St Buryan Academy Primary School

Curriculum Statement

In 2015 our school team attended training from Carl Jarvis which was inspirational; the training was organised through the Applied Minds Alliance where we had first heard about the 'REAL projects' based learning.

We have since worked with our pupils to deliver engaging learning opportunities which begin with an 'authentic question' and lead to a relevant outcome. We have surprised our Y5-6 class by 'evacuating' them to the Telegraph Museum at Porthcurno to work with authentic World War 2 artefacts and have recently held an Eco Awareness Morning to highlight the dangers that all types of plastic present to our environment.

What is project based learning (PBL)?

Project based learning (PBL) is perhaps the greatest resource being used in UK schools to raise standards. Teachers are increasingly being asked to do more with less, and there's never been a better time to reinvent classroom learning. Despite the mounting pressures on schools, a huge advantage is that all schools still hold the freedom to deliver the National Curriculum by how they see fit. There's also a wealth of research to support PBLs uptake in the classroom:

- Students retain content longer and have a deeper understanding of what they learn (Penuel & Means, 2000).
- More effective than traditional methods for teaching Maths, Economics, Science, Languages and other disciplines (Finklestein et al, 2010).
- On high stakes testing, PBL taught students outperform traditionally taught students (Parker et al, 2010).
- Students demonstrate better problem solving skills than students taught in more traditional classes (Finklestein et al, 2010).
- PBL students demonstrate better engagement and motivation to learn, and have better attendance (Walker & Leary, 2009).

"Having individual lessons per subject amplifies a teacher's strengths, but also their weaknesses."

A system has been created where teachers require a huge breadth of knowledge across multiple subjects, yet they are left with very little time to develop areas where they may feel weaker. Having looked at high-performing education systems such as those in Scandinavia, Singapore and Canada, many schools in these countries have been incorporating PBL into primary teaching since the late1990s.

This project is grounded in the seven key criteria for successful PBL. These are:

"Giving the modules a project context meant children were much more engaged with their learning."

1. **Challenging problem:** An open ended task for students requiring plenty of imagination and creativity.
2. **Sustained inquiry:** A three week project in itself, incorporating all subjects.
3. **Authenticity:** Its student led, and the final project is a culmination of their concerns, interests, culture, identities and life issues.
4. **Student voice and choice:** Students have full ownership of the development of the project.
5. **Reflection:** The project is collaborative, so requires regular student discussion and reflection.
6. **Critique and revision:** Developed in the regular student discussion stages.
7. **Public product:** Produced into an app which can be published onto Apple's App Store for a worldwide audience.

Curriculum Planning

All staff work with their classes to think of their next 'authentic question'. A recent example has been 'How can I make a differenceto the world?' The outcome of this unit of work resulted in all involved coming to the realisation that everyone can make a difference and examples of work was presented at the Eco Awareness Morning mentioned earlier.

An important element incorporated into PBL involves children being able to critique each other's work and learning to re-draft and edit- a hugely valuable skill.

Some aspects of the National Curriculum that need to be taught will not fit into these schemes of work so will be taught discretely.

It is our hope at St Buryan Academy that all will be inspired by our engaging curriculum to develop a love of learning and become lifelong learners.

Please contact us at school should you wish to discover more…