

Teaching and Learning Policy for the Infant & Junior Departments

Central Concept

Learning is the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding.

Learning must be enjoyable and effective and based on co-operation and respect.

Learning is achieved through a wide range of teaching routines.

Policy Aims

The aim of the policy is to:

- Demonstrate a commitment to quality teaching and a sensitivity to children's needs.
- Underpin all other policies, both curriculum and supplementary.
- Provide a comprehensive guide to teaching and learning strategies.
- Promote high standards of achievement through effective and enjoyable teaching and learning.

The Role of the Teacher

We acknowledge that the teacher must employ a range of strategies in an effort to match the teaching with the learning. There are times when the teacher will:

- Train and inform.
- Provide or promote.
- Guide or facilitate.

There are times when the teacher needs to stand back and allow development to take place and times when intervention is necessary.

Praise, reward, review and consolidation are also a very important aspect of learning.

Teachers must demonstrate a caring attitude towards children, look at the children as individuals, value their efforts, listen to them and show sensitivity to their needs, promote good relationships between themselves and amongst the children.

Teachers should, at times, be inspirational, enthusiastic, challenging and not afraid to make mistakes.

Teachers can be formal, interactive or open-minded, depending on the learning situation. Above all, the teacher is a role model and should show all the characteristics and attitudes that we would hope to develop in the child.

The Role of the Parent

We aim to create a partnership with parents, which begin before the child starts school. Parents are expected to be fully involved in their child's education and this involvement will differ depending on individual circumstances and the needs of the child. Parents must make sure that their child attends school every day (health permitting). They should take opportunities, which are provided, to familiarise themselves with school procedures. They should provide substantial opportunity for reading development and other homework tasks. They should take a general interest in their child's progress and make arrangements to see the class teacher at least once a year. Interest in school is not always welcomed by the child, but parents should not be daunted. It is important that the parents have a positive view of school and learning which is transmitted to the child, and they should contact the school immediately there is a problem with any aspect of their child's care or education that may affect a child's performance or behaviour at school.

Homework

- To encourage self-discipline and personal organisation.
- To allow parents direct involvement in their child's learning.
- The setting of tasks will be normal practice in the Junior School.
- The frequency and length of tasks will vary according to the age and needs of the child as well as the programme of work at the time.

Homework is an increasingly important facet of a child's development. Tasks provided for home should be lively and interesting enough to engage the child's attention easily. There is a place for hearing children read every day, revision type practical tasks and also, learning tasks. Tasks at home are valuable to the children in so far as home may offer opportunities for individual study or prolonged periods of quiet. Home also often allows for one to one support.

The Learning Process

Learning is planned in the long, medium and short term. Long term planning ensures coverage, medium term planning ensures progression and short term planning ensures that learning is purposeful and that the learning can be evaluated and assessed. Shared planning, as a whole school or in the various departments, is often used particularly when introducing new ideas or developing long and medium term plans. The advantages of sharing planning are numerous, it can be supportive where staff are unsure of the content in a particular curriculum area, it can expand the teachers understanding of what is happening elsewhere in school and it can also provide facilitators with valuable information on the way subjects are being delivered elsewhere.

Each policy determines **how** subjects are organised and taught and what the specific aims of the subject and its development are with regard to the achievement of the children.

- i. Teaching and lesson plans have clear objectives and build on children's previous knowledge.
- ii. Children are aware of the aims and outcomes of the lesson and know the expectations of time- allocations, parameters and what will be the acceptable standard.
- iii. Questioning skills are important, which helps to develop children's ability to think, evaluate and develop their own critical skills.
- iv. There will be a manageable degree of differentiation, which takes account at least of the more and less able pupils.

Learning takes place in a range of settings matched to intended learning goals:

- Whole class teaching.
- Children working in groups or similar tasks.
- Thematic approach - small groups working independently to contribute to the whole.
- Groups rotating around prescribed tasks or activities.
- Individual or paired work using explanatory work cards or text books with accessible materials and resources.
- Individual study and development.
- Focused or open-ended play.

Children are sometimes given opportunities to develop their own ideas, particularly as this is often where the best learning takes place. Such things as projects, together with involvement in the day to day running of the school.

Parent and other adults are used in school for a range of learning situations. Where the adults are teaching using their own expertise, learning can often be enhanced. Enhancement through visitors providing dramatic or other stimuli will also extend the children's learning, often beyond the range of the teacher.

Assessment and Evaluation

- Assessment tests at the beginning and end of each academic year (September and June), in Reading, Maths and English.
- Class tests.
- School examinations in November and June.
- Keep a pupil progress chart for each class.
- Key Stage 2 tests.

The assessment of children's ability is of paramount importance if children are to be moved on from where they are rather than where they should be. Short term planning provides an opportunity for individuals and groups to be assessed by their teacher against achievements in specific and very small steps forward. By virtue of their professional skill teachers are able to

make diagnostic assessments of pupils in the broadest range of situations. Where they cannot they will seek assistance from the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

The process is ongoing and pupil performance is monitored using a very wide range of strategies. The chosen assessment method should, in all cases, match the learning method that it is associated with.

- A child's knowledge may be judged initially by their capacity for recollection.
- Skills can be assessed by a child's use of them in a given context.
- Understanding, however, may only be judged by their application and skills in a range of new situations.

Assessment is usually directed at the specific learning objectives related to the teaching, but where there are a broad range of achievements the assessed levels of achievement are pre-determined according to the Argyle House School descriptors.

Individual assessment will often give rise to the need for individual targets, which can be negotiated with the children themselves.

Children should be encouraged to make judgments about their ability and define the targets needed to move them on. Notice should be taken of these and steps taken to neutralise the problems. It may sometimes be the fault of the teacher or even other children or simply a physical constraint in the classroom.

Above all, the learning process and the environment in which it takes place must be flexible. Children's individual and group needs may differ on a day to day basis and the school must be ready to adapt its practices, resources and even its physical environment to benefit the learning of the children within.

It is important that children and parents are made aware of how best they can develop their children's learning and why certain strategies are used, such as LOOK, COVER, WRITE, CHECK in spelling and that children are aware of how they learn best, eg through physical participation.

Training and Development

We recognise the need for continuous training of staff as well as pupils. Education never stands still and new initiatives have to be appraised and assimilated all the time. Development needs are flagged up by individuals through self-reflection, appraisal or as a result of monitored feedback. They are also introduced by outside agencies. There is an appreciation that training is ongoing to keep abreast of recent initiatives or even to reaffirm age old practices. The teacher need not always be seen as the expert and often some of the best learning takes place when the teacher is learning with the class.

The school can provide staff development in a number of ways:

- Internal support from colleagues.

- Use of expert outside providers.
- Use of training and support materials.
- Attendance of meetings or training courses.

The crucial element to all forms of training must be the provision of time.

Quality Assurance and Evaluation

The whole process of teaching and learning is a living process, ever-changing making an infinite number of demands on the staff and children. Evaluation of the process comes through a wide spectrum of means and innumerable informal opportunities. Formal opportunities for monitoring and evaluation include:

- Meeting with staff to discuss professional development and set targets.
- Analysis of assessment data.
- Facilitator monitoring with department teams.
- Review of policies and planning.
- Target setting and review.
- Classroom observation.
- Sampling children's work.
- Teachers' plans and records.
- Results of Key Stage 2 practice papers.
- Subject co-ordinators supervise the preparation of subject policies and help with the schemes of work, provision of appropriate teaching resources and offering of advice and support to colleagues (they also monitor the quality and teaching and learning and use the evidence gained to shape future curriculum development).

Reporting to Parents

A written report is forwarded to the parent/guardian of every child in the school at the end of the Autumn and Summer terms of that academic year.

After each assessment period in September and June, parents are invited to school to discuss the results of the tests.