



Londonderry Primary School

Teaching & Learning Policy

Approaches to Learning and Teaching

Children learn best when learning is interactive, practical and enjoyable. When teachers make use of a wide range of teaching methods, balancing whole class, group and individual activities children are engaged in effective learning.

In the Foundation Stage our children experience much of their learning through well planned and challenging play. This self-initiated play helps children to understand and learn about themselves and their surroundings.

We ensure pupils are motivated by providing opportunities for them to make choices and decisions about their learning and use their ideas and interests as starting points for learning activities or for pursuing a topic in more depth.

We ensure 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 and self-confidence;
- Have opportunities to be actively involved in practical, challenging play-based learning in a stimulating environment, which takes account of their developmental stage/needs (including those with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Gifted/Talented children) and their own interests / experiences;
- Have opportunities to initiate play which capitalises on intrinsic motivation and natural curiosity;
- Have choice and 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 social 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.

Intrinsic to this is our recognition of the importance of process based learning, as opposed to product based, outcome driven learning, with observation based assessment, carried out in an unobtrusive way, as an ongoing and integral part of the learning and teaching process.

In order to develop children's skills and capabilities across the whole curriculum, we will provide frequent opportunities for pupils to think and do for themselves. To help foster good thinking habits and develop more independent learners, teachers will utilise a 'Plan, Do, Review' process, which integrates and fosters children's skills and capabilities.

PLAN

- Clarifying tasks;
- Generating ideas;
- Designing ways of approaching tasks or problems.

DO

- Finding and analysing relevant information;
- Creating, trialling or testing out possible solutions;
- Making decisions;
- Drawing conclusions;
- Presenting ideas, opinions or outcomes.

REVIEW

- Evaluating progress throughout and making improvements when necessary;
- Reflecting on their thinking and the learning;
- Transferring thinking and learning to other contexts.

Planning

Children learn best when learning is connected. The curriculum is set up under 6 Areas of Learning, but through our teaching we ensure integration is encouraged to help the children better understand the links between the different aspects of learning.

In our Foundation Stage teachers have considerable flexibility to interpret the Areas of Learning to suit the needs, interests and abilities of the children in Londonderry Primary School. Throughout the Foundation Stage, teacher observations will ensure that;

- Teaching builds from where the children are;
- Children's needs and interests lead their learning;
- Appropriate support can be given to those children who require it;
- Children are motivated and their learning challenged;
- Children have high expectations of themselves;
- Information can be shared with parents;

At Key Stages 1 and 2 teachers seek to build on children's earlier learning. In order to ensure effective teaching and learning we have established clear and concise plans which are stimulating and reflect the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

These plans are continually monitored and evaluated to ensure pupil learning is maximised.

Long Term Planning

We have established Lines of Progression in each subject from Primary 1 to Primary 7. These are reviewed every 2 / 3 years to take account of curriculum changes. These Lines of Progression are broad and balanced.

Medium Term Planning

Each year group delivers the curriculum through a topic theme approach. These themes in the Foundation Stage are 4 weekly in P1 and 8 weekly in P2 and are reviewed after each 4 / 8 weekly period. In Key Stages 1 and 2 these themes are 8 weekly and are married in with 8 weekly discrete subject planners. These plans are reviewed after each 8 weekly period by the teachers taking into account pupil feedback on content and teaching methods.

Short Term Planning

Each class teacher plans weekly for their class. This planning should;

- Show the Learning Intentions;
- Show differentiated tasks;
- Indicate what the classroom assistant will do;
- Show how ICT will be incorporated into the different areas;

Please see your year group partner for your 8 weekly planners and all Lines of Progression can be found in the C2k Central Resource Area.

Effective Learning

We acknowledge that people learn in many different ways and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them. We take into account the many different forms of intelligence and learning styles when planning teaching and learning.

We offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways including:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigation and problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whole class work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Watching television and responding to musical or tape recorded material
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research and finding out	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• debates, role plays and oral presentations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• group work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• use of the computer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• designing and making things
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• pair work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• participation in physical activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• independent work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• creative activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• reflecting on what has been learnt
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• outdoor play	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• structured play	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• free play

Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way they learn and to reflect on how they learn, what helps them learn and what makes it difficult for them to learn. Self review and peer review strategies are used, as well as planned plenary at the end of lessons / topics to review the key learning objectives and to assess the level of understanding.

Further information on Pupil Learning Styles can be found in Appendix 1

Effective Teaching

Our teaching is aimed at motivating pupils and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. We use 8 weekly topic planners and subject plans based on the Northern Ireland curriculum to guide our teaching. These plans set out the statutory learning intentions for the pupils and gives details of what is to be taught to each year group.

We believe children learn effectively when their teacher provides:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thorough preparation; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> an atmosphere where children are prepared to take risks; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lessons where children's previous learning and interests are built upon, through purposeful application of knowledge to different situations;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shared learning intentions which are understood by the pupils; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> innovative teaching; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> opportunities to review and reflect on their learning;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear expectations of what pupils are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> appropriate pace to the lesson; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thinking time before answering questions;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> open ended, thought provoking, challenging questions; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lessons where understanding is developed through active, practical and first hand experiences, involving individual and collaborative talk, exploration, questioning, prediction and investigation; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developmental feedback and constructive comments ;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support for the learning of pupils with differing abilities; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a planned programme of educational visits to reinforce and stimulate learning; 	

We base our class teaching on our knowledge of the children's level of attainment. Our prime focus is to develop further their skills and knowledge. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability. When planning work for children with an ALN we give due regard to information and targets contained in the children's Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or Pupil Action Plan (PAP). We have high expectations of all children, and believe that all children should be included in the full range of educational opportunities and that their work should be of the highest possible standard.

All teachers try hard to establish positive working relationships with the children that they are teaching. We treat them fairly and give them equal opportunity to take part in class activities. All teachers follow school policy with regard to discipline and positive behaviour strategies. We praise and reward children for good effort and, by doing so, help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general. We insist on good behaviour at all times.

Learning Assistants and other adult helpers are deployed in a variety of ways. Sometimes they work with individual children and sometimes they work with small groups.

All teachers reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement and plan their professional development accordingly. We do all we can to support teachers in order to enhance their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice.

Details of Effective Grouping Strategies and Effective Questioning can be found in Appendix 2.

Please refer to the CCEA Curriculum documentation in regards to Effective Teaching Methods and Learning

Please refer to our Positive Discipline Policy, Homework Policy and Foundation Play Policy to help to further your understanding of how to ensure effective teaching and learning.

Subject policies and schemes can be found in the C2k Central Resource Area – or speak to the relevant co-ordinator for support in each area.

Differentiation

Differentiation accommodates the needs of individual learners in our school. It allows teachers to ensure pupils make progress in relation to their capabilities.

Differentiation takes account of assessment results and teacher judgement. Teachers use this information to make adjustments to learning tasks / activities and their teaching methods to accommodate all within their class.

Differentiation might be achieved:

- by **TASK**:

Students work in a variety of ways with their different strengths and aptitudes therefore requiring a range of tasks which span the spectrum of abilities.

- by **RESOURCE**:

Activities which involve resources available to extend the more able, as well as supporting ALN pupils. Consideration will be given to – layout, design and graphics on worksheets, easily accessible resources, training pupils to use resources independently, a variety of mediums e.g. marker pens, poster papers, whiteboards.

- by **RESPONSE**:

Written comments on work will take account of pupil ability and wording of questions and instructions will vary from pupil to pupil.

- by **OUTCOME**:

Teachers will consider the outcomes of tasks set taking into account pupil ability – especially if the task is a common un-differentiated piece of work.

- by **GROUP**:

Teachers group pupils for various reasons. Pupils may belong to semi-permanent groups within larger teaching groups. Pupils may not necessarily be told how they are grouped. These groups may be streamed, mixed ability etc depending on the nature of the task.

- by **SUPPORT**:

Some students inevitably need greater support than others. Teachers will endeavour to ensure all pupils are supported due to their needs either personally or through the utilisation of a Learning Assistant. Learning Assistants can be utilised as the teacher deems necessary either to support an individual pupil, a small target group or the rest of the class if the teacher is

supporting an individual or target group. In Key Stage 2 the use of peer support may be used if appropriate.

Individual Education Plans or Pupil Action Plans may also be put in place by the class teacher to support pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).

These strategies adapt teaching to the potential and needs of each individual, from the gifted and talented to those with an ALN and as a result create a culture of respect for others and their learning.

Planning for Differentiation information can be found in Appendix 3

See our Special Needs & Inclusion Policy for more information

Assessment

Assessment exists to help the teacher to help the child. It ensures more effective teaching by providing the evidence for closer matching of tasks to the pupil's needs. It assists the children by providing them with an indication of what stage they have reached in the learning process. It helps teachers to identify future planning and teaching strategies.

Details of our assessment arrangements can be found in our Assessment Policy.

We employ a range of Assessment for Learning strategies throughout the school to link assessment to better teaching and learning. These include:

- Sharing Learning Intentions (WALT)
- Setting marking criteria / expectations (WILF)
- Peer Assessment
- Self Assessment
- Constructive Feedback (2 stars and a wish)

These strategies are utilised throughout the school where appropriate.

See our Assessment Policy for more information

Learning Environment / Displays

We believe that a positive learning environment is necessary to promote learning and that displays should support and celebrate this learning.

This may be achieved in a variety of ways:

Engaging Pupils in Learning – ownership of ways:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interactive displays	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exciting ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asking questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fresh /relevant to current topics and themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Success criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Colourful

Enabling Learning to Take Place

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Word lists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• White boards
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to basic resources – rulers, scissors, glue etc
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number squares
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Table squares
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High frequency words
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Place value cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practical phonic resources

Keeping What is Learnt in Mind

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WILF (2 Stars and a Wish)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Word lists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flip Charts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning Intentions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mind maps / links

Celebrating Success

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Displaying good work (also in corridors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exemplar materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupil's photos (check permission)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Class Reward Charts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual Target Charts

Raising Expectations

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Setting targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aims
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WILF	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Class / group targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agreed class rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Noise level 'meter' / Traffic lights
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extension activities available	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practical challenges / activities available

Clarifying Routines

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Timetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visual activity cues
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to resources labelled	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Signs

Encouraging Independence

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self registration charts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Word banks, dictionaries, thesaurus
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Class responsibilities, rotas, monitors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategies for self help	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self registration for dinners or packed lunch

Using ICT to Enhance Teaching and Learning

Information and Communications Technology has the potential to transform and enrich pupils' learning experiences and environments.

Our teaching is supported through the use of ICT resources / mediums in order to enrich learning experiences.

All children have access to a dedicated Computer Suite.

Through the use of:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interactive whiteboards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Power point presentations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DVD / Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Websites
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning NI interactive activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• C2k software
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jolly Phonics scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nelson Handwriting scheme
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BeeBots / Probots	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roamer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ipads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• digital cameras

Across the curriculum, at a level appropriate to their ability, pupils will be given the opportunities to:

- Explore
- Express
- Exchange
- Evaluate
- Exhibit

Our use of ICT is progressive and we continually assess pupil ability in Using ICT using CCEA statutory guidance.

See our Using ICT Policy and scheme for more information