

St. Clare's Learning and Teaching Policy

Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for teaching and learning at St. Clare's Primary School. The policy reflects the beliefs of the governors and the staff. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all members of the St. Clare's Primary School Community.

Aims & Principles

We see teaching and learning as a process of co-operative team work and welcome and encourage the involvement of parents and others in the community.

Our aims for teaching and learning are that all children will:

- achieve their potential in terms of spiritual awareness, academic achievement and aesthetic appreciation.
- be tolerant and understanding with respect for the rights, views and property of others.
- develop a responsible and independent attitude towards work and towards their roles in society.

Purpose

Education is the purpose of our school. We offer a curriculum which is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum. This Learning and Teaching policy lays the foundations for the whole curriculum, both formal and informal and, along with our Mission Statement and Aims, forms the context in which all other policy statements should be read. It is written for the benefit of all members of the school community to ensure that all are aware of the fundamental principles underpinning the work of the school.

Pastoral Care

All members of St. Clare's community (teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, pupils, governors and visitors) are expected to work towards the school's aims by:

- valuing children as individuals and respecting their right to education in a caring, secure environment.
- fostering and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community.
- providing a well ordered environment in which all are fully aware of behavioural expectations.
- offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life.
- encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviour and work.
- working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another.

Effective Learning

We believe that effective learning takes place when:

- pupils feel valued as individuals and are actively involved in the learning process.
- classroom relationships are built on mutual tolerance and respect
- pupils are encouraged by their teachers and are given opportunities to enjoy a genuine sense of achievement.
- there is a common awareness that high standards of self discipline and order are expected.
- the environment in which pupils and teachers are working is stimulating, comfortable and safe.
- lessons are well prepared with tasks and resources appropriate to pupils learning needs.
- teachers are respected.

Effective Teaching

We believe that effective teaching takes place by

- providing a stimulating programme of study ensuring that the teaching styles, resources and tools pupils encounter are varied and challenging, offering opportunities for the highest standard of personal achievement by pupils across the ability range.
- providing lessons which are prepared, structured and paced to make effective use of the time available.
- ensuring, through assessment and accurate record keeping, that learning is progressive and continuous
- ensuring that pupils have a clear and common understanding of the high expectations held of them individually, according to their ability and aptitude and of the targets to which they are working.
- giving pupils opportunities to review and reflect upon their progress and, where possible, to involve them in planning the next steps in their learning.
- maintaining an up to date knowledge of the curriculum they are delivering.
- establishing links with the local community and other schools to prepare pupils for the next steps in their education.

Strategies for Learning and Teaching

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

This should be organised to ensure that children have the opportunity to:

- work individually, in groups and as a class;
- make choices and decisions
- work co-operatively
- solve problems
- be creative
- discuss their ideas
- develop social skills
- develop independence
- use initiative
- access resources independently
- receive support
- achieve academically.
- build emotional intelligence / literacy
- reflect upon their learning
- display their work to consolidate learning and celebrate success

Learning takes place in an environment which:

- is challenging and stimulating;
- is peaceful and calm;
- is happy and caring;
- is organised;
- is well resourced;
- makes learning accessible;
- is encouraging and appreciative;
- is welcoming;
- provides equal opportunities;
- provides a working atmosphere.
- promotes positive behaviour.

Children should be encouraged to develop personal capabilities and thinking skills through:

- appropriate tasks
- confidence building
- example
- co-operation
- provision of suitable opportunities
- responsibilities.

We believe that quality learning will take place when all teachers aim to:

- link learning in a holistic way.
- make their lessons purposeful interesting and stimulating.
- manage the class effectively matching learning activities and opportunities to all abilities and learning styles.
- within each class whole class teaching, group work and individual work are differentiated where and when appropriate.
- all teachers teach all subjects to their classes, seeking the advice and support of subject coordinators where necessary.
- teachers within year groups draw up programmes of study for classes making reference to the Northern Ireland revised curriculum, ICL's, our curriculum overview and our policies and schemes of work.
- pupils with special educational needs are identified and supported in line with our inclusion policy, SENDO and the code of practice.
- incorporate relevant and appropriate new initiatives into classroom practice.
- provide homework activities that reinforce class learning.
- include high expectations, where there is an introduction, learning intentions and success criteria are shared, tasks are challenging, questioning is effective.
- draw lessons to an effective conclusion with good feedback sessions and discussion to assess how well objectives have been achieved.
- use both formative and summative assessment to evaluate pupils progress and to inform future teaching plans.

Shared learning will be managed through:

- circle time, developing attention and listening skills
- developing children's questioning skills
- developing children's presentation and discussion skills
- questioning sessions
- discussion and debate
- children demonstrating their learning to their peers
- thinking skills activities and debriefs

Assessment

We believe good practice within the area of assessment should include:

Incorporating the development of Assessment for Learning to include:

- Sharing Learning Intentions/Success Criteria through WALT and WILF boards
- Involving children in the planning process
- Help children reflect on their learning and target setting
- Giving formative feedback praising achievement and highlighting area for improvement
- Teacher and Peer comments and marking through Star, Star Wish
- Effective questioning techniques

Celebrating achievement and success through:

- Displays of pupils work
- Whole school achievement/celebration assemblies
- Class/Whole school reward system
- Recognition by Principal & Teachers
- Notes giving positive feedback to parents

Development of Pupil Profiles to include:

- Pupil achievement through samples of pupils work
- Standardised test results – AUs, NFER, INCAS's, BPVS, MIST, OUEST
- Teacher/parent interview (First term)
- Pupils annual report to parents

Monitoring pupils learning:

- Baseline pupil attainment at beginning of academic year to target set for and individuals
- Regularly monitor and review pupils' progress throughout the year
- Evaluation of individual teacher planning and teaching strategies
- Use of Formative & Summative Testing
- Book Sampling
- Formal/Informal teacher discussions
- Liaising with parents as required
- Annual review of statemented pupils
- Continuous teacher record keeping of pupils progress through observations and written evidence

PHYSICAL ORGANISATION

Resource Finance

Curriculum areas and class teachers are allocated money according to the needs identified in the School Development Plan and the accompanying School Budget Plan.

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 units arranged to:

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

Resources

Materials in all areas should be:

- well organised, be of good quality, be clean, accessible and well labelled.
- materials should be near the appropriate working area.
- checked and replenished regularly.
- Regarded as finite and pupils should be taught 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 or in central resource areas
- All missing, damaged or dangerous items should be reported to the subject co-ordinator.

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils work towards the school's aims by:

- respecting themselves and each other.
- respecting and cooperating with each other in the classroom and playground.
- respecting school equipment, supplies and furniture.
- being positive and encouraging to other pupils.
- being kind and respectful towards all staff and visitors.
- respecting other pupils' school materials and personal property.
- using appropriate language.
- attending school regularly.
- being punctual and ready to begin lessons on time.
- being organized bringing necessary kit, taking letters home promptly, returning reading books regularly.
- making full use of all the opportunities with which they are presented.

Parents work towards the school's aims by:

- ensuring that their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- ensuring that children arrive at school with the correct uniform and equipment.
- providing support for behaviour management within the school and the teacher's role.
- being realistic about their children's abilities and offering encouragement and praise.
- participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainments.
- giving due importance to homework.
- allowing their children to take increasing responsibility as they progress through the school.
- keeping the staff informed of any changes in the child's circumstances which may affect their learning.

Teachers work towards the school's aims by:

- supporting the aims and purpose of the school
- facilitating pupils' learning
- supporting pupils as they learn and develop skills.
- model positive behaviours and attitudes.
- communicate with parents as appropriate
- acting fairly and ethically towards all

- helping students relate current issues in society to their own lives
- employ a range of teaching styles to cater for all learning preferences
- supporting substitute teachers within year group
- carrying out the good practice as detailed above in 'strategies for learning and teaching'.

Co-ordinators work towards the school's aims by:

- developing detailed knowledge of their subject area within the Revised curriculum
- disseminating knowledge and good practice to members of staff
- monitoring and evaluating the quality of planning, teaching and learning within their subject area
- informing Principal of current practice within subject area
- leading a curriculum team in subject area
- liaising with outside agencies where and when appropriate

Governors work towards the school's aims by:

- determining, supporting, monitoring and reviewing the school's policies on learning and teaching.