**Lismore Primary School**

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**Teaching and Learning Policy**

Our Teaching and Learning policy is underpinned by the ethos of our island school. There is a holistic approach to Teaching and Learning where every event is taken as a learning opportunity and each individual’s progress informs planning for future Learning and Teaching. There is a strong emphasis on child led learning – wherever possible children make their own choices about learning and each child regularly discusses their progress and next steps.

**1 Vision, Values and Aims of the School**

All stakeholders are involved in the formation of the Vision, Values and Aims of the school which are centred on our family ethos and our island location. The children have written their own version of the aims of the school and they are referred to regularly.

**1.1 Our Vision**

We are striving to become an excellent school that enables our pupils to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors. In the words of the pupils:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| We are all working to make our school * A happy place
* Feel safe
* A place we want to come to
* A place where we learn lots of things to help us when we are older
* Friendly and fair with nobody left out
* Eco-friendly
 | We will try our best to:* Take responsibility for our learning
* Feel positive about ourselves
* Develop good relationships and be polite and thoughtful towards other people
* Enjoy school and help other children to do the same
* Lead a healthy and eco-friendly lifestyle
* Follow the school’s golden rules
* Be good Global Citizens
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**1.2 Our Values**

***L****ismore Community* - We value the co-operation between children, staff, parents, carers and the community which makes the school a unique place where children can be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

***I****ndividuality* - We treat every learner as an individual, recognising and responding to their different learning and personal needs and encouraging each to achieve their potential.

**S**afe - We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners, and to a policy of non-discrimination and freedom from prejudice with regards to gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation and race.

***M****indset* - We value the philosophy of positive discipline and believe that learners learn through encouragement and positive support.

***O****penness* - We value the openness of our school community, where learners, parents staff and members of the community know they will be listened to if they voice their opinions or concerns

***R****espect* - We encourage all to respect and value the beliefs and high achievements of others in order to create a mutually supportive learning environment.

***E****xpectations* - We value high standards and expect and encourage everyone to achieve their potential. We value and encourage creativity, a healthy lifestyle and high self-esteem.

**1.3 Our Aims**

***L****earning* - We aim to make learning engaging, relevant and challenging for every child

***I****ndependence* – We aim to address geographical isolation we will develop our links with other schools and encourage staff to take every opportunity to maintain their professionalism.

***S****uccess* - We recognise that whilst academic achievement is fundamental, an all-round education will encourage a child to develop as a whole person. We therefore aim to provide opportunities for children to find their own interests and talents, to enjoy success and to persevere in the face of initial failure.

***M****otivation* - We aim to develop an ethos of self-motivation for all through the Growth Mindset philosophy

***O****neness* - We aim to make the school a friendly place with a happy, relaxed, family atmosphere where children from all parts of the island work, feel safe and protected and where effort is valued and success is celebrated.

***R****esponsibility* - We aim to encourage everyone to appreciate and celebrate Global Diversity, the environment and to have a positive attitude to health and well-being.

***E****xperiences* - We aim to create a rich and stimulating environment – to ensure that every child has the widest possible range of opportunities in which to experience success; to develop an enthusiasm for learning and to prepare them for the challenges they will meet in their education and in life outside school

**2 The School Curriculum**

We deliver the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence.

**2.1 Curriculum Levels**

The curriculum is for 3 to 18 year olds and is organised into levels

The levels in Lismore Primary School are

* Early level Nursery) and P1.
* Level 1 P2, P3 and P4
* Level 2 P5, P6 and P7

**2.2 Outline of Curriculum**

Teaching and learning are planned using the principles and four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence.

**The Seven Design Principles**

The Seven Design Principles of the Curriculum for Excellence underpin all learning at the school. We ensure that learning experiences adhere to these principles – personalisation, challenge, coherence, relevance, depth, breadth, choice.

**The Four Capacities**

The four capacities are embedded across learning and are part of the aims of our school. Activities where children are being successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens are identified throughout the main hallway of the school. These attributes are continually taught throughout the learning themes and curricular areas so that children can see what theses look like in real life.

**2.3 Organisation of Learning and Teaching**

Children from P1-P7 are taught in one multi composite class where work is differentiated so each child is working at an appropriate level. P1 join the Nursery for part of every day to make and Early Level Class. Within the multi composite class, children may be taught as

* A whole class with differentiated outcomes
* In mixed ability or age pairs/groups
* In groups based on current Curriculum for Excellence working levels of the children or based on pupils who have similar strengths or areas to develop
* Individually

**3 Teaching and Learning**

The Teaching and Learning philosophy of the school is based on the four contexts of the Curriculum for Excellence:

* The ethos and life of the school as a community
* Curriculum areas and subjects
* Opportunities for personal achievement
* Interdisciplinary learning

**3.1 Ethos of the School**

Our friendly school is embedded in the life of the community on our tiny island. It is a family school where children, families, staff and friends can feel at home. The school is a happy, bright and welcoming place where achievements and learning are celebrated by everyone. There is a relaxed atmosphere of mutual respect, consideration and security. Everyone is clear about the ethos of the school as a small friendly relaxed and caring environment and maintain this through all their actions. Throughout all teaching and learning across the curriculum the school works to maintain its ethos through:

**Giving the pupils a voice**

The children’s are asked their opinions on many of the decisions made in school. They lead much of their learning and make suggestions about topics and projects; improvements to the school and changes in procedure. The children feel that they have ownership of their school and learning. As a small school we do not have a Pupil Council as every pupil can give their opinion during our daily circle times.

**Active Learning**

There is an emphasis on active learning and approaches to learning are varied to engage the learner. Children benefit from child led learning, real life experiences outdoor learning, field trips which all bring relevance to their learning

**Learning Through Play**

At the Early Level, the children learn through play wherever appropriate. They are encouraged to explore, investigate and experiment to prepare them for more formal learning as they move through the school.

**Our Early Level Class**

We have developed an Early Level Class. Children aged between 3 and 7 years learn together through age relevant experiences and topics and through creative, investigative and exploratory play. P1 join the Pre Five children for part of each day to enable them to continue learning at an appropriate level through play. There is close liaison between Early Level and Primary School to ensure progression and challenge

**Outdoor Learning**

As a rural school with large grounds, we use outdoor learning across the curriculum particularly in the summer months. The children are as at home outdoors as they are indoors. We have circle times outside whenever possible and We have regular expeditions on the island particularly during the summer and have our own Outdoor Learning Zone, raised beds and pond. The Early Level spends time everyday outdoors exploring, constructing and investigating.

**Encouraging Creativity**

The children are given many opportunities to be creative across their learning – through problem solving, discussion, collaborative and independent work as well as through open ended questioning from staff. The Early Level class also has regular creative play sessions. Learners are given opportunities across the curriculum to create their own ideas, to develop them and to modify them through self-evaluation.

**3.2 Curriculum Areas and Subjects**

The organisation of learning is very flexible with a varied mix of curriculum subjects and interdisciplinary learning. Experiences and Outcomes are tracked so that a balance across the curriculum areas is maintained.

We have a flexible ‘timetable’ which takes account of any Interdisciplinary Learning so that all curriculum areas are covered either as discrete subjects or as part of a project. There are daily Numeracy, Literacy and Health and Wellbeing sessions. Other curricular subjects vary depending on the current interdisciplinary learning theme.

There is an outline nine year topic plan, but local, national and international events as well as the interests of the children also inform the choice of theme.

For each curricular area and at each curriculum level there a set of national “Benchmarks” to enable staff to track the progress of each child. These along with the Significant Aspects of Learning and the Experiences and Outcomes of each curricular area are recorded for each child so that all staff have an overall picture of progress for every learner.

**3.2.1 Learning Areas**

Our curriculum is made up of the following learning areas

* Expressive arts
* Health and Wellbeing
* Literacy
* French
* Gaelic
* Mathematics and Numeracy
* Religious and Moral Education
* Sciences
* Social Studies
* Technologies

Within each learning area there are a range of Experiences and Outcomes and Benchmarks for children at each curriculum level. These provide teachers, children and parents/carers with the detail of the curriculum and can be viewed at:[www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum)

The school has a curriculum overview plan which sets out a year-by-year structure for our curriculum. Teachers and children work within this and can also adapt the plan to suit the needs of classes, groups or individuals. This ‘curriculum plan’ can be viewed in the school entrance.

**The core subjects**

Numeracy, Literacy and Health and Wellbeing are seen as core subjects and are embedded in all learning activities across the curriculum.

Daily sessions of each core subject are also timetabled:

**3.2.2 Numeracy**

Each child works at their own level through the schools own Programme of Study which includes:

* Mental arithmetic
* Number, measure and money
* Shape, movement and position
* Information handling
* Problem solving and investigations

No particular Maths scheme is used but the daily sessions will generally include a mixture of adult led teaching, games, mental maths and written practice. Wherever possible the whole class works on the same topic at an appropriate level for each child. Individual areas of challenge are identified on a weekly basis so that they can be addressed promptly with extra support.

At the beginning of a numeracy topic, each child is given a set of Success Criteria to work towards. These Success Criteria are then used for planning and recording of evidence of knowledge skills and understanding.

Children use a wide variety of tools to support their learning – games; fun practice activities using dice and “bones”; whiteboards, ipads, jotters and worksheets.

As the class is very small teachers have a thorough knowledge of each child’s progress. Assessments are used to support teacher judgement and for moderation. The school uses standardised testing – GL Assessments, the Scottish National Assessments; end of topic assessments using the given Success Criteria, to identify individual areas of challenge and Holistic Assessments where children are expected to use a range of skills from across the curriculum.

Children’s progress is tracked on a detailed recording sheet which covers their whole school career.

**3.2.3 Literacy**

Each child works at their own level and an individual programme of study is planned for them which will include targets and teaching and learning plans for Listening and Talking, Writing and Reading.

**Reading**

Most children read aloud to a member of staff every day. The children are asked questions about what they are reading to check understanding. They are also encouraged to ask questions of their own about the text. Progress is noted daily in the Learning Journey.

From P3 upwards, learners complete weekly written comprehension exercises to support their progress in both reading and writing.

For part of each year, both First and Second Level learners study a “class” novel chosen to suit the needs of the learners.

P5-7 all have personal readers which they are expected to read every day at home.

As soon as a learner has reached a level where they are confident to read short sentences, they are encouraged to read in all aspects of school eg computer research, reading recipes, reading to younger children and this expectation increases as the children move up the school.

Assessment of children’s progress in reading is continuous as children read aloud every day. Standardised reading assessments are used to confirm teacher judgement and to ensure the school’s judgements are in line with the national standard.

**Writing**

We take a holistic approach to writing where the children are encouraged to write every day either in Literacy sessions or during Interdisciplinary Learning. There may be a specific writing topic focussing on a certain genre of writing, eg story writing, persuasive writing or writing may be for a purpose linked to a current topic or activity eg writing a thank you letter for Christmas presents. A record is kept to ensure that learners cover all genres of writing during the year. Learners are expected to produce at least one extended piece of writing – generally a story – which has several chapters and takes several weeks to write.

**Handwriting and word processing**

From P1, learners use a mixture of handwriting and word processing for writing in order to develop both skills.

From P1-P3 children practise letter formation regularly and by the beginning of P4 they are encouraged to join their letters. The school does not have a specific policy about how letters should be joined so that individual children can develop their own style of handwriting. P1-P3 use thick soft leaded pencils to write moving to thinner HB pencils once they are confident in letter formation. When learners are confident to write in joined handwriting they are to use fibre tipped handwriting pens. We encourage all the children to use other writing resources when first learning to form letters (writing in sand, using paint etc) and for less formal writing (brightly coloured gel pens, etc)

As soon as learners can recognise letters they are encouraged to type some of their writing. Lower case keyboards are used with P1. Every child has their own area on the computer system where they can store their work.

**Literacy skills**

As we take a holistic approach to writing, there are no formal spelling or grammar lessons. However, some children choose to do spelling and grammar as part of their homework. These skills are also addressed through e formal written comprehension exercises and Literacy Box cards. Younger children practise the alphabet by playing games. Other Literacy skills such as using dictionary, writing notes etc are planned for in Interdisciplinary Learning.

A learner’s writing is kept in their own individual writing folder which travels through the school with them and demonstrates their progression. At the beginning and end of every term, a specific piece of work is used as a more formal assessed piece to check progress and inform next steps. These pieces are kept in the Learning Profile folders.

At least once a year, the school works with other small schools to moderate and ensure that teacher judgements are in line with the national standard.

**Listening and Talking**

In a small multicomposite class there are daily opportunities for talking and listening in different situations ranging from Circle Times and Plenaries where each child is asked to speak and listen to their peers, to discussions about the current interdisciplinary topic.

Every opportunity is taken to encourage children to talk in familiar and unfamiliar situations. Learners are expected to greet visitors to the school and to talk to them about their learning. Children eat lunch together with staff and are encouraged in

All children from Pre Fives upwards are encouraged to speak aloud in front of an audience eg taking part in a play, reciting a poem etc.

**Recording of progress in Literacy**

Every child has their own Literacy tracking sheet for recording progress which stays with them as they move through the school.

**3.2.4 Health and Wellbeing**

Health, happiness and security are the first steps towards a child making progress in learning.

Daily Health and Wellbeing sessions include whole school Circle Times where personal, social and moral issues can be discussed as well as 30 minutes of physical education or other physical activity.

HWB is effectively monitored and tracked. Health and wellbeing discussed in daily circle times. Healthy snacks and lunches are encouraged; we take part in the NHS Childsmile initiative for teeth cleaning and children take part in daily physical exercise. To address the island’s remote setting we have an emphasis on social and emotional wellbeing.

**Getting it Right for Every Child**

The school works with parents and other agencies to ensure that every child is safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. We ensure that each child’s needs are met through regular observations, interaction with parents and professional dialogue with other agencies. GIRFEC based Developmental Milestones are used in the Early Level and all children have a yearly plan based on the My World Triangle

**Growth Mindset**

We encourage the children to have a Growth Mindset and we use positive language for learning. We encourage children to believe in themselves and to persevere so that they develop the resilience to tackle the challenges they will face as they grow and develop.

***Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing across Learning***

Every opportunity is taken to use and develop Literacy and Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing knowledge and skills across learning – in interdisciplinary learning, in day to day routines and throughout curriculum subjects, eg children will use numeracy a fitness circuit as they use a stopwatch, note down scores in a table and find totals and averages. They use literacy skills to research a topic on the internet – reading the information and then taking notes.

**3.3 Opportunities for Personal Achievement**

We give all pupils opportunities for personal achievements. We encourage children to be involved in extra-curricular activities. Every child gave a reading at our Christmas Nativity Service and all have speaking parts in any school performances. Many children attend sporting or musical activities at the weekend which are discussed informally around the lunch table on a Friday and during Circle Time the following Monday so that progress can be monitored.

We work with parents to find more opportunities for children to take part in activities with a larger number of children, where they can learn new skills and develop them further.

Learners are encouraged to take up as many opportunities as they can to develop hobbies, interests. Staff encourage children to attend and improve.

A record of personal achievements and progress in personal projects is included in the Learning Log allowing children to discuss next steps and progress.

**Wider Achievements**

We encourage children to take part in events and competitions beyond school in order to widen their capabilities and to allow them to try new activities and to experience success in different areas. Children take part in activities ranging from drama to swimming and gymnastics. Children enter the Mod and take part in Cluster competitions and activities.

All the children take part in the Lismore Award Scheme

**Personal Support and Mentoring**

Our pupils are known well by all staff. Yearly, termly and weekly targets are formulated with each child and their parents and are discussed individually each week. Each child reflects on their own learning in a weekly conversation with their teacher. Individual needs are identified promptly and addressed appropriately

**Learning Journeys**

Every child has a Learning Journey which they keep throughout their time at the school. This contains agreed targets, progress reports, examples of work, photographs, certificates etc and is shared regularly with parents.

**3.4 Interdisciplinary Learning**

Interdisciplinary Learning is the basis for much of the learning at the school. Planning is always flexible so that the interests of the children can be followed. The children are involved from the outset, helping to choose and plan the topic, forming learning intentions and success criteria, deciding in an end point and assessments and evaluating their own progress. We have our own child friendly version of the NAR flow chart which is displayed on the wall for every topic and referred to frequently.

Work is recorded in a variety of ways but is generally displayed on the classroom walls or kept in large shared floorbooks. Children may also have individual project books when they wish to follow their own particular interests. Experiences and Outcomes are recorded with any work and are also tracked for each child.

Our Interdisciplinary Learning makes good use of all outcomes ensuring there are a variety of activities which are relevant learning experiences for all children. Activities and topics are chosen because of their relevance to the children’s lives or because the children have shown a specific interest in the chosen topic. Interdisciplinary Projects are planned and lead by the children using large floorbooks. Assessment is planned and where possible each project has a suitable end point.

**Information & Computer Technology**

iPads, computers and cameras are always available to assist the children across their learning. There are enough computers in school for each child to work independently if necessary. The children record their activities on camera and video which they can edit themselves.

Computer software is used to practise Literacy and Numeracy skills and iPads are always on hand for quick snippets of research.

**Skills for Life, Learning and Work**

The development of skills for learning, life and work is emphasised in all aspects of school – the children are asked to identify skills they have developed using Bloom’s Taxonomy. Following a topic, the children discuss what skills they had developed and applied and may record them in their Learning Logs. The newly developed Lismore Award is based on skills under the headings – Living healthily, Independence, Skills, Making friends, Outdoors, Responsibility and Employment.

**Developing the Young Workforce**

We give the children the opportunity to meet or visit people from different walks of life beyond theirs to enable them to widen their horizons. Through our skills curriculum we help them to prepare for the work. In August 2015, P6-7 began work on the JASS award – the Junior Award Scheme for Schools allowing them to try new skills and activities beyond school in preparation for their future.

**Citizenship**

We aim to give the children an understanding of good citizenship. We have a Global Citizenship Policy and refer to citizenship issues throughout the curriculum. We refer to the rights of the child, responsibilities and global issues, encouraging children to become citizens of the world through interdisciplinary learning projects and through regular Circle Time discussions.

**Scottish Culture**

Scottish culture and customs are part of the way of life in our island school. Gaelic is spoken by some staff and pupils and children are greeted and dismissed in Gaelic. The children regularly take part in Gaelic traditions such as dancing, singing and other musical activities

**Residential field Trips**

To address the schools island location, the whole school takes part in overnight expeditions to a variety of different places, so that the children can experience the wider world.

In December 2015, the whole school travelled to Edinburgh, where they visited the Scottish Parliament and Dynamic Earth as well as attending a traditional Pantomime.

**Sustainability**

We endeavour to embed the importance of sustainability across learning. Our school is an Eco School and Fairtrade Active. We have taken part in activities with the island energy group; we collect the island’s unwanted clothes for Rag

Bag; we recycle when possible and we fundraise for charities of the children’s choice.

**Enterprise**

Children are given opportunities to take part in regular Enterprise activities which they help to plan and carry out. The children plan their own enterprise projects from first ideas, to outlay to final product.

**International Education**

The children are introduced to a variety of different cultures and countries through annual theme weeks about different parts of the world. We are in communication with several other Lismore Schools in the world.

**4 Working with others**

**4.1 Parents as Partners**

As a family school, we work closely with parents. There is daily communication between school and home. Parents are also involved improvement planning and in the planning of future projects. Most parents are members of the Parent Council. Brothers and sisters, grandparents and other relations often visit the school and there are many family events during the year. The parents are involved in target setting and formation of each child’s long term school plan.

We value parents/carers role in supporting their child’s learning. Typically we would expect parents/carer’s support to include

* Using the Learning Journal each week with your child to check learning, discuss what your child had been doing in school and decide as a family what you can do to support learning.
* Ensuring good school, attendance and punctuality
* Supporting positive behaviour and relationships
* Supporting learning including homework
* Coming to curriculum evenings or parent open days
* Helping to get ready for transitions
* Volunteering some time for school events where this is possible

We report progress to parents through

* Target setting discussions
* Learning Journal and weekly reflections of learning
* Homework/Shared Learning activities
* Child Planning Meetings (CPM’s) for children with significant additional support needs
* School newsletters highlighting the achievements and learning
* Parent Council meetings

Teachers will get in touch with parents if they are concerned about a child’s progress or development. For example

* Friendships are not developing as expected
* A child’s wellbeing has changed suddenly
* Learning will require significant additional support
* The teacher has suggestions for home support in learning

**Homework**

We recognise that a significant number of children may have other commitments outside school. Homework will reinforce school based learning and will give parents/carers an insight into their child’s current learning. We recommend that all children in P1-P3 read.

**4.2 Partnerships for Learning**

We involve parents, family, friends, colleagues and experts in much of our learning. Partnership projects are planned in advance to maximise the children’s learning experience. We have initiated A Friends of Lismore Association, members of which help at school events and with curricular activities. The school calls on members of the community, parents and local experts to enhance learning experience. Staff take part in professional dialogue to address isolation issues.

**School Liaisons**

We have strong links with other island schools as these schools are similar to ours. We also link up with schools from the coop and the cluster for joint activities and moderation. The children from the island schools are able to meet others who will eventually live and work together at Oban High School.

**Transitions**

Transitions at all stages within the school are smooth and seamless with children settling quickly into their new environment. We use a number of activities with other island schools to facilitate the P7s move to Oban High School and the hostel.

In the term prior to moving into P1, children begin to spend a little time in the Primary School classroom where they can familiarise themselves with the different routine. The children stay for lunch and spend one or two full days in school. Once they have joined P1 the children spend some time each day in the Early Level class where they are able to play and learn in familiar more relaxed surroundings.

5 Reporting assessment and moderation

**5.1 Reporting, recording and profiling**

Each child owns a detailed Learning Log which goes home every week and a portfolio showing progress over their school career. Parents are also reported to regularly. The Learning Log contains targets, records of learning, photographs and other evidence of progress.

Termly discussions about learning are held with each child and their parents and a summative end of year report is written by the child and teacher together.

**5.2 The Assessment Process**

We use a wide variety of tools for assessment including summative, observation, formative, peer and self-assessment. This assessment informs about progress and next steps. We use standardised tests to back up professional judgement and evidence. We see assessment is a part of the planning process.

We use dialogue with individuals during planning and assessment so that each child can discuss their learning, identify their next steps and can monitor their own improvement.

**5.3 Moderation**

As a small school we recognise the importance of ensuring that standards in our school reflect National Standards. We work on joint projects with other small schools, using the NAR flow chart as a basis. Staff work together to share ideas, compare standards and use the experience to inform future teaching and learning.

**6. Planning and lessons**

1. The aims and purpose of an activity are discussed with the children and recorded as appropriate.
2. Success Criteria are discussed with the children and recorded as appropriate.
3. Teacher led introduction/explanation
4. Tasks and activities
5. Assessment of task through self-assessment, peer assessment, individual feedback with teacher during and following task
6. Whole class or individual plenary discussion

The school uses a wide variety of its own resources to support this system.

**7. Additional Support Needs**

Inour small school any areas of challenge are quickly identified and support put in place. Further information about additional support needs can be found in the school’s handbook.

**8. More information**

For parents requiring more detailed information on curriculum areas or approaches to learning, please contact the School Office or follow the link below to find out more: [www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum)