



# **Woodlands Primary School**

## **Effective Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy**

**May 2018**

## **Effective Learning, Teaching & Assessment Policy**

### **Rationale**

This policy provides a strategy to implement the school's aims, values and vision. It supports our belief that learning extends beyond the classroom experience to the wider community. Skills for Learning, Life and Work are an integral part of our curriculum and will be reflected in our planned learning experiences.

Our whole school and community approach integrates global citizenship, sustainable development education, outdoor learning, children's rights, learning how to learn and the promotion of positive attitudes and attributes. This ensures a learning experience which is meaningful and sustainable.

We believe that all pupils, no matter their background, ethnicity or disability, have an equal right to a quality education. This policy and our curriculum provides a structured approach to help ensure we do the best we can to get it right for every child in our care to enable them to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society and to work.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide an effective framework to support teaching and learning experiences for all. Learning and Teaching are at the heart of everything that happens in our school community and aims to ensure that every child learns and reaches success through a wide variety of experiences.

It is paramount that all staff consider the specific learning needs for each pupil are fully met and that their backgrounds, perspectives and interests are taken into consideration. This will support the promotion of personal growth and development.

This policy relates to aspects of Angus Council's Guidelines for Effective Teaching and Learning although staff should refer to this document for further guidance.

### **Aims**

- To provide a stimulating learning environment for all children 3-12
- To ensure progression of skills; knowledge acquisition and engagement in learning through a range of challenging experiences which ensures that all pupils:
  - Develop the understanding, skills, capacities and attributes which they will need for mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing
  - Develop the set of skills which allow them to engage fully in society and in learning
  - Develop confidence and competence in using number, allowing them to solve problems, analyse information and make informed decisions based on calculations
- To ensure breadth and challenge within each level of the curriculum in order that children can apply their learning in a variety of contexts
- To ensure that learning, teaching and assessment are planned in a coherent way and that assessment is valid and reliable:
  - To ensure that all children's learning is regularly assessed and evaluated
  - To ensure that all staff evaluate assessment data, along with pupils' ongoing achievements across the whole curriculum, in order to report on pupils' progress
  - To ensure that staff evaluate pupil progress in order to match learning to pupils' needs
- To ensure all staff reflect the aims of this policy in their planning, delivery and assessment of the curriculum and learning.

### **How will we deliver these aims?**

We believe that in our school we are all learners and we work on the principles that we all learn best when we:

- Know how we learn
- Understand clearly what we are trying to learn and what is expected of us
- Are given feedback about the quality of our work
- Are fully involved in deciding what needs to be done next and who can help
- Are motivated and interested in our learning
- Are supported and respected by those around us.

### **What will this achieve?**

This will help to nurture in all children, a love of learning and a capacity to acquire the values, knowledge and the range of skills needed for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Our teaching and learning approach will create an environment where teachers and pupils will master a range of these crucial life skills which are encompassed in the 4 capacities:

**Successful Learners**  
**Confident Individuals**  
**Responsible Citizens**  
**Effective Contributors**

**Curriculum for Excellence** challenges us to think differently about the curriculum. It encourages those working in education to plan and act in new ways.

### **The Learning Environment**

#### **The Physical Environment (Indoor)**

The physical environment of a school can have a significant effect on how well children learn. Well-designed classrooms help to create a learning ethos in the school. With this in mind, teaching areas in classrooms should be interesting, well organised and allow for the educational needs and differences of learners to be met.

It is important to remember that certain stimulus can have a significant effect on how children learn and behave in the classroom. These include:

- Temperature – either too hot or too cold
- Air quality
- Colour
- Light levels
- Noise such as background music.

Classrooms should be well organised and easily accessible to children and adults alike, for example:

- Storage areas and equipment should be clearly labelled
- Learning/activity areas should be set up in advance where possible
- Wall displays should be relevant and maintained to support learning
- Furniture should support learning without becoming cluttered and encroaching on personal space
- Areas for relaxation and comfort should be created, where possible.

#### **The Emotional Environment**

In our school, it is essential that all children are offered a safe and healthy emotional environment to learn. There are many ways we manage this, such as:

- Encouraging children to take risks and realising that mistakes are part of the learning process

- Recognising the value of all pupils' contributions and actively listening to children's views, feelings and opinions
- Encouraging pupils to feel confident to voice opinions and raise issues/concerns
- Realising that children learn using a variety of learning styles and accommodating this by using a range of teaching strategies and approaches
- Applying rules and expectations consistently and fairly
- Ensuring that positive feedback always outweighs any development targets given. This should be consistent, considered and constructive.
- Knowing the children and being aware of how varying levels of self-esteem impact on a child's ability to learn and therefore helping to raise the self-esteem of all children in our care
- Implementing aspects of mindfulness, as appropriate, to support emotional and personal wellbeing.

Offering a safe and healthy environment will help children to develop a sense of belonging, purpose, self-worth and confidence; all of which are crucial in the learning process.

## **Policy into Practice**

### **Active Learning**

Active Learning should be seen as a major strategy within daily experiences. These will manifest in an extensive range of learning and teaching approaches where contexts are challenging, enjoyable and enterprising and include creative and investigative activities directed, at times, by pupil choice.

By creating such activities daily, pupils will engage confidently and be prepared to take risks and manage mistakes, because they understand that they can learn from these. Through carefully planned activities, they will also develop and apply skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

**Children should be actively involved in their learning and this should be central to teacher's planning.**

Key components of active learning are:

- ✓ Effective Questioning
- ✓ Developing Thinking
- ✓ Interactive activities.

### **Active Learning in Numeracy**

All pupils will be involved in 'hands on' learning. The use of concrete materials will be actively encouraged when developing Numeracy and a greater allocation of time will be allotted to full and deep understanding of place value, the four basic numeric functions, time and money. Progression in maths will be built on a diagnostic approach and will follow a progressive sequence within a skill as outlined in our progression pathways guidance. At all stages, pupils will further develop their knowledge and skills through their application to familiar and less familiar contexts.

### **Active Learning in Literacy**

All pupils will use a range of strategies to support their development of literacy skills including the implementation of Keys to Literacy approaches; Jolly Phonics and Grammar, Talk into Writing approaches, Moving Image Education and a diagnostic approach to spelling from P3 (Schonell). Literacy skills will be progressive with staff utilising the progressive pathways to support planning. Literacy skills will be developed through and applied to a range of meaningful learning contexts at each stage of every level of the CfE Literacy curriculum.

### **Active Learning in Health & Wellbeing**

All pupils will undertake a range of activities throughout their time in Woodlands. Staff will continue to support healthy eating and tooth-brushing within the Early Years in nursery. When planning learning within HWB, teachers should be taking account of the SHANARRI indicators (**S**afe, **H**ealthy, **A**chieving, **N**urtured, **A**ctive, **R**esponsible, **R**espected and **I**ncluded) and ensure children complete the wellbeing web to identify how they feel and to identify class focus/needs (appendix 1). In P3-7 this will be completed at the start of a session and mid-way through a session to inform planning, whilst in Nursery-P2 this will be on-going with a focus on a particular aspect each planning block.

Throughout the school, staff will continue to ensure that all pupils have **2 hours of quality physical education each week with one session being outdoors**. A major focus of this will be the need to ensure that the skills learned and attitudes developed are sustainable. We will try to ensure that pupils' experiences build capacity for children to continue with their healthy lifestyles into adulthood.

### **Development of Learning Contexts**

Through our ongoing use of KWL grids, pupils have choices in their learning (see appendix 2). Any contexts should fully demonstrate the links with previous learning and current learning across the curriculum as well as real-life situations and make new learning meaningful. Staff have access to a range of flexible context planners from Early-Second level to support and guide interdisciplinary learning (learning across subject areas). As a context for learning develops, pupils should be able to demonstrate or explain information, ideas, processes and skills to the teacher and to other learners clearly in their own words, orally or in writing or pictures.

Staff will regularly ask open questions (see below) and pupils' responses will be used to enhance their learning. By so doing, pupils will learn to give considered answers from a personal viewpoint. Children will get time to think and reflect before responding. Staff will continue to develop formative assessment strategies and will use thinking time strategies to ensure this. Pupils' answers will lead to further questioning and dialogue which will in turn lead to coherent lines of enquiry.

Pupils will be encouraged to ask questions – of each other and of the teacher. Those who are not involved in discussion will participate actively by listening, thinking and reflecting. The size of the discussion group, and other contextual features, is planned to meet the children's needs. Discussions with very young children, and with less confident older children, may take place in smaller groups. When appropriate, co-operative learning strategies will be implemented to enhance the learning experiences and digital technologies will be used to support and enrich learning, with children exercising choice in its use.

Staff will continue to build on their use of the local community to extend and enhance learning. Staff will fully support the involvement of pupils in their learning outwith the classroom and school and use this in tasks and activities to raise attainment and achievement further.

Pace and challenge of learners' experiences ensures sufficient focus on challenging and successful learning for all. Accurate assessment underpins planned experiences for learners enabling them to apply learning in active and creative ways.

### **Use of Digital Technology**

Children will be given the opportunity to exercise choice in the use of digital technology as they become more independent in their learning. Use of digital technologies will become increasingly effective in enriching and supporting learning as staff use a range of creative resources and teaching approaches.

## **Our Learning Community**

### **Leaders of Learning**

Teachers will adopt approaches which ensure pupils are leaders in their own learning through planning a curriculum which allows some personalisation and choice. Through end of topic evaluations, they can reflect on their own learning, drawing their own informed conclusions. In addition, the use of cold and hot assessments and sharing learning intentions, success criteria and feedback further provides opportunities for children to see and be leaders of their learning.

All teachers will have a role in ensuring they are an integral part of the learning process and model life-long learning. They will each keep a quality assurance folder which should be referred to when undertaking annual professional review and development. This folder should be updated after professional learning with the teacher's own reflections of their learning, learning needs and how this will impact/has impacted on the learning experiences they provide for the children.

### **Professional Dialogue and Moderation**

Teachers will regularly meet, within and across departments, and with support staff, to share planning, assessments and evaluations to ensure a coherent and cohesive curriculum is being delivered effectively across all stages. This will also include having opportunities to liaise with other schools within Carnosutie Cluster and beyond to moderate planning and assessment thereby ensuring a shared understanding of standards and expectations (see appendix 3). Moderation is a process that takes place before, during and after planning of learning, teaching and assessment and will link to the school improvement plan and staff development.

The Senior Early Years Practitioner (SEYP) and Early Years Practitioners (EYP) will meet regularly with both the Depute Head Teacher and with the Early Years departmental staff to ensure that there is progression and challenge throughout the Early Years Level and also to ensure smooth transition for all children from Pre-school to P1.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Ensuring effective Learning and Teaching lies at the heart of everything we do therefore an annual calendar of monitoring and evaluation will be agreed with staff at the beginning of each session and provision for these meetings shall be included within the AJNCT 195 hours. This calendar will include quality assurance which provides opportunities to discuss pupils' assessment information and data; periods of observations and liaison; learning mirror visits; learning walks; planning and attainment meetings and pupil learning sampling and monitoring.

In summary, implementation of this policy is monitored through:

- ✓ Angus Council's Quality Improvement procedures and use of How Good Is Our School?4
- ✓ Classroom Observations from other teachers and the managers
- ✓ Professional Discussions between teachers and between teachers and their line manager
- ✓ Sampling of pupils' learning from both jotters and discussions with the pupils
- ✓ Planning and Evaluations.

Summaries of main strengths and next steps from across the school are shared and discussed with staff and used to inform further development/school improvement.

### **Planning for Learning**

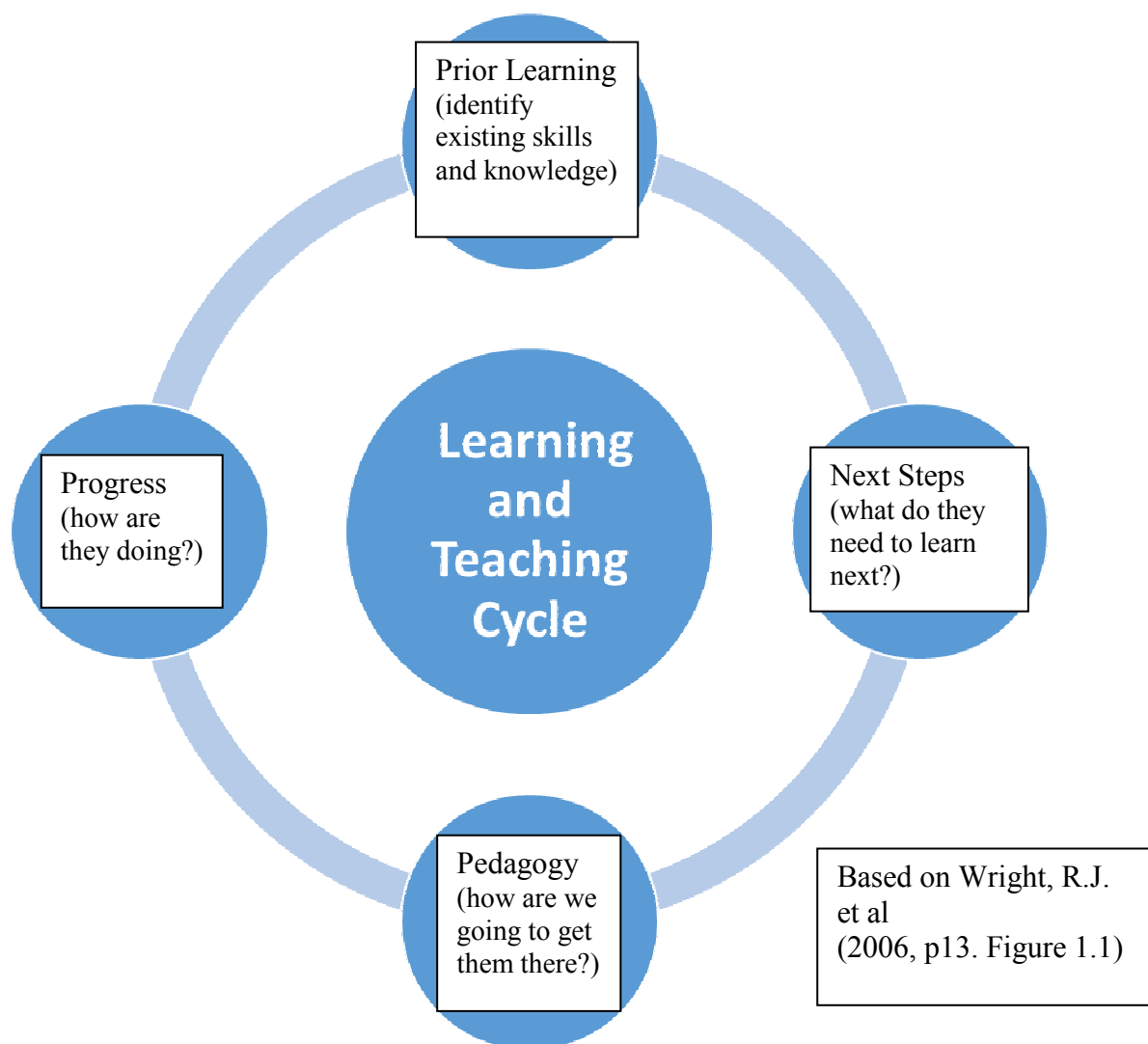
All staff will use the newly developed, flexible context planners along with the hand on information from previous teachers which includes previous planned learning to guide and inform long term plans. This will ensure breadth, depth, progression, relevance and coherence. These long term plans are to be completed in term 1 - both within and out with context and remain flexible to ensure pupil needs are met, with any changes being recorded on the long term planning sheet.

As said, the context planners are for guidance and teachers should take account of previous learning as well as pupil needs and interests, adapting these context planners as appropriate.

Medium term planning is recorded and tracked on the new tracking spreadsheet for each year group, with dates of intended implementation being in bold to identify up to five key assessments per planning block. These key assessments are stored in pupil learning logs to create a pupil profile shared and referred to with the child and shared with home. Short term planning should include planned learning intentions and, where appropriate, success criteria as well as an outline of the activity and any resources required. To ensure coherence and progression all staff will continue to access developed pathways of progression to support and guide planning in literacy, numeracy and mathematics, Health and Wellbeing, Christianity and Learning for Sustainability.

### Organising/Planning a Lesson/Learning

Effective teaching and learning is more likely to occur when lessons are well planned and organised and effective assessment takes place. The 4 phase model for learning is a flexible framework which helps to guide the planning, organising and assessment of lessons and learning.



All pupils will be expected to experience a programme of literacy, numeracy and mathematics which will include planned progression through the Es & Os. Teaching staff and nursery staff will use Woodlands' progression pathways to support and guide planning. In addition, staff will access guidelines for spelling and phonics (appendix 4), marking and presentation (appendix 5), Keys to Literacy (appendix 6), Moving Image Education (appendix 7) and digital technology (appendix 8). It should be noted that the progression pathways are linked to the benchmarks to help assess whether learners are making suitable progress towards the national standards expected. The resultant evidence is then used to plan children's next, challenging steps in learning.

### **Planning Literacy**

All pupils will:

- undertake a programme of synthetic phonics
- build their experience of reading around the philosophy that early focus on reading for enjoyment will develop verbal reasoning strategies, thus expanding pupils ability to access a range of learning experiences
- experience a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts including film analysis annually (see CfE definition of 'C21st texts')
- analyse texts to support and enhance writing (Talk into Writing approaches)
- use Keys to Literacy and Information Keys to develop higher order reading skills
- develop formal research skills from First Level onwards
- enhance and develop literacy skills through interdisciplinary learning across the curriculum
- have an annual focus on the Scots Language.

### **Planning Mathematics**

As previously stated, an active approach to Numeracy will be adopted, with much use of concrete materials and learning approaches to develop conceptual understanding along with the development of procedural fluency across the stages. The focus for all Numeracy will be place value, the four core functions, time and money and how these apply to everyday life. Much of the reinforcement of these functions will be related to problem solving with application of skills to familiar and less familiar contexts being planned to deepen learning.

Further mathematical learning experiences such as Shape, Position and Movement and Information Handling will be explored annually and, where relevant learning will link to a variety of meaningful contexts for learning to increase relevance.

### **Outdoor Learning and Learning for Sustainability**

At Woodlands Primary School we understand the importance of outdoor learning in developing children's knowledge and skills as well as their emotional, social and physical wellbeing. Research has shown outdoor experiences benefit all aspects of health and wellbeing, thereby enhancing all aspects of the curriculum. We believe learning outdoors connects children and young people to the world around them, creating resilient, responsible citizens and successful lifelong learners.

#### **Outdoor Learning & Learning for Sustainability Aims:**

Through outdoor learning we aim to enable pupils to:

- develop skills of enquiry and critical thinking
- connect with their local environment
- develop an understanding of the social, cultural and environmental challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- be part of a healthier, safer and stronger community who collaborate to contribute to a greener Scotland
- build positive relationships with and understanding of others and their environment
- establish relevant partnerships to support learning



- develop their fine and gross motor skills as well as their general emotional and physical health
- become confident individuals, responsible global citizens, successful learners and effective contributors.

### **Effective Outdoor Learning & Learning for Sustainability**

If outdoor learning is to enhance children's wellbeing and support the development of the four capacities as stated in our last aim, then teachers/educators need to ensure:

- children are engaged and motivated
- learning opportunities are relevant, progressive and sustainable
- prior learning is linked
- learning is well planned with clear learning intentions and success criteria known to the children
- learning opportunities take account of the differing needs and abilities within a class to ensure all children are challenged and included
- learning takes account of the children's views and interests
- opportunities for real life contexts and application of learning
- account is taken of learning for sustainability ie global citizenship; knowing and understanding our world and developing the skills and values to contribute to the common good
- opportunities promote positive interactions
- children are dressed appropriately
- learning takes place outdoors regularly
- resources used are appropriate to the age and stage of the pupils as well as the intended learning.

### **Grounds for Learning**

We are lucky at Woodlands to have grounds developed to enhance both informal and formal learning and play. In addition, the local environment harbours a wealth of opportunities within a manageable distance. Teachers will also plan opportunities for learners to engage in learning beyond the local environment and school grounds. These opportunities will be planned to motivate children and build on the learning taking place.

### **Health and Safety**

At Woodlands Primary School and Nursery we will support children in taking risks within a safe and secure environment. Pupils will be taught to manage risks. It is important to ensure that the outdoor environment offers challenges and teaches the children how to be safe and aware of others. In the first instance the school's policies relating to Health and Safety and Risk Assessment should be referred to and applied prior to any outdoor learning activity that may require additional support beyond the reasonable activities normally applied within the classroom. Risk assessments and related forms must be completed and approved by a line manager prior to any learning taking place beyond the school grounds. Annual permissions from parents/carers will be sought for localised learning, with parents/carer permission being sought for each educational outdoor learning experience beyond Angus.

### **Sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria**

Research by Dylan Williams & Paul Black (*The Black Box Trilogy*: 1998) and more recent research by John Hattie (*Visible Learning* series: 2012-17) shows clear evidence that learners learn best when they understand what they are trying to learn and what is expected of them.

### **The Benefits of Sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria**

- Creates a framework leading to better quality learning
- Forms the basis of formative assessment and feedback dialogue
- Makes the purpose of learning clearer for pupils, teachers and parents
- Pupils will know what they are learning and how to achieve the intended learning
- Pupils will be more likely to ask for clarification about their learning
- Improves concentration, motivation and self-esteem
- Gives focus for discussion during lesson plenary sessions
- Encourages risk taking and enterprising approaches to learning
- Provides a key focus and dialogue for self/peer assessment and feedback
- Gives a platform for engaging in the reflect and review process, with pupils being better able to identify if they have succeeded and what their strengths and next steps are; they can see their learning and progress.

### Sharing Learning Intentions (LI)

The LI is what learners are expected to learn, **i.e.** the purpose of a lesson. The purpose of a lesson can be one of three things:

- **Knowledge acquisition** (After this lesson I will know...)
- **Concept acquisition** (After this lesson I will understand...)
- **Skill acquisition** (After this lesson I will be able to...)

LI should be shared with pupils during each lesson. Sharing LI is best done both visually (in either pictorial or word format) and orally. This will help children who have different **dominant learning styles** to better understand and engage in their learning.

Sharing LI should include:

- **Short Term LI** – what is to be learned within a lesson
- **Long Term LI** - making children aware of how their learning fits into the 'bigger picture' of a whole block of learning as well as why the learning will be relevant in their present and future lives.

### Muddled Learning Intentions

It is important when sharing LI, that the task context be separated from what is actually being learned. Pupils must be made aware that there is a difference between what we want them to learn and the context through which they will do the learning.

For example, the Learning Intention:

*'We are learning to write a set of instructions about how to order a pizza'*

Should be: *'We are learning to write a set of instructions'* and the context is ordering a pizza.

Otherwise a child might actually think they were learning to order a pizza or that these skills apply only to enable them to order a pizza, and so the main purpose of the lesson will not have been realised and the skill less likely to be applied.

### Sharing Success Criteria (SC)

Where the LI makes the purpose of a lesson explicit, SC give guidance about what is expected of pupils when completing a task to enable them to achieve the learning intention. It could be said that SC are a set of measurements against which children can monitor and check their learning.

By applying SC, pupils will learn to make judgements about their own learning before any other person assesses it.

There are two types of SC which can be used during lessons:

- **Product SC** – Similar in style to the LI and are usually achieved over a series of lessons, e.g.: *by the end of these lessons I will have....!*
- **Process SC** – Relating to the key steps needed to be taken during a lesson in order to achieve the LI, e.g.: *to be successful in my learning I must remember ....!*

Whichever type of SC is used, it is important that they are:

- Clearly linked to the Learning Intention
- written in appropriate language for the learner
- are succinct, brief and relevant to all learners
- differentiated according to the needs of the learners
- are, where appropriate, created and agreed with the learners
- outline the 'key ingredients' or steps to success
- focus on key elements or steps of the process, not the product
- help children identify their progress so far and next steps.
- a summary of what has been discussed
- visible and continually referred to
- modelled by the teacher to give good examples
- referred to throughout the learning and used to assess the learning and progress towards the learning intention.

### **Assessment for Learning**

In Spelling, Literacy and Numeracy, **diagnostic approaches to learning are central to all key learning experiences** and will be used to plan next steps for learning.

Our expectation is that **formative assessment strategies will be used daily** to inform the learners and teachers of what has been learned and how to move forward within the learning experience across all areas of the curriculum.

In addition, maths progress checks will be used in numeracy at the start of each session, with FSiN and teacher devised diagnostic assessments being used throughout the year to support planning and teacher judgements. In spelling and reading Schonell (appendix 9) will be used to support teacher judgements at the start and mid-point of the year (Aug/Sept and Jan/Feb). Teachers will also assess three pieces of reading and three pieces of writing each session. In health and wellbeing, Wellbeing Webs consisting of the SHANARRI indicators will support the identification of strengths and next steps in terms 1 and 3. In P1, P4 and P7 SNSAs will be used whilst Quest will be used in P3 to further identify strengths and next steps and help to inform teacher judgement.

Over a session, key assessments will be planned and identified in bold in MTP, with teachers using the tracking tool to ensure all curricular areas have planned key assessments by the end of a year. Literacy and maths/numeracy will have a key assessment planned in every planning block. As teacher's skill and confidence develop, each of these key assessments will have a cold and hot assessment to show a child's progress. These assessments are discussed with the children to involve them in their learning and in identifying their own strengths and next steps. The key assessments will be stored in pupil's learning logs to build an assessment/learning profile that is shared with parents/carers towards the end of each planning block.

Moderation processes within school and across the cluster will further support teacher judgements and develop a shared understanding of standards and expectations.

Over the coming sessions, staff development will include building skill in the creation and implementation of holistic assessments that enable the application and assessment of a range of contextualised skills.

### **Pupils' Ownership Of And Involvement In Their Learning**

Pupils will be asked to plan for topics through KWL Grids. i.e. they will answer the three questions:

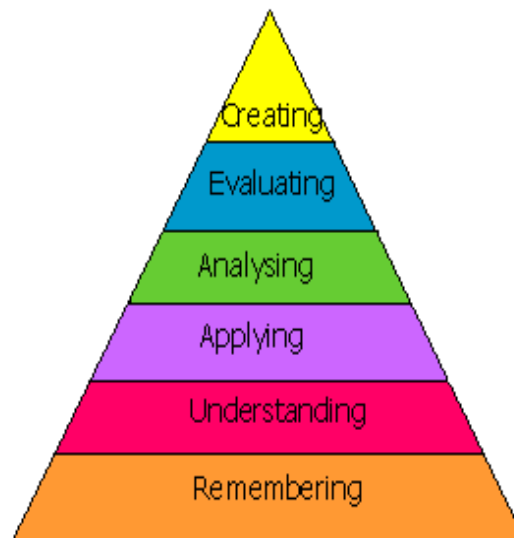
- **What do I know** about this topic?
- What do I **want to know**?
- What have I **learned**?

Teachers will be expected to talk through a pupil's learning experiences with the child and work with them to identify next steps on an ongoing basis.

### Questioning

The purpose of questioning is engage learners by stimulating a thinking process. Bloom suggests that there are many forms of thinking. He outlines these in his taxonomy of thinking. The following pyramid represents Bloom's Taxonomy.

### Bloom's Taxonomy for Thinking



The pyramid above can be divided into two halves, LOWER ORDER and HIGHER ORDER.

LOWER ORDER THINKING	HIGHER ORDER THINKING
Remembering Understanding Applying	Analysing Evaluating Creating

Research has suggested that often questions in school only stimulate lower order thinking. Higher order thinking is essential if pupils are to be successful learners and enterprising individuals.

Learning Skill	Words you might hear or use when thinking and talking about this skill
<b>Creating</b> Putting things together – creative thinking	Compose, assemble, organise, invent, compile, forecast, devise, propose, construct, plan, predict, improve, formulate, generate, prepare, develop, design, imagine, set up, create, produce
<b>Evaluating</b> judgement	Judge, predict, assess, determine, prioritise, experiment, check, test, evaluate, defend, conclude, debate, justify, recommend, discriminate, argue, rank
<b>Analysing</b> breaking things down – critical thinking	Distinguish, inspect, inquire, question, examine, research, probe, investigate, calculate, experiment, compare, contrast, survey, test, debate, sequence, relate, categorise, discriminate

<b>Applying</b> using knowledge in new situations	Translate, illustrate, make, practice, manipulate, calculate, apply, operate, exhibit, interpret, interview, sequence, show, solve, collect, demonstrate, dramatise, use, adapt, draw, construct
<b>Understanding</b> comprehension	Report, recognise, review, describe, observe, outline, interpret, explain, identify, discuss, research, annotate, translate, give examples, define
<b>Remembering</b> Recall - knowledge	List, memorise, choose, recite, quote, record, match, select, underline, cite, relate, sort, show, locate, give an example, reproduce, quote, repeat, label, recall, outline

In our school, key questions should be planned to stimulate a good balance of higher and lower order thinking. This can be done by asking a range of closed and open questions.

### Closed and Open Questions

- A *closed* question will require a limited range of answers which are generally short and can be answered relatively quickly. They will add pace to question and answer sessions but will usually only stimulate lower order thinking such as knowledge and comprehension.
- An *open* question will have a broad range of answers which will generally take longer to answer. They are more likely to generate longer discussions which require ideas, values, opinions and beliefs and will help to stimulate higher order thinking.

### When Asking Questions

- Use a variety of strategies to encourage pupil interaction e.g.:
  - think, pair, share
  - take the question round the class
  - snowballing (adding to comments)
  - walk about talk about
- Follow a question with thinking time (at least 7 seconds) so that children can process the question, comprehend it and formulate an answer. This will:
  - increase the length and number of responses
  - give pupils more confidence to respond
  - encourage more children to respond
- Only focus on one thing at a time.
- Distribute questions evenly and encourage everyone to contribute when possible
- Develop a 'no hands up' policy
- Ask a range of questions to stimulate higher and lower order thinking
- Use question stems to support children in asking their own questions
- Encourage children to formulate and ask their own questions.

### When Responding to Answers

- Adopt a relaxed and non-threatening attitude
- Avoid criticism or outright rejection of answers
- Re-phrase questions if necessary
- If pupils cannot answer, re-direct questions
- Use further questions as prompts to develop answers or elicit further information rather than changing a child's answer to what one wants to hear.
- Resist the temptation to answer one's own questions
- Accept alternatives or more than one answer – this can lead to good discussions.

### Assessment

For children to 'learn how to learn', they should be taught how to assess their own progress and the progress of others as *early as possible* in their school careers. For quality assessment to take place, the children will first need to know about learning intentions and success criteria, and be able to use them.

Teaching children to assess will always begin with the teacher modelling 'how' to do it. Regardless of which strategy is being used for assessment the process of assessment should be modelled as follows:

- Look at/observe the child's learning
- Check/refer to the success criteria
- Look for examples of where the success criteria have been achieved in the learning and use a strategy to highlight these
- If there are success criteria which have not yet been achieved, choose the one which could most be improved and give feedback/examples of how any improvements could be made.

Teaching staff need to model how to assess at the earliest opportunities to prevent children falling into the 'traps' of traditional marking ie children looking for common errors such as spelling mistakes, untidy handwriting and punctuation. Falling into these 'traps' will mean no thought will be given to the success criteria during the assessment process. This approach will make it more difficult to teach children how to assess at a later stage since when a child learns to do something in a particular way, a memory pattern is formed. Each time the learning is repeated, the same memory pattern will be consolidated. Over time, it becomes more difficult to change that memory pattern.

### **Peer/Self-Assessment**

*Children should be taught to peer assess, before being taught to self-assess.*

Many cognitive theorists believe that young children are 'egocentric', meaning that they have an attitude of self-importance. This can make the process of self-assessment tricky for young children, as they will be unlikely to have the necessary developmental experience and maturity to form a self-critical viewpoint.

Peer assessment does not pose the same problem, as the self-importance concept is no longer a barrier. Instead, children will be asked to consider the quality of learning from an objective viewpoint.

At the outset, peer assessment practice sessions should be scheduled into the weekly timetable, so that children can be given quality time within the school day to practise peer assessment.

Once practised, children should be able to peer assess with the minimum of supervision and this can be done as work is completed, in the everyday running of the classroom.

Once the children become fluid in the art of peer assessment, they should be encouraged to try self-assessment using the same criteria. This process should be easier since the children will have already practised and formed a memory pattern for being critical from an objective viewpoint.

### **How To Give Feedback**

Feedback can be given in one of two ways:

- Orally
- Written

The best scenario is to give oral feedback as it is quicker and will be thought about immediately by the receiver.

Written feedback is a tool which should mainly be used in the event of marking away from pupils, although formative dialogue should be maintained with pupils whenever possible.

Giving feedback is a skill which must be learned like all other skills. Pupils and teachers will need time to practise and develop the skill.

## **Making Feedback Effective**

- Relate feedback directly to the learning intention and success criteria
- Use feedback to support future planning to meet the needs of the pupils
- Feedback should be positive and constructive
- Use feedback to give advice on how to improve learning
- Feedback should be embedded in all aspects of learning and teaching.

## **Reflective Learners**

We actively encourage pupils to be reflective about their learning and progress and set Personal targets within their Learning Logs. At the start of each learning block, staff spend time with the children considering and recording individual targets to link to their planned learning. During the block of learning the children work with staff to consider what they have learned, what they have enjoyed, what they have achieved and what they would like to try to improve next. This is to encourage the children to reflect on these aspects as well as learning skills in target setting and reflection of achievement.

## **Learning Logs**

Teachers will support pupils through the development of their Learning Logs. These will provide opportunities for pupils to share their learning with parents during each planning block (these may vary depending on the length of the planning block and the needs and interest of the children) as well as provide opportunities for children to identify and share what they feel is their 'best work' and to share personal achievements from out with school. The learning shared with home, as well as being a child's selection of their 'best learning' will consist of cold assessments and hot assessments (pre and post assessments). The cold assessments will always contain a numeracy/maths assessment and a literacy assessment, with assessed information then informing teacher planning. The cold and hot assessments will be discussed with the child so they can see their learning and progress.

## **Celebrating Achievement**

Pupils are encouraged to share and celebrate in school and out of school achievements. By inviting the children to share these achievements, the children are supported in the identification of the variety of opportunities that are available and to provide opportunities to discuss the associated learning. These are celebrated in class as well on school displays and in assemblies.

## **Health and Safety and Resources**

Health and Safety issues include:

- setting up and moving equipment; only staff members should move ICT trolleys. Trolleys should not cross wet area thresholds.
- establishing appropriate working conditions;
- general electrical safety as prescribed by the authority.
- ensuring all equipment is attached to the correct charger and the trolley door is closed after each access. It is the ultimate responsibility of the staff to ensure this is done
- ensuring SPSA room/resource cupboards are only accessed under staff supervision
- resources are maintained and managers informed when there is a need to update/purchase new resources as and when this is noticed by staff
- walk in cupboards are left tidy after staff have accessed them to ensure safety and longevity of resources.

## **Getting It Right**

**In all aspects of learning and teaching it is imperative that all staff have a sound working knowledge of their pupils and what is happening in their lives.**

It is the responsibility of all to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to access learning.

All teachers must take account of the social, emotional and physical needs of the child and indeed of the family. They have a duty of care to ensure that any concerns are reported to the management team and, where necessary, the designated Child Protection Officer (CPDO).

All staff have a duty of care to provide a learning environment where children feel:

**Safe**  
**Healthy**  
**Achieving**  
**Nurtured**  
**Active**  
**Responsible**  
**Respected and**  
**Included**

## **Significant Events**

**As well as informing the management team of any significant event, the class teacher should also update the GIRFEC Significant Events sheet in a child's records.**

## **Policy Review**

**Reviewed by** Management Team, a cross section of the staff and the Parent Council

**Policy review date:** May 2018

**Date of next review:** 2020/21