

Hemel Hempstead Area: Guiding Principles and “that means” statements

Introduction

Through a two-part 2020 workshop, Hemel Hempstead heads and other school representatives worked together to build consensus and deepen their understanding of the ‘learning experiences’ which will define the core of Hertfordshire and individual schools’ Educational Vision. This led them to generate a set of organising guiding principles that will help define that Vision and how it is realised.

In addition to agreeing a set of guiding principles and challenge statements Part two of the workshop enabled them to check that they had shared understanding of the meaning and implications of theirs and Stevenage’s principles.

Agreeing Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles were generated and agreed by participants:

- Principle 1: Schools in Hemel Hempstead will have high expectations of all pupils
- Principle 2: Schools in Hemel Hempstead will support students of all abilities
- Principle 3: Schools in Hemel Hempstead will be collaborative not competitive
- Principle 4: All learners will have an entitlement to a broad, balanced, flexible and relevant education
- Principle 5: Parents have the right to a high quality provision for children in the local community
- Principle 6: The curriculum will be personalised to meet the needs of all learners
- Principle 7: All students will leave school with skills for life and employment
- Principle 8: All schools will provide community facilities for learning, leisure, health, support, etc
- Principle 9: All students will have access to ICT in school, at home and at work
- Principle 10: All learners will have a sense of their own worth as participants in Hemel Hempstead
- Principle 11: Schools will ‘enforce’ acceptable, social and moral standards
- Principle 12: All students have the right to be happy at school

Principle 13: Each school in Dacorum will be based in firmly agreed and shared core values (e.g. respect, honesty, tolerance, equal worth, equitability, law & order, care, wanting the best, uniqueness of each individual). Whilst all participants supported this principle it was agreed that further work is required to identify what these core values are and how they will be interpreted.

Participants discussed these principles and there was consensus that some of them are ‘actually principles’ and may sit better with ‘that means’ statements.

Review of Stevenage's Principles

Participants agreed with all seven Stevenage's principles with the following comments:

Principle 3: We want our learners to acquire the qualities, skills and competencies for life that have a currency with employers, FE and HE providers – 'parenting skills should be pitched alongside'

Principle 6: We want the learning experience to be enjoyable, safe and healthy – 'ensure that bullying is captured'

Principle 7: Schools will be flexible, sustainable organisations that support the learning experience for all – 'implications should reflect the lack of social areas'

Activity 4: Further Analysis of Hemel Hempstead's Principles

In addition, participants analysed three most important of the principles they had generated and agreed and uncovered their implications. These are set out below with each principle that was articulated by the group set out in bold and statements that describe what 'that means' in practice organised beneath it.

Principle 1: All learners will have an entitlement to a broad, balanced, flexible and relevant education. That means

- We will introduce tighter tracking system of learners and measure their progress and attainment
- We will collaborate to offer a range of opportunities and experiences - enabled by further flexibility of hours
- In addition to the academic facilities we will provide a range of other facilities and activities to support wider community needs
- Learning will be cumulative and will be accredited through units which can be achieved at any stage
- The core curriculum will provide Gifted and Talented learners with the opportunity to study at a higher level where appropriate
- Learning facilitators will need additional skills which will be provided through a well organised training/CPD programme
- We will ensure special provision to meet the needs of some students
- We will access a wider workforce by having a more 'analogue' approach to those who will be able to teach (wider skills and qualifications)
- Flexibility demands structures and on-going training and development of educators
- A robust ICT infrastructure is vital to providing flexible access
- We will create flexible learning spaces – not just 'cubes' with 30 chairs
- Our curriculum will allow learning in other locations than just learners' individual schools

Principle 2: Schools in Hemel Hempstead will support students of all abilities. That means

- We will ensure appropriate provision for groups of students with different needs on the same site – with larger facility on one site
- Staff will need a wide range of specialisms – health, SME (Small-Medium sized Enterprises) skills, different professionals
- Co-located SEN school will need a separate head and staffing structure working collaboratively with mainstream school to meet individual learner's needs
- We will provide fit for purpose accessible buildings

Principle 3: All students have the right to be happy at school. That means

- We will provide all learners with all the support they need to realise their full potential
- We will ensure that all learners feel safe, experience good quality relationships and are free from intimidation
- We will ensure that all learners have the opportunities to experience and develop other talents in and beyond school through extra-curricula activities, social experience, cultural development, creativity and related arts development
- We will employ multi-agency support for all students

Issues needing further clarification/debate

- Right of access – how will this be delivered?
- How do we legitimise the development of social and life skills when we measure success? Should the emphasis be on 'accountability' rather than 'performance measurement'?
- How clear are about the parents' role in the 21st century education system and how do we ensure that parents feel empowered to take on this role?
- Individual students have different talents and aspirations but each needs some structure, goals and targets
- **Hemel Hempstead will like to be referred as Dacorum – the umbrella tag under which all collaboration and partnership work take place**