



Teaching and Learning Policy

December 2020

At Donegall Road Primary School our pupils are nurtured in a caring environment in order for effective learning to take place.

Every child is an individual and they will learn through a range of different teaching / learning strategies and experiences. Our aim is to successfully meet each child's learning needs by providing high quality learning experiences in order that they are successful in their learning and so consistently experience high levels of achievement.

In Donegall Road Primary School we believe it is important that children:

- have secure relationships with peers and adults in a positively affirming environment which supports their emotional development and which is sensitive to their growing self-esteem;
- have opportunities to be actively involved in practical, challenging play-based learning in a stimulating inclusive environment, which takes account of their development stage/needs, (including those with learning difficulties and the most able children) and their interests/experiences;
- have opportunities to initiate play which capitalises on intrinsic motivation and natural curiosity;
- have choice, exercise autonomy and independence in their learning, and where they are supported in taking risks in their efforts to succeed;
- are given equality of opportunity to learn in a variety of ways and in different groupings;
- are actively involved in planning, carrying out and reflecting on their work;
- are supported by trained, enthusiastic and committed professionals who work in partnership with parents and carers and where appropriate, professionals in other fields, to ensure that all achieve their full potential.

AIMS

The following are our agreed aims for learning and teaching:

- to ensure that the school provides a safe, happy, positive, pleasant and effective learning environment where good relationships are fostered;
- to develop high self-esteem and confidence in staff and pupils recognising that these are central to the learning process;
- to strive for the highest standards possible of learning and teaching appropriate to *individual children and their needs*;
- to achieve the true potential of all pupils from the less able to the gifted;
- to ensure that children have opportunities to become autonomous and lifelong learners;
- to enable pupils to develop and use skills in a range of areas and contexts;
- to promote the use of a range of different teaching approaches to cater for different learning styles and ranges of intelligences;
- to ensure that school policies are reviewed, observed and followed;

- to ensure that pupils are given effective feedback – both written and verbal;
- to set up and ensure an effective structure of monitoring and evaluation at all levels throughout the school to ensure high quality learning and teaching;
- to develop and maintain effective links with community groups for the mutual benefit of all;
- to create effective leadership and management structures.

PURPOSES

- Planning will be effective and show clear learning intentions, differentiation and high expectations.
- Teaching will be well paced and reflect clear learning intentions, differentiation and high expectations.
- A variety of teaching strategies will be used which are appropriate to each child and to the learning outcomes, and will include regular use of ICT.
- Teaching will motivate the children's interest and perseverance with their tasks.
- The children will be given opportunities to develop independence in their learning and use of equipment, materials and ICT.
- The children will be given opportunities to collaborate effectively in a variety of peer learning situations involving groups of different composition and size. Through this interaction they will learn to listen attentively to one another and take account of the opinions and views expressed in order to plan and complete tasks in a collaborative manner.
- Teachers will organise classroom routines efficiently and prepare adequate and suitable resources, which are readily accessible when required.
- Teachers will maximise the use of any classroom assistants/support staff for the benefit of the pupils.

We believe the effective teacher endeavours to create learning environments characterised by the following:

Planning which:

- is concise;
- takes account of prior learning and preferred learning styles;
 - the kinaesthetic learner
 - the visual learner
 - the auditory learner
- affords challenge and opportunities for all to learn at an appropriate pace;
- specifies what learners are expected to learn and how/when learning is to be undertaken;
- makes the best of a range of available resources;
- builds in flexibility to take into account the reality of the learning environment and the needs the individual learners.

We recognise that children learn in different ways and that there are three different types of learning:

- (i) The **visual learner** who learns best by storing a series of images in his/her brain. These learners respond well to the written word, diagrams, pictures, videos, wall charts and posters.

- (ii) The **auditory learner** who learns best through sound. These learners respond well to the spoken word, audio tapes, discussion and sound effects.
- (iii) The **kinaesthetic learner** who learns best through movement and touch. These learners respond well to movement, hands-on activities, designing and creative activities and role play/drama.

Teaching approaches which;

- engage and stimulate the learner;
- allows for regular review of progress (linked to learning outcomes and success criteria);
- are varied to match learning needs and preferred learning styles;
- maximise opportunities to work directly with learners in whole class, group and individual situations;
- embed ICT in the learning process;
- promote positive social interaction.

Teacher-Learner Interactions which are marked by:

- sharing the purpose of learning and reviewing prior learning;
- clear and appropriate explanations and instructions;
- discussions which promote learning and build confidence, giving learners opportunities to express their thinking and use their initiative.

Questioning which:

- is skilful and excites the curiosity of the learner;
- allows time for thought/reflection;
- involves all learners;
- identifies areas for improvement;
- values all genuine responses and exploits them to promote further learning.

Learners who:

- do not fear failure;
- become increasingly aware of how they learn;
- take responsibility for and are active in managing their own learning and often set their own targets;
- adopt a collaborative approach;
- are confident about expressing their own thinking and listen to and respect others' ideas;
- review their own and their peers' progress and have an understanding of how to improve;
- exploit skilfully the opportunities afforded by ICT to extend their knowledge and skills.

Assessment which:

- is well matched to clearly identified purposes and encourages learners;
- emphasises the formative, celebrating what has been achieved and identifying what still has to be achieved to progress;
- is an appropriate blend of self, peer and teacher review;
- provides useful information which is regularly shared with learners and where appropriate with parents/carers and partner professionals
- is formal and informal;
- is summative and formative.

(Also see Assessment Policy).

The quality of learning and teaching will be monitored and evaluated at a variety of levels by all staff – (*Refer to Monitoring and Evaluating Policy*).

Areas to be monitored will reflect the priorities in the School Development Plan.

(i) Teachers

In the classroom teachers will assess through observation and discussion, through the marking of work (including the use of, ‘Green for Growth and Tickled Pink’), through their planning which includes learning outcomes and an evaluation of these at the end of each planning cycle and through both formative and summative testing.

(ii) Co-ordinators

Co-ordinators will monitor through:

- teachers’ planning notes;
- sampling children’s work;
- classroom observation;
- leading subject groups;
- staff discussion.

(iii) Senior Leadership Team

The school management team will monitor through:

- all of the above;
- review of test scores etc., at whole school level;
- overview of children’s learning at key stage and whole school level.

We recognise that, in our school, there will be children displaying ability levels at both ends of the spectrum.

Gifted and Talented Pupils

Gifted and talented pupils have high general ability, exceptional academic prowess in one or more subjects and/or diverse talents, some of which are more easily recognised and acknowledged than others, for example, to be musically gifted.

We will ensure that the process of identification of such pupils is continuous and that it draws on both quantitative and qualitative information.

Consequently, there needs to be a variety of strategies to identify gifted and talented children. They have an equal right to the same level of challenge and support as other pupils, if they are to fulfil their potential, therefore the curriculum overall must provide adequate stimulus and enrichment and extension work needs to be linked carefully with the curriculum.

Problem-solving and opportunities to investigate and research will feature frequently in their programme of work and records will indicate all-round strengths and needs – not only those relating to academic progress.

Pupils with Learning Difficulties

Information as to how these children are to be identified and ways in which they will be supported is found in the school’s *SEN Policy*. It is sufficient to mention here general guidelines. The teacher will work with the classroom assistant, SENCo, parents/carers, and medical, psychological and social services where appropriate, in collecting and recording information which may lead to preventative action in the early years. Children who have been identified as having learning

difficulties will have individualised education plans which will have short term targets and steps towards achieving the targets outlined. The progress of such children will be reviewed regularly.

Community Relations, Equality and Diversity

It is our belief that the whole community has a part to play in the all-round development of our children. We therefore will continue to make and maintain links with individuals and groups in the community for the mutual benefit of all. These will include links with:

- parents/carers (volunteer helpers, PTA);
- Board of Governor members;
- other primary schools (sporting activities, visits etc.);
- cross community links e.g. Shared Education with St Malachy's.
- local nursery schools, post primary schools, colleges and universities;
- local churches (Assemblies, participation in Church services and events);
- Greater Village Regeneration Trust;
- local services (E.g. PSNI, Fire and Rescue Service, Ambulance Service, Post Office etc.);
- Education Authority Belfast Region and associated services;
- links with sporting clubs e.g. Ulster Rugby and Northern Ireland Football Association.

Conclusion

The content of this policy is reviewed every two years or amended as appropriate to reflect new guidance/recommendations. Therefore, the implementation of this policy will ensure that the learning and teaching taking place in Donegall Road Primary School is effective and meet the needs of all the pupils.