INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY
WOOD FARM PRIMARY SCHOOL, HEADINGTON, OXFORD.

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COMPUTERS

The value of the computer in the classroom should not be underestimated. The computer is an aid to learning, an interactive tool that can be used to facilitate classroom management, helping to encourage academic ability at all levels. "Microelectronic technology is going to have a large effect on the society we live in. From this it seems it would be apparent that the introduction of aspects of computer literacy from an early age becomes desirable to the children in our care" (Mullan).

SKILLS

Skills such as: group participation, taking turns, responding to suggestions and giving them, discussion, vocabulary extension, reading, writing, referencing, recording and expressing ideas can all be extended and developed through the use of the computer and programs irrespective of subject content.

Scientific and mathematical skills such as problem solving, observing, estimating, hypothesising, questioning, predicting, classifying, data handling and processing can also be developed through the use of the computer.

AIMS

As a staff we believe that the aims for using computers in school should be:

1. To provide an opportunity for children to become familiar with and confident in using information technology.

2. To enable children to have a growing awareness and understanding of the capabilities of information technology.

3. To give all the children a chance to use the computer effectively and to increase accessibility by all children.

4. To guide towards more effective use of the computer through staff guidelines for program use.

5. To dispel any negative attitudes in children, staff or parents towards information technology and to encourage such attitudes as:

    Computers are fun.
    Computers are easy to use and are a useful tool / aid to learning.
    Computers are rewarding.
    Computers are stimulating.
    Computers are accessible to all, regardless of gender, race or age.

6. To use the computer for a variety of purposes such as; writing, encouraging logical and mathematical thinking, designing, developing and exploring real or imaginary situations.

7. Through the above, to link the use of the computer with other core and foundation subjects and not to use it in isolation.

8. To plan for the use of the computer and not to use it to replace practical, concrete experiences.

As a school, we aim to encourage within all our pupils, a growing awareness and understanding of the applications and use of information technology. This will be done through the following areas as outlined by the National Curriculum for Information Technology:

a. Developing ideas and communicating information in a variety of forms, such as text, number, pictures and sound.

b. The ability to use information to gather, store, organise, retrieve, modify and present information.

c. The ability to use I.T. to model real or imaginary situations and to explore and develop such models.

d. The ability to use I.T. to measure physical quantities and control movement and other effects.

e. The ability to make informed judgements about applications of I.T.

We aim that the above will form an essential part of the whole curriculum through integration with other core and foundation subjects in order that ‘pupils should be able to use I.T. appropriately and effectively to communicate and handle information for a variety of purposes and to design, develop, explore and evaluate appropriate models of real or imaginary situations’ (NCC).

We see that the following main programs can be used to fulfil this:

ARROW / ROAMER: Control.
BRANCH / CLIPBOARD: Data handling.
WRITE ON / TRAY / ROCKET / PAINT SPA: Communication.
HAZARD & RESCUE / SLOT DIAMONDS: Modelling.
PLUS: EXTRAS SMILE, COMPOSE.
C.D. R.O.M.S.
CONCEPT KEYBOARD.

GUIDELINES TO GOOD PRACTICE WHEN USING THE COMPUTER

a. As with all electrical appliances children should not remove plugs or connections and should always have clean dry hands when working with the equipment.

b. Children need to know that the computer and software, though tough, are not indestructible and need to be handled with care and respect.

c. The computer should never be switched off with the disk still in the disk drive. This damages the magnetic field and can make the program unusable.

d. Children should be encouraged to respect the work of others and not touch any part of the computer while others are using it, or while work is on the screen.

e. Children should learn how to save and recall their work to ensure it is not inadvertently lost during breaks in the day.

f. At the end of a session, if the machine is to be switched off, with NIMBUS, press CTRL, ALT and DEL simultaneously to return to the welcome screen before removing the disk. Closing procedure for Windows computers should be adhered to.

PLANNING

To gain maximum benefit from a program, advanced planning and preparation are advised. Familiarising yourself with the program booklet will help. The organisation of the class will be dependent on the aims of the teacher for any one particular situation, taking into account the different abilities and stages of development of the children.

Introducing a new program may mean having the whole class seated around the computer, or small groups at a time. No one way is always right.

USE OF THE COMPUTER ROOM

The computer room will be timetabled. It will be used to teach I.T. skills within the other curriculum areas.

WHOLE CLASS TIMES

The lesson will follow a similar pattern to the Literacy Hour with a whole class time followed by group work. Children may do follow up work on the computers or at the central tables. It is not necessary for all the children to work at the computer every time.

The room can also be used by small groups of children working with a Learning Support Assistant or other adult.

ATTITUDES

A high proportion of work using technology will be using shared resources. We aim to foster group work, sharing and collaborative support between peers. Caring and respect for equipment and resources will be an integral part of the curriculum.

MANAGEMENT

There is a designated Information Communication Technology (I.C.T.) co-ordinator to oversee the planning within the school. The co-ordinator is responsible for informing the rest of the staff about new developments and where appropriate for organising (and providing) appropriate training. The I.C.T. co-ordinator is not a technician but will advise colleagues on managing equipment, software and booklets in the classrooms. A central resource area will be maintained and reviewed annually along with other resources for I.C.T.

The co-ordinator will monitor the curriculum and report to the Headteacher annually on progress against the development plan.

The co-ordinator will attend Partnership meetings and participate in the developing the Partnership plan and keeping staff informed of developments.

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

Using I.T. with children with special educational needs can:

- address children's individual needs.
- support skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.
- develop individual children's I.T. capability.
- increase access to the curriculum.

A variety of activities are presented according to children's needs to enhance language skills.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Planning will promote equal opportunities for computer usage and fairness of distribution of I.T. resources.

Classroom practise will consider role models. Positive images of both girl and boy use will be promoted, including the use of pupils of both sex as mentors to other younger groups.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment of I.T. takes place during other subjects, however clear learning objectives support the focus of accessed activities. Pupil achievement is recorded in the class I.T. record. Individual pupil records, with evidence, are kept in the pupil file. This forms the basis of the report to parents.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

All equipment is checked annually under the Electricity at Work Regulation 1989.

The Health and Safety at Work Act (1 January 1993), European Directive deals with requirements for computer positioning and quality of screen. This directive is followed for all administration staff. Whist this legislation only applies to people at work we seek to provide conditions for all children which meet these requirements.

SECURITY

Each computer is security marked.

The school has an alarm system installed throughout.

Each computer system has individual security against access to the management system. The files and network system are backed up regularly.

MAINTENANCE

Any faults with the computers should be reported to the I.T. co-ordinator.

RATIO

The school has a pupil to computer ratio 1:8 which is very good.

INSET

At least one staff meeting each term will be arranged for staff to work on I.T. This will include:

- introduction of software.
- general training for I.T.
- whole school support in planning for I.T.
- sharing ideas.
- sharing children's work.
- moderation of children's work.
- development of I.T. portfolio.

Staff attend courses through the County O.Q.S.A. support system from the I.T. Adviser and Advisory team. Opportunities for training are offered wherever possible, to meet whole school needs as well as those of individual teachers.

OTHER INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROVISION

Resources

- Calculators
- Electronic keyboard
- Radio / tape recorders / headphones
- C.D. player
- Television / video
- 2 Roamers