

Glenfield Primary School Curriculum

Student Inquiry

Purpose:

- To motivate students to learn and create interest and curiosity in a subject or problem that needs to be solved.
- To strengthen 'whole of life' transferable skills I, including critical thinking, planning, self management, organisation and communication.
- To enable students to learn how to effectively and safely locate, access, evaluate, use and contribute to an ever-evolving global information bank.
- To provide an approach to learning that encourages integrative, connective thinking.
- To develop student agency. Through quality questioning and involving students in actively gathering and analysing information. The student develops a sense of control over and responsibility for themselves as a learner.
- To involve students in locating, gathering and critiquing information using an increasing number of digital tools, therefore sharpening digital literacy competence.
- To encompass essential learning areas of social sciences, science, technology, the arts and health.

Teachers:

- Ensure that planning is responsive and recursive. There is a strong connection between the plans that teachers make and the needs and interests of students as they are monitored and assessed.
- Notice, question, prompt, observe, name, scaffold, guide and listen. Understand that learning is a two way process – teacher / student, student / teacher.
- Create a flexible, equitable learning environment where students exercise choice and where independence is fostered.
- Link investigations to authentic contexts.
- Frame their teaching around open-ended questions or problems. This positions students as investigators and researchers.
- Provoke, model and celebrate curiosity. Allow time for students to figure it out for themselves.
- Involve students in making decisions about aspects of the learning experience.
- Access students' prior knowledge.
- Are reflective and teach students how to reflect.
- Are inquiry learners.

Students:

- Have a voice in decision making about their learning and about the school as a whole.
- Tackle real world questions and problems through authentic contexts at both local and global levels.
- Make meaning using high thinking skills and strategies.
- Become able to transfer routines and strategies in different contexts.
- Raise questions.
- Make connections between ideas.

Types of Inquiry:

Project Related Inquiry

Is driven by some kind of task / action / product. The inquiry process helps learners find out what they need to do and know about in order to achieve their goal. Students know what it is that they will do with the knowledge they have gained. Teachers are responsible for considering the skills they need to make explicit.

e.g. Students design models to take to the school board of ideas they have for a new playground.

Philosophical / Ethical Inquiry

Encourages children to explore their values and beliefs as well as exercising their creativity and metacognition. Questions children ask may have many answers or may never be answered at all.

e.g. Does the past make us who we are?

Issues / Problem- orientated Inquiry

The emphasis is on the location and exploration of a problem in order to reach some kind of recommendation for actions and solutions. The inquiry is happening because of a need to sort something out or alleviate a situation.

e.g. What can we do about the school's waste?

Our GPS Model of Inquiry

At GPS we have an inquiry model that provides an approach to develop independent learners across all curriculum areas. Our learners go through a process where they connect with, and utilise and apply information to build new learning and understanding. The model is scaffolded for junior school children (Year 1 – 2) and for senior school children (Year 3 – 6).

Juniors (Year 1 – 2)

G Get Going

- What is our purpose?
- What do I know?
- What do I want to find out?

R Respond

- What are our questions?
- Plan our inquiry
- Research and find information
- Develop understanding

O Organise it, create it

- What else is there to learn?
- What do we do with our information?
- How will we share our information?

W What now, where to, share it

- Share our learning
- Celebrate our learning
- Set new goals

Seniors (Year 3 – 6)

G Get Going

- Identify a purpose?
- Gather prior knowledge
- Develop questions

R Respond

- Identify a personal focus
- Plan my inquiry
- Conduct research and evaluate information
- Develop knowledge and understanding

O Organise it, create it

- Make decisions, considering implications and consequences
- Extend ideas
- Prepare findings

W What now, where to, share it

- Share outcomes
- Celebrate our learning
- Set further goals / plan further action

Questioning

Careful thought needs to be given to the way questions are framed as the way a question is framed determines the approach we use to 'find out' and therefore the information we attend to. Providing students with practice in various ways to develop and structure questions is an important role of the teacher.