

Stewartstown Primary School's



Teaching & Learning Policy

INTRODUCTION

The staff at Stewartstown Primary School believe that teaching and learning is central to our mission as a school.

We believe that **quality teaching is essential for quality learning** and that our values and ethos fortify this process and permeate all aspects of school life. We strive to develop all pupils to their full potential in a safe and secure environment, hence focusing on our school motto:

“Inspiring Pupils to Reach Their True Potential”

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

We aim:

- to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which gives every child the opportunity to achieve their potential
- to provide a structured learning environment which builds on strengths and supports need, thus promoting independence and self-esteem
- to set and expect high standards in everything we do
- to equip children with the knowledge and skills to enable them to progress confidently into secondary education and adult life
- to enable effective learning
- to promote a reflective approach to teaching
- to encourage a consistent approach to teaching
- to develop children as independent learners
- to enable children to make their maximum possible progress intellectually, physically, socially, spiritually and morally
- to enable children to have equal access to the curriculum.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

We believe that children learn best when they:

- are happy
- are interested and motivated
- achieve success and gain approval
- are given tasks which match their ability
- clearly understand the task
- are confident, feel secure and are aware of boundaries
- are challenged and stimulated

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We recognise the role of the school environment in promoting positive attitudes to and supporting learning. We aim to provide a learning environment that:

- promotes well-being and is secure and safe
- is rich in language and in number
- is well ordered, organised and resourced
- conveys high levels of expectation
- is consistent between classes with a shared School Code of Conduct
- promotes an atmosphere of mutual respect
- promotes independence
- is bright, colourful and stimulating to the senses
- has a variety of displays covering the breadth of the curriculum
- celebrates individual achievements whether academic, creative, sporting or expressive.

LEARNING AND THE LEARNER'S ROLE

Learners are most effective when they are involved in, and take responsibility for their own learning. Learning, therefore, aims to increase levels of independence and develop the ability to work with sustained concentration for age appropriate periods of time.

Effective learning strategies we aim to promote are:

- The ability to ask and answer questions
- Concentration when listening
- Contributing to discussions in a relevant and thoughtful way
- Co-operating and working collaboratively with peers and adults
- Problem solving skills
- Selecting appropriate resources for a task and putting them away
- Organisational skills
- Responding to and persevering with a task to a conclusion
- Taking pride in the presentation of work
- Presentational skills
- Organising learning
- Time management
- Responding and conforming to established routines and practices
- Explaining their understanding
- Appreciating and evaluating their own work and that of others
- Setting personal targets

TEACHING AND THE TEACHER'S ROLE

We recognise that the organisation and effectiveness of teaching has a direct impact on the quality of the child's learning experience. Within our work we aim to develop the following attributes:

- Have high and realistic expectations of ourselves and our pupils.
- Be well planned and organised.
- Be a role model by being punctual, dressing and speaking appropriately, showing respect for others.
- Be supportive of, and assist, colleagues by respecting individual differences and working collaboratively as part of a whole-staff team.
- Have good curricular area knowledge and deliver lessons within the statutory curriculum requirements.
- Take a self-reflective approach to our work.
- Seek to improve our skills and understanding through planned professional development.
- Develop classroom systems and organisation to support learning.
- Develop digital / electronic skills.

We aim for our teaching to demonstrate:

- good quality planning based on the assessment of the children's prior knowledge and understanding
- appropriate levels of resourcing
- clear and shared learning intentions with shared success criteria
- appropriate use of grouping
- differentiated and matched activities reflecting an understanding of pupils' ability and development levels
- a range of teaching styles and strategies
- effective use of additional adults within the classroom
- good pace with effective use of time
- lesson organisation that involves children in their learning
- use of effective questioning
- challenge, encouraging risk taking and learning from mistakes
- a range of learning mediums, e.g. digital, audio, written
- a range of assessment strategies
- a mix of whole class, group and individual work

PLANNING

The foundation for our curricular development is the School Development Plan; developed through a process of collaboration between staff, pupils, parents and approved by governors. We follow a cross curricular approach to learning where some subjects are taught through a topic and some are covered as discrete subjects. Meetings with colleagues are organised to discuss various aspects of the curriculum and ensure consistency of approach and standards. Planning takes place half termly, with reference to the NI Curriculum. Eight weekly plans are submitted to the coordinators of Literacy, Numeracy and UICT. Plans are based upon teacher judgment, data, pupil need and subject expectation. As reflective practitioners, lessons are evaluated and used to inform future lessons. Planners are working documents.

DIFFERENTIATION

So that we always have the highest possible expectations of individual learners and so pupils can demonstrate what they can do, understand, and achieve, teachers will differentiate the curriculum according to individual needs by:

- Pace
- Content
- Task
- Resources
- Extension
- Autonomy
- Outcome
- Teacher/adult support

SEN PUPILS

Teachers provide a differentiated learning environment, which takes account of:

- Gender
- Gifted, talented, low and under achievers
- Pupils with special educational needs.
- Newcomer

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the pupils' levels of achievement. 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' Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs). 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 are catered for through consultation with parents, pupils, SENCO, Coordinators, and other appropriate agencies and with reference to the Special Needs Policy. To ensure early intervention when needed, we monitor the progress of all pupils on a daily basis.

The following strategies are employed to support pupils with learning difficulties: -

- Early identification of learning difficulty
- Differentiated programme
- Setting attainable individual targets with Personal Learning Plans, where necessary
- Regular meetings involving relevant personnel to monitor progress and make further plans
- Effective use of classroom assistants
- Close communication with parents
- Raising self-esteem of the pupil by praising effort, celebrating success, and encouraging perseverance.
- Use of assistive technology to overcome barriers to learning

We believe that gifted and talented pupils are those who achieve significantly higher than the average for their age.

The following strategies would be employed to teach gifted and talented pupils: -

- Providing higher expectations
- Differentiating work to include problem solving and investigations
- Encouraging participation in extra-curricular activities
- Increasing responsibility

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 of care for equipment and not to misuse, damage or waste it. Relevant text books should be available within each classroom.

Resources within classroom settings should be age appropriate, for example play areas within the foundation stage classroom.

Additionally, we consider the extensive grounds of the school and the outdoor play equipment as significant resources for the development of wellbeing, play and activity based learning and further exploration of the curriculum.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

Planning and Assessment for learning is done through:

- Teachers' half termly planners
- Teaching staff curriculum-based meetings
- Curriculum meetings
- Personal Learning Plans
- Informal discussions amongst colleagues
- Discussions between teaching and support staff
- Teacher observations
- Formative and Summative Assessments

Regular assessments are made of pupils' work in order to establish the level of attainment and to inform future planning. Formative assessment is used to guide the progress of individual pupils. It involves identifying each child's progress in the cross curricular skills and determining what each child has learned and what therefore should be the next stage in his/her learning.

Children from Y3 to 7 complete annual summative assessments in English and Maths. CAT test in Y3, 4 and 6 are used as baseline comparison. Formal summative assessment is carried out at the end of each Key Stage (i.e. in Years 4 and 7) through the use of levels of progression.

Feedback to pupils about their own progress is achieved through discussion and the marking of work. Effective marking:

- helps children understand how to improve and comments aim to be positive and constructive
- is often done while a task is being carried out through discussion between child and teacher
- of written work is used sensitively and with discretion so that a child can assimilate a limited number of corrections at one time. This will vary according to the age, ability and task.

Feedback to parents is given through:

- Twice yearly progress reports
- Annual school report
- Annual parent teacher meetings
- Shared assessment scores
- PLPs if appropriate
- Teacher / parent communications
- Work sent home at regular intervals

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Learning and teaching is a shared responsibility and all members of the school community have an important part to play.

Coordinators are responsible for:

- taking the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work alongside other staff members, designed to ensure progression and continuity in their subject throughout the school
- supporting colleagues in their development and implementation of the scheme of work, and in assessment and record-keeping activities
- monitoring progress in their subjects and advising on action needed, taking responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for their subjects
- using release time to support colleagues
- keeping professionally informed and upskilled through reading, attending relevant face-to-face and online professional learning opportunities and disseminating information/good practice to staff
- preparing reports and evaluating action plans (when necessary) for their curricular area in line with the School Development Plan and reporting to the Principal and Governors

The Principal is responsible for:

- how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil achievement through the school self-review process
- thorough monitoring and evaluating procedures. The information gathered is used to inform and influence future developments and is closely linked to the School Development Plan
- the PRSD process which involves direct observation of teaching and learning
- observing the practice of Beginning Teachers and /or Early Professional Development teachers

The Role of Governors

Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school policies on learning and teaching. In particular, they:

- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively
- ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful learning and teaching

- monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations
- monitor how effective learning and teaching strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment
- ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching
- monitor the effectiveness of the school's learning and teaching policies through the school self-review processes. These include reports from coordinators and the termly Principal's report to governors as well as a review of the in-service training sessions attended by our staff.

Parents' Role

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping their children to learn effectively. Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning by:

- ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, well-rested and in good health
- ensuring that their child arrives at school wearing the correct uniform and bringing necessary equipment
- providing support for the Behaviour Policy within the school and the teacher's role
- supporting the work of educational targets and becoming actively involved in the implementation of any support programme
- participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainment
- support the school's homework policy and give due importance to any homework set
- allowing their child to become increasingly independent as they progress throughout the school

We work hard to inform and assist parents in how they may support their children's learning at home. Parents are kept informed of their child's progress and of ways in which they may participate in their education through:

- School App
- Online Monthly Newsletters
- Key School Policies- accessed on school website
- Pupil's Numeracy and Literacy books sent home regularly
- 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,
- Assemblies, celebrations, sports days, concerts etc.
- Pupils' work is showcased on the school Facebook page
- Annual written reports at end of year
- Annual Parent/Teacher Meetings
- Parents of pupils with Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) are invited each half-term to review progress made and to discuss the way forward

In the event of a further outbreak of Covid 19 where school has to close, we will offer remote learning via Microsoft Teams. Staff are all trained in its effective usage. Pupils' homeworks are periodically set on TEAMS to keep the pupils upskilled in its use.

This policy also operated in line with other school policies and should be read in conjunction with the following:

Assessment Policy
 Pastoral Care Policy
 Marking Policy
 Homework Policy
 SEND Policy
 Literacy Policy
 Mathematics and Numeracy Policy

This policy will be reviewed as and when necessary.

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	Asks pupils to plan and prepare a process for tackling a problem.

comparing procedures	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.