

Is your classroom environment a place of potential attachment?

Primary pupils spend a lot of time in their classroom. This activity will help you ensure that your classroom is an attractive, safe and secure learning environment for your class, helping them to feel a sense of belonging in it.

Study your classroom, trying to see it through your pupils' eyes. Does it provide a welcoming and attractive environment for learning? What messages does it convey to pupils about how they are valued? What do the furniture, equipment, décor, displays and notices imply about anticipated activities and behaviour expectations in it? To what extent does the space facilitate mutually respectful relationships between pupils, and adults and children? For example, is there enough space between chairs for pupils to be able to get around the room without tripping over one another? Are there sufficient resources to prevent conflict over access to them? Does the room convey a sense of ownership by pupils, through, for example, their collaboration in creating class rules and working wall displays?

Discuss your classroom with pupils, asking how they think it could be improved. Remind them that the function of the room is to provide a good environment for their learning. Invite pupils to create pictures, maps or models of how they would like it to be organised. Where possible, try out pupils' suggestions for improving the room, whether they are reorganising the book corner, rearranging furniture, enhancing display boards, introducing houseplants or introducing new 'clear up' routines.

Use this activity to encourage both critical and creative thinking. Help pupils to identify constraints such as the shape and size of the room, the position of fixed features such as doors and windows, available furniture and equipment, and the cost of making changes that limit what is practically possible. To encourage more creative thinking about possibilities, invite pupils to design and plan their ideal classroom, or a future classroom.

For an example of this approach in action, see Parker (2018), who describes how her school decided to challenge pupils to reorganise their classrooms.

Reference

Parker, C. (2018) *Why we let our pupils create their own classroom*. Available at: <https://www.tes.com/magazine/article/why-we-let-our-pupils-create-their-own-classrooms> (last accessed 1/5/2019).

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