LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

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Date of Original Policy: August 2006

Revision No.	Details of Change	Date
1	Full review of procedures	January 2007
2	Policy update	November 2009
3	Policy Update	November 2011
4	Policy Update	November 2013

**Staff have matched the following articles from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to the Learning & Teaching Policy:
28,29 and 31**

RATIONALE

Curriculum for Excellence aims to achieve transformation in education by providing a coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum for 3-18, firmly focused on the needs of the child and young person and designed to enable them to develop the four capacities. The changes brought about by Curriculum for Excellence will lead to improved quality of learning and teaching and increased attainment and achievement for children and young people in Scotland, including those with special educational needs.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- Learning and teaching will be inclusive and enjoyable
- Learning and teaching will meet the needs of the whole learner
- Learning and teaching will take account of multiple intelligences
- Learning and teaching will be flexible
- Learning and teaching will create lifelong learners who are active citizens.

AIMS

We believe that people learn in different ways. At our school we provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows pupils to develop skills and abilities to their full potential. Through our teaching we aim to:

- Create an ethos of achievement to raise levels of attainment for all pupils
- Use Curriculum for Excellence framework to ensure a coherent and progressive approach to learning and teaching
- Enable our pupils to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributers
- Foster pupils' self-esteem and help them to build positive relationships with people
- Show respect for all cultures and beliefs , in so doing, to promote positive attitudes towards other people
- Develop pupils' self-respect and encourage pupils to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

We will create learning environments, both in and out of the classroom, which:

- Create conditions which motivate all pupils to make sustained progress in learning within a common framework
- Provides equal opportunities for all pupils
- Are flexible in responding to pupils' academic, personal and social development
- Take account of pupils' different learning styles
- Make it clear that the achievements and progress of each pupil are valued
- Promote teaching which builds on the prior learning and attainments of pupils
- Free teachers to spend most of their time on direct teaching and enable pupils to work effectively on challenging tasks
- Are feasible and appropriate in terms of its expectations of teachers and pupils
- Promote praise and build positive attitudes to school and learning

> Encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning, reflecting on how they learn and through reflection setting their own goals
> Are attractive and stimulating and display pupils' work

We offer opportunities for pupils to learn in different ways. These include:

> Investigation and problem solving
> Research and finding out
> Group work
> Pair and trio work
> Independent work
> Whole class work
> Asking and answering questions
> Use of ICT and other media
> Fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest
> Visitors to our school
> Creative activities
> Debates, role-plays and oral presentations
> Designing and making things
> Participation in athletic or physical activity
> Participation in Citizenship and Enterprise activities

TEACHING APPROACHES

Our teachers are the most important resource for learning available to the pupils and how her/his time is used is fundamental to effective learning and teaching. "What happens in the classroom determines the quality of a school….." (Teaching for Effective Learning SCCC 1996). We use teaching approaches which:

> Engage and stimulate the learner
> Are varied to match learning needs and varied styles of learning
> Offer good quality interaction between staff and pupils
> Allow for regular review of progress towards learning outcomes
> Maximise opportunities to work directly with learners in whole class, group and individual situations
> Embed ICT in the learning process
> Promote positive social interactions

STRUCTURE OF LESSONS

All lessons whether group or class will commence with sharing the learning outcomes/targets with the pupils. The bulk of the lesson will be direct teaching with differentiated follow up activities. There will be a plenary session or summing up of what has been learnt at the end of the lesson, whenever possible.

Teachers are at their most effective when teaching directly. We see direct teaching as being an effective teaching tool. Effective direct teaching includes the following features:

> Varied questioning of pupils and giving clear explanations in a range of contexts
> Listening and responding to pupils and giving clear explanations in a range of contexts
> Providing pupils with feedback and checking, through questioning, that teaching points have been well made and understood

- ➢ Sharing objectives/targets with pupils when setting tasks which motivate and challenge
- ➢ Monitoring the progress and pace of learning of individuals within groups
- ➢ Responding to individual needs by identifying next steps in learning

Direct teaching is effective in introducing and consolidating work.

Direct teaching carries with it a need to ensure that tasks undertaken by pupils are timed appropriately with a clear outcome expected at the end of that time.

FORWARD PLANNING

Our teachers' forward planning takes account of:

- ➢ long-term (yearly), medium term (termly) and short term (weekly) planning
- ➢ prior learning and varied learning styles e.g. visual, auditory, tactile/kinaesthetic
- ➢ multiple intelligences: visual/spatial, verbal/linguistic; logical/mathematical; bodily/kinaesthetic; musical/rhythmic; interpersonal; intrapersonal; spiritual
- ➢ setting targets/assessment criteria which specify what learners are expected to learn
- ➢ evaluating what has been taught and identifying next steps for learning and teaching
- ➢ linking class-work and homework
- ➢ cross-curricular links

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching cycles. We undertake assessment that is:

- ➢ Well matched to clearly identified purposes and encourages learners
- ➢ Emphasises the formative, celebrating what has been achieved and identifying what has still to be achieved to progress
- ➢ An appropriate blend of self, peer and teacher review
- ➢ Both formal and informal
- ➢ Provides useful information which is shared with learners, and where appropriate, parents and other agencies.

ORGANISATION OF TIME

Time allocations for each curriculum area are not being specified nationally. The broad principle is that children need sufficient time to make good progress through all the experiences and outcomes and achieve the learning set out at each level securely so that they can apply their learning in a range of situations. Our children need to make connections between different areas of learning. Inter-disciplinary studies can provide relevant, challenging and enjoyable learning experiences.

ORGANISATION OF CLASSES

All our classes are mixed ability, and to cater for the needs of all we organise them in a variety of flexible ways:

Attainment Grouping

In English and Mathematics the groups are organised by attainment. This allows time for direct teaching, based on good quality assessment evidence which is used to build on prior learning. It offers appropriate challenge and motivation for the pupils within the group and provides opportunities for pupils to move between the attainment groups.

Mixed Ability Grouping

In other areas of the curriculum the teachers can organise by attainment groups or by mixed ability grouping. The benefit of mixed ability groupings is that the presence of a range of abilities in the one classroom can allow pupils who are higher attainers in one area to work alongside and help those who are lower attainers in that area enabling increased achievement for both. We use working pairs and trios effectively in writing, reading and other curricular areas.

The more able pupils can serve as a model for others in the group/trio and an ethos of achievement can be fostered. It also allows pupils who are less academic but able in other areas of the curriculum opportunities to raise their achievement and self-esteem.

Managing differentiation in a class with a wide range of abilities makes demands on the teachers, and teachers need to present work in a way that motivates all pupils and keeps them usefully occupied on appropriate tasks. In order to accommodate this we try to have no more than 4 teaching groups within a class whenever this is possible.

Individual

In all areas of the curriculum there are opportunities for aspects of individual learning but this is often appropriate for able pupils and pupils with specific needs, particularly those with Individual Educational Plans. Teachers will plan and deliver, in collaboration with Support for Learning team, a suitable learning and teaching programme for pupils with I.E.P.s Able pupils may be provided with individual extension activities but at all times especially in the Upper school pupils will be given opportunities to work individually e.g. in research work, giving presentations/talks etc.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

Parents are informed of aspects of our Learning and Teaching e.g. groupings etc. in our School Handbook. Priorities in the School Improvement Plan and how they will be implemented within the classes are discussed with parents and are kept informed of any changes in practice via newsletter and/or Parents Meetings. We hold workshops to demonstrate methodologies/strategies

being employed within the school. Parents are audited for their views on aspects of learning and teaching when the school reviews aspects of the School Improvement Plan.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

All teaching staff undergo the above and reflect on the impact of their professional development on their learning and teaching by maintaining a CPD profile and portfolio. All teaching staff are part of Aberdeenshire's Professional Development Review Scheme and meet yearly with their line manager.

RESOURCES

We have a bank of varied resources to support learning and teaching and these are reviewed regularly to ensure they are relevant and appropriate. Resources for different curricular areas are included in our school policies.

ROLE OF SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

The Support for Learning team and Classroom Assistant/Auxiliaries play a significant role in supporting the school in all aspects of learning and teaching. Collaboration of planning and teaching aims to meet all pupils' needs. Time is also given to non teaching staff to develop their skills in supporting our children.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF PRACTICE

The Learning and Teaching at the school is related to our school aims and our School Improvement Plan. We use the Quality Indicators in 'How Good Is Our School 3' to evaluate our learning and teaching. It is reviewed in light of National Priorities, findings from Quality Improvement Reports, HMIe inspections, and the monitoring and review of practice. Classroom practice is monitored by School Management Team and attainment levels are tracked and monitored by Head Teacher on a termly basis. We also track pupil progress in aspects of the curriculum. These help to inform us of the effectiveness of our learning and teaching within the school. Teachers undergo self-evaluation to evaluate the effectiveness of their classroom practice.

We take account of reviewing learning and teaching methods to ensure they are still relevant when we are reviewing our School Policies or auditing aspects of the School.