

SOUTHERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD



TEACHING AND LEARNING
POLICY

INTRODUCTION

We the staff of Derrychrin Primary School believe in the concept of lifelong learning and that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience. Through our teaching we equip the pupils with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to make informed choices about their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help our pupils to lead happy and rewarding lives.

This policy aims to ensure that the pupils at our school are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to a consistently high level of pupil achievement.

Pupils learn through their total experience. This policy guides what pupils do, what teachers do, how time is managed, the organisation of the classroom and what the school as a learning organisation does to create an effective and well-managed learning environment in which the individual needs of each pupil can be met.

AIMS

- To provide a broad, balanced, relevant, differentiated curriculum based on the key principles of the Northern Ireland Revised Curriculum that is accessible to all.
- To develop a happy, positive, stimulating and secure learning environment with resources which promote the motivation to learn.
- To develop a genuine love of learning and enable our pupils and ourselves to become independent lifelong learners and thinkers.

- To enable all our pupils to become happy, healthy and emotionally intelligent open-minded citizens with a high self-esteem and concern for others and the confidence, skills and competencies required for a diverse and changing world.
- To develop in pupils personal qualities of perseverance, confidence, independence and co-operation with others.
- To engender a positive approach to learning in pupils and to enable pupils to experience success and pleasure through a range of teaching approaches.
- To enable pupils to develop an awareness and understanding of different learning styles.
- To allow learners to become involved in the learning process, to become increasingly responsible for their own learning and to make progress in their learning.
- To train, develop and support teachers in their vital role of unlocking the latent skills, knowledge and potential in the learners.
- To work in close partnership with parents as the first educators of their pupils to provide the very best learning opportunities and all round education for each and every pupil in our school.

LEARNING AND THE LEARNER'S ROLE

- Pupils have a vital role to play in the learning process and are encouraged to set personal goals and targets.
- Pupils are motivated and are interested in their work. They are supportive of each other, enjoy their work and persevere with tasks.
- Pupils engage in a range of group activities to share ideas, to work co-operatively, to contribute effectively and to respect each other's views and opinions.
- Pupils engage in a range of individual activities to develop independence, take responsibility for their own learning and encouraged to reflect on what they have learnt.
- Pupils are aware of and employ a range of learning styles.
- Pupils are given opportunities to demonstrate their learning and talk about their work which shows knowledge and understanding about what they are doing and how they can apply this to different contexts.
- Pupils evaluate their own work, making realistic judgements about it and communicate information and ideas, offering comments and explanations.
- Pupils' individual learning needs are met through differentiated, yet challenging experiences.
- Pupils feel that they are valued by their teachers and that their achievements are being recognised.
- All teachers are also learners and should be striving to evaluate and improve their practice.

TEACHING AND THE TEACHER'S ROLE

- Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and of the learning process.
- Teachers create a purposeful, supportive and safe environment for learning.
- Teachers ensure that all provision is inclusive.
- Teachers' planning and teaching takes account of the pupils' different stages of development, abilities and attainments to ensure that their individual needs are met.
- Teachers plan lessons which have clear learning intentions which are communicated effectively to pupils.
- Teachers use a range of teaching styles and ensure that there is an appropriate balance of individual, group and whole-class tasks.
- Teachers use a range of questioning (*see appendix*)
- The school supports a climate where pupils feel happy, safe and secure, where they are nurtured and cherished and where their contribution is valued.
- Teachers encourage pupils to ask questions, take risks, knowing that mistakes/failures are acknowledged as a part of the learning process.
- Teachers have positive attitudes and pupils feel confident and secure in asking their teacher for advice and support.
- Teachers use praise and positive reinforcement to foster self-esteem, motivation and confidence in pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

We acknowledge that pupils learn in many different ways and we recognize the need to develop strategies that allow them to learn in ways that best suit them. We offer opportunities for pupils to learn in different ways. These include:

- Whole class work
- Group work
- Paired work
- Independent work
- Sharing learning intentions and developing success criteria
- Reflection on what has been learnt.
- Self and peer review strategies
- Study buddy
- Peer-tutoring
- Open-ended, thought-provoking and challenging questions
- Pupils adopting role of teacher
- Decision making
- Investigation and problem solving
- Creative activities
- Use of brain breaks to bring pupils back on task
- Research and finding out
- Use of ICT
- Designing and making things
- Participation in physical activity
- Discussions, debates, role plays and presentation

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The learning environment will be:

- Challenging and stimulating
- Peaceful, calm and comfortable
- Happy, caring and supportive

CLASSROOM ROUTINES AND RULES

Routines and rules in the classroom contribute to a healthy learning environment.

To be effective they should be:

- clearly understood
- fair and consistent
- realistic and positive

DISPLAY IN THE SCHOOL SHOULD BE USED TO:

- support pupils' learning and changed regularly.
- create an attractive and stimulating environment
- include work on different aspects of the curriculum
- reflect the individual child's efforts as well as ability
- sometimes be interactive

PHYSICAL ORGANISATION

Furniture

All classrooms should have:-

Tables arranged for:

- ease of working
- flexibility
- purposeful discussion
- provision of quiet corners
- large working surfaces

Chairs should normally:

- be sufficient in number for the activities in the classroom
- leave enough room for children to move easily around the room

Storage/display areas arranged to:

- support different areas of the curriculum
- support a project or activity
- give character to a room
- house children's personal belongings.

Library.

This area should be:

- accessible to pupils
- attractive, comfortable and inviting
- furnished to enable quiet reading and study
- carpeted
- provided activities for pupils to become active readers

RESOURCES

Materials in all areas should be well organised, be of good quality, be clean, tidy, attractive, accessible and well labelled. Stocks should be checked and replenished regularly. Children should be taught and shown by example that resources are finite and that we all have a duty to care for equipment and not misuse, damage or waste it. Relevant textbooks should be available in each classroom.

The effective implementation of curriculum subjects calls for a wide range of equipment to be used. These do not necessarily have to be stored in the classroom. The school library and classroom have a selection of books covering all curriculum subjects. Additional books are loaned from ELB.

STAFF AND STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- All staff will establish positive working relationships with the pupils that they are teaching.
- All pupils will be treated fairly and given equal opportunity to take part in class activities.
- All staff will follow the school's policy for Promoting Positive Behaviour and classroom management.
- Pupils will be praised and rewarded for their efforts in line with the school's policy and, by doing so, help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning.
- Staff will regularly review performance against this teaching and learning policy and any other targets set as part of the PRSD process.
- Staff will identify areas for individual and school-based development through both formal and informal procedures
- Staff will maintain and update individual training on a regular basis
- Staff will work as part of a team, sharing good practice and liaising with others across the disciplines, when appropriate

CURRICULUM CO-ORDINATION

Co-ordination of curriculum subjects is divided between the staff. As a small school, this means that each member of staff may have several responsibilities in relation to co-ordination.

ROLE OF CO-ORDINATORS

Co-ordinators will be responsible for:

- Maintenance and overview of their subject's resources.
- Attending relevant courses and disseminating information to staff.
- Liaising with other teachers to ensure continuity and progression.
- Monitoring teaching and pupil progress in line with the monitoring and evaluating procedures in their subject and preparing reports for the principal and governors.
- Preparing and evaluating action plans for their subject in line with the School Development Plan.

SEN PUPILS

Staff will provide a differentiated learning environment, which takes account of:

- Gender;
- High and low achievers
- Children with special educational needs.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the pupils' levels of attainment. Our focus is to develop further their knowledge and skills. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each pupil's level of ability. When planning work for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) we give due regard to information and targets contained within the pupils' Individual Educational Plans (IEPs). We have high expectations of all pupils, and believe that all pupils should be included in the full range of educational opportunities. In line with the Code of Practice, the special needs of individual pupils will be catered for through consultation with parents, pupil, SENCO, Co-ordinators and other appropriate agencies. (See Special Needs Policy) To ensure early intervention when needed, we will monitor the progress of all pupils on a daily basis.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

- Assessment is an integral part of planning, learning and teaching and helps pupils know how to improve.
- Teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including observations, discussions with pupils, marking and written tests.
- All assessment tasks have clearly identified purposes which are understood by the pupils.
- Assessment criteria are shared with the pupils, so that pupils have a clear sense of what the teacher expects of them.
- The pupils' work is marked regularly and highlights strengths and areas for development
- Pupils receive regular oral or written feedback on their work which highlights strengths and areas for development.
- Pupils understand that the teacher's marking is linked to learning intentions and success criteria.
- Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their current performance and what they need to do next to improve so that they are actively involved in the learning process.
- Pupils are given time to make improvements to their work.
- Encouragement is given to promote improvement and praise is given regularly to encourage pupils. It recognises progress from pupil's previous best.
- Responses from pupils are welcome and feedback, not failure is highlighted.
- Teachers encourage self-assessment and peer-assessment strategies, thus encouraging pupils to become more responsible for their own learning.
- Summative assessments are carried out annually and the pupil data is used to identify progress or underachievement.

ROLE OF PARENTS

- We believe that parents that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping their children to learn.
- We work hard to inform and support parents in how they can support their children's learning at home.
- Parents are kept informed of the progress of their children and how to participate in their education. This is done through:
 - ✚ Monthly newsletters
 - ✚ Key school policies
 - ✚ Parent Curriculum Awareness Meetings
 - ✚ Parental Workshops
 - ✚ Informative and helpful remarks when marking work;
 - ✚ Well chosen homework activities
 - ✚ Invitations to parents to attend open days, displays of work, pupil presentations, prize giving, assemblies, celebrations, sports days, concerts etc.
 - ✚ Annual written reports at end of year
 - ✚ Annual Parent/Teacher Meetings
 - ✚ Parents of pupils with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are invited to attend each half-term, to review progress made and to discuss the way forward
- The school also offer an open door policy so parents may arrange a suitable time to discuss any concerns that they may have with regards to their child's learning.
- Some parents offer some of their time to help in school. These offers are always welcome and parents undertake a variety of tasks, working with individuals and groups of pupils. All helpers are subject to vetting procedures.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING

- Monitoring and evaluating are integral parts of the teaching and learning in our school and are the responsibility of all members of staff. The principal will oversee the progress we are making towards fulfilling our aims.
- The principal will monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in term of raising pupil achievement, through the school self-review process.
- Through monitoring and evaluating procedures, the information gathered is used to inform and influence future developments and is closely linked to School Development Plan.
- Teaching and learning form part of the agenda for Board of Governor meetings and the principal will present an oral report to the Board of Governors, outlining the school's performance.
- The Board of Governors support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively and by ensuring that the school buildings and facilities are effective in supporting effective teaching and learning.

Appendix

Good questioning encourages pupils to think more deeply and to share their thoughts and ideas with others. Teaching ensures that pupils are given access to a range of questions.

Type of questions	Example
Open	What do you think...? Why do you think...? How do you know...? Do you feel...? Find different ways of...? Can you try different ways of...?
Closed	What is...? What are...? When did...? How many...? Where is...? Where would you find...?
Recalling facts	Asks pupils to name an event, process or fact. Asks pupils to recall some information but not apply it.
Observing	Asks pupils to describe what they see, using appropriate vocabulary.
Hypothesising, predicting or speculating	Asks pupils to estimate, suggest why something happens and suggest what will happen as a result of doing something; to ponder, guess or draw an inference.
Concluding	Asks pupils to draw different threads together or follow a logical route to arrive at a solution.
Personal responses	Asks pupils to express personal feelings, thoughts and ideas.
Discriminating	Prompts pupils to consider advantages or disadvantages, to look at something from different points of view.
Designing and comparing procedures	Asks pupils to plan and prepare a process for tackling a problem. Asking pupils to analyse before or after an activity which process will be/was the most effective.
Interpreting results	Asks pupils to draw conclusions from data or information, particularly where they are expected to understand a trend, identify what might happen next.
Applying reason or what they know	Asks pupils to provide more than one solution to a problem. Asks pupils to apply one or more aspects of their learning in order to explain what has happened or might happen next.

