LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

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RATIONALE

At Ballytober Primary School, we aim to ensure that the children are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to a consistently high level of achievement. We recognise that children learn best when they are happy and confident. We believe that every child is an individual and that they will learn through a range of different teaching / learning strategies and experiences.

Our aim is to raise pupil achievement by having high expectations of everybody, both learners and teachers. By creating a learning and teaching culture in the school, by constantly involving the staff in professional development and by recognising that the Principal is a leader of learning, staff in Ballytober believe that they have a solid foundation for an excellent teaching and learning environment.

The Northern Ireland Curriculum promotes a more active and participatory classroom allowing for a learner-centred approach to teaching & learning. There is also a shift from product-driven learning to process-driven. These changes encourage us to reflect not only on the key principles of learning and teaching but also on our role in the process. Pupils become more active learners and focus on asking questions and taking responsibility for their own learning. They become reflective learners collaborating in their learning and actively listening to opinions of others. Instead of learners of individual subjects they are connecting their learning.

ETHOS

In Ballytober, everyone is treated with respect and trust. Special effort is made to establish good working relationships, both in the class and throughout the school. All teachers have access to copies of the school policies. Pupils are expected to comply with the policies so that we can promote the best learning opportunities for all.

Classroom assistants and other adults who help in the classroom play an important role. As well as working with our pupils, they help plan lessons with the teachers and assist in the evaluation of the children's work. They make an invaluable contribution to the learning environment of the school.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Our Learning and Teaching Policy seeks to raise the achievement of pupils by :-

- Enabling all pupils to learn and develop their skills to the best of their ability
- Promoting a positive attitude towards learning, so that pupils acquire a solid basis for lifelong learning
- Encouraging pupils to be creative
- Challenging pupils to develop their own thinking
- Enabling pupils to be positive citizens in society
- Encouraging pupils to have respect for themselves
- Developing pupils' self-esteem
- Supporting the ability to work co-operatively with others
- Using approaches to learning and teaching which are consistent innovative and challenging, hence effectively meeting the needs of pupils
- Understanding and accommodating the range of types and preferred learning styles of pupils
- Meeting the needs of all staff by offering continuing professional development opportunities
- Meeting the need to retain the best features of educational practice when implementing the school curriculum
- Providing an agreed focus for monitoring teaching and learning
- Identifying pupils with Special Educational Needs and offering early intervention to assist pupil performance
- Effectively using Assessment for Learning techniques

VALUES

Our curriculum is underpinned by the values respected by our school. These values have created the foundation for a learning school, one where the children feel happy and confident.

Ballytober values include :-

 honesty, commitment, equality, integrity, achievement, respect, helpfulness, independence, trust, responsibility, kindness, consideration, empathy, happiness, safety

Particular attention is paid to the development and promotion of the main skills required to become and remain a good learner:

- Responsibility
- Resourcefulness
- Respect
- Resilience
- Reflection

Pupils are actively encouraged to :-

- take responsibility for their own learning
- be involved in reviewing the way they learn
- reflect on how they learn
- identify what helps them learn
- understand what makes it difficult for them to learn.

The curriculum is the means by which the school achieves its objective of educating children in the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in order to lead fulfilling lives.

EFFECTIVE LEARNING

We believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the idea that both adults and children learn new things every day. We recognise the importance of placing value on the differing abilities and strengths of pupils.

At least eight different areas of intelligence or learning styles have been identified to date, including:-

- Verbal / linguistic
 - strong verbal linguistic intelligence
 - read and write easily
- Logical / mathematical
 - strong mathematical/logical intelligence
 - good with numbers
 - recognise patterns quickly
- Visual / spatial
 - good at thinking in pictures, design, charts and maps
- Physical / Kinaesthetic
 - good at sport, dance and drama
- Aural / auditory / musical
 - sensitive to pitch, tone and rhythm
 - play an instrument
 - enjoy listening to music
- Naturalist
 - interested in anything to do with the natural world
- Social / interpersonal
 - work well with others in groups or teams
- Solitary / intrapersonal
 - work and solve problems on their own
 - like to plan and get on with their own work

We provide, plan and deliver a curriculum which embraces and supports the diversity of learning styles and multiple intelligences of children. However, the majority of people use the three main learning styles. We recognise that some people prefer to learn in one or two of these so whenever possible there is a Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic element to curricular activities.

Visual Learners prefer teaching and learning materials which include:-

- pictures
- mind-maps
- computers
- interactive whiteboards
- diagrams
- flow charts
- key words
- television extracts
- video clips

They also like :-

- work which is in colour as it aids retention
- different colours on diagrams to denote different meanings
- highlighter pens on written notes
- information in bullet point format
- using key words.

Auditory Learners prefer teaching and learning opportunities which use sounds and voices. They prefer teaching and learning activities which include:-

- discussion groups which helps with understanding of the task
- talking through demonstration
- making auditory recordings instead of written notes
- use of computers

Kinaesthetic Learners often enjoy sessions where the teacher demonstrates a skill and then gives them a practical task, enabling them to feel, touch and practise their skills.

Appropriate teaching and learning activities could involve :-

- brain gym activities
- activities which require them to touch and feel
- activities which are practical
- use of computers
- standing up and stretching every 20 minutes

Effective Learning stems from high expectations and the expectations we have for our pupils are that they will:-

- understand lesson outcomes
- fully engage with all their lessons
- respond to questioning
- develop literacy and numeracy skills
- use both peer and self-assessment to improve learning
- show the ability to generate ideas and concepts
- collaborate effectively with others
- show a capacity for independent learning.

Children are encouraged to :-

- take responsibility for their own learning
- to think for themselves
- to become independent learners as far as possible

EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Effective learning only comes about from effective teaching.

In Ballytober, the pupils learning is improved when the teacher:

- Focuses beyond what children learn
 - to how they will learn
 - to how the teacher needs to intervene in the process.
- Structures lessons well
 - has focused learning intentions that are written in a language that children understand
 - includes meaningful tasks
 - has a plenary that allows time to reflect and review on what has been learned
- Demonstrates a wide range of teaching strategies to accelerate learning
 - uses visual, auditory and kinaesthetic teaching styles
 - ensures that all children are reached in a way that suits their particular learning style
 - communicates in an articulate way
 - uses a variety of effective questioning to ascertain understanding and challenge learning
 - models and demonstrates
 - uses stimulating foci
 - teaches memory and study skills
- Encourages a variety of learning techniques
 - talks to pupils about how they learn
 - responds positively to their efforts
- Marks pupils' work in accordance to the school's policy
 - indicates what children need to do next in order to raise their own attainment
 - refer to school's Marking Policy.
- Makes the most of opportunities to learn together
 - reflect on their own experiences
 - share good practice with colleagues
- Tries new ways of working
 - embraces new ideas
 - takes pedagogical risks.

LESSON STRUCTURE

We have adopted an agreed lesson structure that embraces the ethos of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. It is paramount to stress the position of the teacher as a leader and facilitator of learning. It is through the teacher's enthusiasm, innovation and vision that children will be equally enthused to develop as lifelong learners.

The INTRODUCTION of the lesson is the opportunity for staff to :-

- discuss prior learning
- introduce and discuss the learning intention
- negotiate the success criteria of the lesson

In effect, the teacher and pupils are producing the road map to learning success in their lesson. Pupils should be motivated to learn and succeed, knowing what it is they have to do to meet the criteria.

DEVELOPMENT of the lesson should involve relevant and challenging tasks, including:-

- opportunities for different learning styles to be applied
- opportunities for different learning settings to be utilised, e.g. individual, paired, group and whole class
- a balance between guided and independent

These tasks should include opportunities for children to :-

- self-manage
- manage information
- be creative
- work with others
- think
- problem solve
- make decisions

These opportunities should be developed across the whole curriculum.

PLENARY of the lesson is the opportunity to :-

- assess the learning
- celebrate the learning
- realign the road map for future learning

Effective questioning plays a key role:-

- questioning of the children
- questioning by the children
- facilitates assessment of what has been learnt
- provides opportunity to assess impact on future learning

We can look forward to new learning opportunities that may arise from the learning opportunities just experienced and we can link in with prior learning.

It is important to recognise the voice of the learners :-

- all will be expected to listen effectively
- all will have an equal say in discussing their prior learning
- all will have a role in determining their future learning.

TARGET SETTING

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's level of attainment, our focus being to further develop the knowledge and skills of the children.

Every effort is taken to:-

- set tasks appropriate to each pupil's level of ability
- give due regard to information and targets contained in pupils' Individual Educational Plans (IEPS)
- have high expectations of all our pupils
- ensure that work is consistently of a high standard
- set whole school, class and individual targets using the relevant performance data and end of Key Stage assessments
- take into account areas that are identified as requiring improvement
- raise the achievement of pupils in identified focus areas to improve overall standards
- set targets for underachieving pupils, identified through comparison between CAT4 and PTM/ PTE scores
- utilise qualitative assessment effectively alongside quantitative data
- create targets for underachievers in liaison with the Literacy and Numeracy co-ordinators
- construct targets with reference to analysis of test results and teacher input
- investigate the reasons for underachievement
- create effective action plans to address issues and ensure progress is made
- review the progress of each pupil at the end of the academic year and set revised targets
- predict end of Key Stage results

PLANNING

Planning practices have been recently reviewed and new planning formats consequently agreed. These include :_

- long term plans
- medium term plans
- weekly plans.....September 2019 onwards

Long-term plans are agreed for each key stage. These indicate which topics are to be taught in each term. The schemes are periodically reviewed to ensure they reflect statutory requirements and opportunities for best practice and provision.

Medium-term plans refer to the relevant schemes of work. The half-termly planners contain clear guidance on the learning intentions and teaching strategies utilised when planning for provision within each curricular area

Medium term planners are submitted to the principal and the subject leaders every half term. Teachers evaluate their medium-term plans on a regular basis and identify those pupils who require additional support in a given area.

Short-term plans are those that staff write on a weekly/daily basis. They reference the half-termly planners which are based on the subject specific whole school curricular schemes.

Planning in the Foundation Stage is "topic-based", with plans for play-based learning also being produced. Staff work collaboratively to ensure there is coherence and full coverage of all aspects of the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum throughout the school across the key stages.

Lessons are planned with clear learning intentions. Our planning contains information about the tasks to be set, the resources needed, if identified, and the way we assess the children's work. All lessons are evaluated so that we can modify and improve our teaching and inform our planning in the future.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

To ensure quality teaching and learning takes place, we have created a learning environment which is:-

- conducive to effective learning
- challenging and stimulating
- happy, welcoming and organised
- well resourced

CLASSROOM PROVISION

Classrooms are well organised to ensure pupils have the opportunity to learn in different ways:-

- exploring, investigating and problem solving
- research and finding out
- group work
- pair work
- independent work
- whole class work
- questioning and answering
- use of ICT
- educational trips to places of value and interest
- creative activities
- role play and oral presentation
- designing and making things
- participation in sports and other physical activities

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

Assessment for Learning strategies are used effectively to encourage pupil engagement in their learning experiences, including :-

- sharing of learning intentions with the pupils
- collaborating to create success criteria
- effective questioning to promote further learning
- facilitating peer and self-assessment
- providing feedback on pupils' learning to support improvement

CLASSROOM AND CORRIDOR DISPLAYS

A stimulating environment sets the climate for learning, and an exciting classroom promotes independent use of resources and high-quality work by the pupils. All classrooms should be stimulating, challenging, peaceful, calm, happy, caring, well organised, well resourced and welcoming. They should provide an atmosphere conducive to working productively.

It is important to show pupils their work is valued. Displaying pupils' work helps promote pupils' self-esteem and develop an ethos of high expectations.

Displays are used to create an attractive and stimulating environment throughout the school environment:-

- Teachers are responsible for changing their classroom and corridor displays regularly.
- Items for display includes work which is well presented and reflects the best efforts of the pupils
- Pupils are encouraged to take care in the way they present their work
- Pupils are expected to regard its appearance as an important aspect of the completed product
- Displays should include work on different aspects of the curriculum
- Items should reflect the individual pupil's efforts as well as ability

HOMEWORK

Homework is based on work which is ongoing in school and reflects the learning taking place. It is:-

- relevant, challenging and appropriate to the pupils' needs
- differentiated based on pupil ability
- varied to take account of learning styles
- both practical and written activities -

Reference the school's Homework Policy for further detail.

RULES AND ROUTINES

Rules and routines in the classroom and throughout the school contribute to a healthy learning environment. These are:-

- agreed and understood by the children
- fair and consistent
- realistic and positive
- kept to a minimum but enforced.

All rules result in the pupils of Ballytober knowing the boundaries of behaviour. They know what to do as soon as they enter the classroom and after they have finished an activity.

ACHIEVEMENT

This is celebrated in many different ways:

- displays of work
- weekly classroom prizes
- verbal or written praise by teachers, peers, principal and parents
- opportunities to perform and share eg Assembly
- encouraging self-esteem
- awarding stickers, certificates and stars
- taking on responsibilities
- sharing success with local community eg press releases, website

ASSESSING, MONITORING & REVIEWING PUPIL PERFORMANCE

All of our pupils are assessed each year in Numeracy and Literacy during the Summer Term using standardised tests.

The performance data is :-

- analysed by co-ordinators and principal
- presented to the Board of Governors
- used to set realistic yet challenging targets
- used to identify areas for improvement within our Teaching and Learning strategies

Each teacher assesses learning outcomes within their class through :-

- classroom observation
- informal assessment
- supplementary termly assessments as required

Samples of pupils' work are kept as evidence of pupils' performance, creating individual pupil assessment folders.

SPECIAL NEEDS PUPILS

Our aim is to ensure that all pupils receive a quality education that is delivered in such a way as to meet the needs of all pupils regardless of their ability. We strive to identify Special Educational Needs at the earliest opportunity through:

- classroom observation
- informal assessment
- discussion with parents
- discussion with pre-school providers
- BASE, Baseline, Action Picture Test and BPVS

When a child is identified as having a special educational need :-

- the Code of Practice will be followed
- IEPs will be provided where needed
- advice of outside agencies will be sought if necessary SEN pupils will receive diagnostic testing as required and their progress will be regularly monitored through on-going assessment. Within the class setting, these children will also receive differentiated work appropriate to their needs.

Where it is deemed appropriate, pupils will receive :-

- WellComm
- Talk Boost
- Reading Partnerships
- Toe by Toe
- Power of Two
- SENCo intervention programme
- Classroom assistant intervention programmes

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Teachers and classroom assistants fully avail of CPD opportunities facilitated by EA and educational consultants, depending on the focus being addressed. CPD is mostly planned to address objectives identified in subject specific action plans. Other requirements are met as deemed appropriate for inclusion in the programme of staff and curriculum development.

Key messages and course content is fully disseminated at staff meetings to ensure more cohesive provision. This develops professional knowledge and creates more consistent, effective practice throughout the school. Termly reviews of progress made towards action plan objectives offer opportunities for CPD impact to be reviewed and further areas for development to be identified. Monthly meetings between the principal and co-ordinators facilitate professional dialogue regarding individual or whole staff CPD requirements.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Teaching and learning activities are well planned to ensure pupils :-

- working at their correct level
- begin promptly
- initial pace is maintained
- end with an appropriate plenary

At the beginning of each year timetables are devised, based on agreed specified times for teaching different areas of the curriculum. Changes are made to initial timetabling to facilitate additional demands created by curriculum development.

SUPPLY TEACHERS

The principal and class teachers are required to attend meetings and courses linked to the programme of staff and curriculum development. Supply teachers are employed on such occasions. To ensure continuity of provision, teachers leave written guidance and suggested activities for all planned absences from the classroom. Information regarding pupils with additional needs are provided as appropriate.

Classroom assistants play a vital role in maintaining continuity of provision in the absence of the usual class teacher. Their professional capabilities, coupled with their knowledge about the learning and teaching expectations in place, makes them the ideal link when substitute teachers are required.

The school has a small number of supply teachers who are used regularly. Where possible, these teachers are booked to cover planned absences or absences due to illness. This arrangement ensures a greater degree of continuity as the personnel are already familiar with the pupils and the procedures.

New supply teachers are invited to reference the folder of information available in the staffroom.

ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

The principal has overall responsibility for ensuring and evaluating the quality of teaching, including assessment, and how effective it is in promoting children's learning. To meet these responsibilities the principal will:-

- Identify the core and additional areas which need to be monitored and evaluated through all available avenues
- Ensure that staff and governors understand the purpose of monitoring and evaluation, and its link to teaching provision
- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation data is collated and analysed and then used impactfully
- Monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of roles and systems which support pupils' learning including pastoral care issues work and overall deployment of all staff
- Will monitor the quality of staff development processes and activities
- Will carry out direct observations of teachers in accordance with the PRSD policy
- Will carry out learning walks to ensure a stimulating learning environment is evident in accordance with school policy
- Will delegate monitoring and evaluation activities with clarity of expectations and outcomes to be achieved
- Will review teachers' planners and evaluations
- Will carry out regular book looks for each class
- Will conduct surveys with key stake holders to identify overall strengths and weaknesses to inform school improvement planning
- Will carry out self-evaluation at whole school level to identify areas for priority on School Development Plan
- Will report to parents and governors regarding monitoring and evaluating outcomes
- Will liaise with staff members and outside agencies to obtain support and advice as required
- Will agree and review strategies for school improvement
- Will consult with and inform parents of relevant updates in school development as the need arises
- Will carry out review meetings with staff and pupils
- Will review all action plans and coordinate review of School Development Plan progress throughout the year with subject leaders

ROLE OF CO-ORDINATORS

Subject leaders will:-

- provide a strategic lead and direction for their curriculum area
- support and offer advice to colleagues on issues related to the curriculum area
- monitor pupil progress in that curriculum area
- work collaboratively to ensure strategic direction is cohesive
- keep up to date with developments in their subject area
- review the way in which the subject is delivered
- plan for improvement
- review the yearly planners
- ensure there is consistency and progression in the pupils' curricular experience
- monitor and evaluate effectively to identify priorities and progress

While subject co-ordinators have lead roles in their particular areas, curriculum development is regarded as a whole school collegiate responsibility. This ensures a cohesive approach towards effective school improvement measures. The co-ordinators are :-

• Literacy : Mrs E Anderson

• Numeracy : Mrs A Leighton

• UICT : Mrs K Elliott

SEN : Mrs E AndersonWAU : Mrs L Chartres

• PE : Mrs A Leighton

• The Arts : Mrs L Chartres

• RE: Mrs E Anderson

• Pastoral Care : Mrs L Chartres - Mrs E Anderson

 Safeguarding & Child Protection : Mrs A Leighton - Mrs L Chartres

• PDMU : Mrs L Chartres

• Assessment : Mrs E Anderson

Areas for development are identified through robust monitoring and evaluating systems, within the context of the current School Development Plan.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING

A challenging and robust Monitoring and Evaluating schedule is being embedded to create evidence to inform future staff and curriculum development. The practices in place aim to provide opportunities for the principal and subject leaders to :-

- observe the quality of teaching and learning
- ensure consistency and continuity across the key stages
- identify strengths and weaknesses in practice and provision
- identify areas for development
- identify resourcing needs
- ensure the needs of all pupils are met through differentiation
- share good practice

The Principal and subject leaders work collaboratively to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning through :-

- reviewing performance data and assessment outcomes
- reviewing supplementary assessment outcomes
- reviewing qualitative assessment
- identifying pupils requiring SEN intervention
- creating subject specific action plans to address needs
- charting progress against identified targets and objectives
- reviewing half-termly planners and evaluations
- classroom observations with agreed foci
- book scoops with agreed foci
- book looks with agreed foci
- levelling displays
- CCEA Literacy and Numeracy tasks
- reviewing Foundation Stage observations
- consulting with key stakeholders
- PRSD objectives
- Pupil Focus Groups

Evidence gathered is utilised impactfully to improve the learning and teaching environment for the pupils and to engineer effective staff and curricular development.

ROLE OF TEACHERS

Individual class teachers will :-

- Maintain a classroom environment conducive to effective learning
- Take responsibility for general cleanliness and tidiness of their classrooms
- Contribute to developing an accurate and evidence-based overview of standards and quality
- Use monitoring and evaluation outcomes to address development points in teaching and learning
- Will seek support from the SENCo, co-ordinators or principal if required
- Report to the parents on the progress made by each child in their class using data where appropriate
- Reflect on teaching and learning in their own classroom through their planner evaluations
- Will reflect on pupil, class and school progress at meetings
- Complete and analyse the data and tracking system (overview)
 spreadsheets as appropriate and plan future teaching and learning accordingly
- Use data to set targets in relation to low achievement,
 underachievement and the gifted and talented
- Regularly monitor, evaluate and review pupil targets
- Complete assessment activities as scheduled
- Review IEP targets with SENCO and liaise with parents
- Maintain class records/ notes in the class overview file
- Discuss progress with parents at interviews in October and upon request by any parent as appropriate
- Provide support for parents to aid child's learning at home where necessary

CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

Classroom assistants and other adult helpers are deployed as effectively as possible to work with named individuals or with small groups in order to support effective learning and teaching within each classroom setting. They avail of CPD opportunities to increase their professional knowledge and increase their capacity to work with targeted pupils efficiently.

SCHOOL POLICIES

The school's policies are reviewed regularly either annually or biannually in order to ensure they are a considered response to current statutory requirements. All members of staff are expected to be familiar with the content of each policy, to ensure parity of practice and provision. With this in mind, a copy of all current policies is available in the Policy Folder in the staffroom.

ROLE OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors play an active role in all aspects of school life. They fully support the teaching and learning taking place in the school by :-

- determining, supporting, monitoring and reviewing the school policies on teaching and learning
- supporting the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively
- ensuring that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning
- monitoring teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations
- monitoring how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment
- ensuring that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching
- monitoring the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning policies through the school self-review processes
 - reports from subject leaders
 - Annual Governors' Report
 - review of the in-service CPD
- monitoring progress made against the SDP and subject action plans
- meeting monthly to discuss the practice and provision throughout the school
- developing their capacity to support and challenge appropriately

RESOURCE FINANCE

Curriculum areas are allocated money according to the needs identified in the School Development Plan, within the constraints of the Delegated Budget. The Principal and co-ordinators discuss resource needs at the beginning of the year and then on a termly basis. Requests are made directly to the Principal. Co-ordinators are mindful of the value and usefulness of resources they wish to requisition.

ROLE OF THE PARENTS

Parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children learn. Measures are in place to inform parents about what and how their children learn by: -

- holding parent meetings and information sessions to explain our school strategies for teaching and learning
- sending regular reports to parents explaining the progress made and how further improvement can be made with parents' help
- encouraging parents to support their children with homework
- inviting them to curriculum workshops
- encouraging them to volunteer to accompany pupils on educational visits

Parents also have a responsibility to the school. We would like our parents to :-

- ensure that their child has the best attendance possible
- ensure that their child is equipped for school
 - adequate stationery
 - school uniform
 - homework completed
- do their best to keep their child healthy and fit for school
- inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect performance or behaviour at school
- promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general
- support the school in its policies :-
 - Positive Behaviour Policy
 - Anti-Bullying Policy

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

The Learning and Teaching Policy will require regular review, to take a number of things into account, including :-

- new initiatives
- changes in the curriculum
- developments in technology
- changes to the physical environment of the school