more relevant as concepts are learned in context and relate to existing knowledge and experiences.
- Develop thinking processes and strategies as sequentially developed in the Thinking Processes Domain of the Victorian Curriculum.
- Provide rich learning opportunities that are relevant to the children and cross over all domains eg. English, Mathematics, Civics and Citizenship, Science, Health, Humanities, ICT, Creativity Design Technology and Art.
- Encourage students to become independent, resourceful and responsible learners.

Implementation

Using Victorian Curriculum the teachers at Wilandra Rise Primary School will develop a Whole School Curriculum Plan. This plan incorporates Science, Health, Civics and Citizenship, Humanities, the Arts, ICT and Technology into four main learning areas or throughlines.

1. My Relationship with Others,
2. My Place in Time,
3. My Place in Space,
4. My Impact on the World

- Inquiry based learning is strongly linked with the development of both Literacy and Numeracy skills. Literacy and Numeracy skills are developed through units of inquiry but are also the tools that allow children to conduct meaningful inquiry. Classroom programs aimed at developing the Literacy and Numeracy levels of children are aimed at increasingly enabling children to become independent learners through improving their ability to question, inquire, investigate, analyse and present. At the same time, units of inquiry allow the children to utilise those skills in a meaningful and relevant context.
- Inquiry Units will be developed under the through lines for levels 2 to 4 (Years 1 – 6). Units will be planned for odd and even years, allowing for a 2-year cycle.
- The Inquiry Units that will be set out in the Whole School Curriculum Plan will be designed using the appropriate standards as set out in the Victorian Curriculum documents. Inquiry units will focus on a particular domain, eg. Humanities, Civics and Citizenship, but will be relevant to the children and rich in nature, often crossing several domains.
- Inquiry Units will begin with an 'essential question, related to the Victorian curriculum focus. Children then form their own questions and plan their inquiry or investigation. The teacher facilitates the learning process by guiding children through the process of searching for answers, drawing conclusions and applying this knowledge to new situations. Teachers assist children with resources, information, direction and the understanding of new knowledge.
- The process of inquiry will be built into lessons, sequences of lessons and units of work.
- There will be opportunity for children to work individually and cooperatively with others.
- Units of work will cater for students with a range of abilities, interests, skills and motivations.
- Children will be given opportunities to reflect on their learning and use peer and self-assessment strategies to monitor their progress.
- The Leadership Team will oversee the implementation of Inquiry Learning throughout the school. Responsibilities include program budget and evaluation along with the purchase, maintenance and storage of reference material and equipment.
- Teachers will be encouraged to access Professional Learning related to the Inquiry Learning Approach. Professional Learning will be linked to whole school priorities and individual teacher's needs, involving internal (sharing of good practice) and external (conferences, in-services, visits to

other schools). A time will be set each term for teachers to share their inquiry units with the whole staff, allowing for a greater understanding of what is being covered throughout the school.

- Students will be assessed against the Victorian Curriculum
- Rich assessment tasks will be designed to assess across several domains.

Evaluation

To be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review process.