**Teaching Policy**

Port Ellen Primary School

**Aims**

***‘Our aspiration is to enable all children to develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society.’***

‘A Curriculum for Excellence : The Curriculum Review Group’.

**The Curriculum**

The curriculum is the totality of experiences that are planned for our children during their learning journey through the school. We are guided by the advice on entitlements outlined in Building the Curriculum 3 and offer a broad curriculum which covers all four contexts for learning – Curriculum Areas and Subjects, Interdisciplinary Learning, Ethos and Life of the School and Opportunities for Personal Achievement. Our curriculum map shows learner entitlements, and through our curriculum we try to develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities – Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Effective Contributors and Responsible Citizens. Planning by teachers takes account of national and local advice while leaving scope for individual teachers to introduce well-considered innovations. The curriculum and teachers planning takes account of the Curriculum for Excellence design principles – challenge, progression, breadth and depth, relevance, personalisation and choice in learning for all pupils.

Planning takes place on a daily, weekly, termly and yearly basis. Our forward planning clearly states what pupils will learn and how it will be taught. Staff and pupils reflect on previous learning to develop next steps. Staff are guided by the NAR process throughout. Children are involved at all stages of the NAR process, planning their learning, developing success criteria and evaluating and assessing their progress. Assessment is planned at the outset and linked clearly to the learning outcomes. Wherever appropriate, opportunities are taken to develop learning in literacy, numeracy, digital skills and health and wellbeing as permeating themes across the curriculum. Staff are also aware of the cross-cutting themes – equality education, enterprise, creativity and sustainability, including global citizenship - and try to incorporate these into their planning where possible. Both IDL and discreet subject in-house planning formats are used. Teachers have a planning folder which remain in school and are easily accessible in the classroom. Discussions with the Headteacher take place to review planning and attainment.

Shared planning may take place where staff have identified specific areas of overlap or to encourage cross-stage working and team-teaching approaches. Cluster level planning sessions at the beginning of the academic year allow links to be made with other schools, deliver cluster entitlements to pupils and allow for moderation of assessment.

**Teaching for Effective Learning**

Effective teachers are clear about what to teach and how to teach to ensure pupils are provided with a challenging, relevant, enjoyable and coherent curriculum. Teachers will consult the Curriculum for Excellence Principles and Practice Papers for guidance as required. Teachers strive to create stimulating learning environments and provide experiences that are well matched to children’s needs and sustain motivation and attention. A good pace of learning will be maintained. In planning, teachers take account of how their pupils learn and provide opportunities for children to write, make, see, do and interact with others. As well as whole class teaching, children will get the opportunity to work in groups and independently.

A range of teaching approaches will be used in classes to engage and motivate pupils. Co-operative learning strategies will be effectively used where appropriate and time taken to develop social learning skills. Children will be encouraged to be active learners and use will be made of outdoor learning spaces and digital technologies to enhance teaching and learning. All teachers will strive for well-organised and managed classrooms. The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning is monitored through classroom visits.

Assessment is for Learning is embedded within the school. Teachers share learning intentions and develop success criteria with pupils. These are displayed in classrooms and/or classwork. A range of formative assessment strategies are used in classes to assess understanding and effectiveness of teaching.

Explanations and instructions given to children are clear and unambiguous and build on previous learning and real-life experiences. Staff will use skilled questioning, aiming to develop higher order thinking skills, to stimulate pupils’ interest and build their confidence. Pupils’ contributions to class discussions is encouraged and valued.

**Meeting Learning Needs**

At Port Ellen Primary School we match learning activities to the needs of individual learners and groups with differing abilities. Staff differentiate, as required, so that tasks, activities and resources provide appropriate support and challenge, and enable all pupils to maximize their progress. The pace of learning is appropriate for all learners.

Teachers take positive steps to identify, review and evaluate learners’ needs including those with additional support needs. Teachers work effectively with Learning Support staff in developing effective classroom interventions and UCPs. Intervention strategies suggested by other professionals will be implemented and regularly reviewed as to their effectiveness.

**Assessment and Moderation**

Assessment is integral to the teaching and learning process. At the planning stage there is a clear identification of what is to be assessed, clearly linked to what the children are learning. Teachers make sure that children are aware of what they are learning and that children are involved in the planning and assessment process. Different approaches to assessment will be used and staff strive to make them reliable, valid and proportionate. Each term teachers will amass a number of assessment pieces to guage overall progress. Holistic assessments are undertaken to demonstrate breadth of learning, challenge children and allow them to apply their learning to new situations. Pupils in P1, P4 and P7 also take part in the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) which give diagnostic information on aspects of reading, writing and numeracy.

Assessment is quality assured through regular moderation within the school and across the cluster with professional dialogue ensuring that shared standards are agreed. The benchmarks for achievement of a level are also considered at moderation.

Next steps for learning are identified through formative assessment of daily lessons and summative assessments. Teachers discuss learning with their pupils, allowing pupils to share difficulties they have or new strategies they have discovered. This allows both teacher and pupil to identify how learning is progressing and what the next steps are. High quality and meaningful feedback is provided to all pupils on a regular basis. Pupils also have opportunities to peer and self assess their work.

Learning progress is tracked in individual assessment folios and learning logs as well as a digital record of progress in Literacy and Numeracy. Each term, pupils will discuss their progress with their teacher and set targets for the term; these are reviewed at the beginning of the subsequent term when new targets will be set. Children can record progress in their Learning Log.

**Expectations and Promoting Achievement**

High expectations is one of Port Ellen Primary School’s core values and this is regularly shared with pupils; pupils have high expectations of themselves and others. Pupils’ achievements are shared in class, and with the school. High quality displays across the school reflect what the children are learning. Examples of pupils work are shared with the class to highlight strengths. Work is differentiated and challenging and allows all pupils to make good progress - pupils know what they are learning and how to succeed. The principles of Personal Learning Planning provide a strong basis for pupils to be actively involved in their own learning and to set themselves realistic targets.

**Partnership with Parents**

We recognise the importance of engaging parents in their children’s learning and the life of the school. From the first visit of parents and children to the ELCC unit to the Leaver’s Assembly in Primary 7, parental involvement is encouraged, planned and purposeful. The use of homework diaries, regular newsletters, the school website, Twitter and other digital platforms ensures that information about what is happening in school is shared regularly. A Parent Information evening is held at the beginning of each session so that parents can be kept up-to-date with progress that has been made and the main focus for school improvement shared. The School Improvement Plan is shared with parents through the school website. The school operates an open-door policy that ensures parents are welcome any time in the school. Parents regularly help out in the ELCC unit, run lending libraries, and generally get involved in class activities. Open afternoons allow pupils to share their learning with their parents. There are formal meetings with parents twice each year, with reports issued during the summer term, however parents are aware that all staff are always willing to discuss any concerns.

Parents of children who have been identified as having additional support needs will be invited into school at regular intervals to discuss progress and next steps, involving other professionals and outside agencies as needed. Copies of documents will be shared with families and their input sought to ensure that the learner’s needs are addressed.

Learning logs are regularly shared with parents so that they have information on their child’s progress across the curriculum, achievements, strengths and next steps in learning. Teachers will encourage children to strive for a good standard of presentation in their Learning Logs.

Regular homework encourages parents to be involved in their child’s education, know what their child is learning about and chart their progress. Homework diaries provide a home-school link and teachers deal with any parent comments in the diaries promptly.