

Woodfarm High School

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy



Policy Date June 2019

Review Date June 2021

WOODFARM HIGH SCHOOL

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy

Introduction

How Good is Our School (4th Edition) states that:

Excellent schools have a learning environment that is built on positive, nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships which lead to high-quality learning outcomes. Excellent schools encourage learners to regularly take on leadership roles, including leading learning. Staff access and apply relevant findings from educational research to improve learning and teaching.

Excellent schools use a range of assessment approaches to match the needs of learners and a quality body of evidence is used to support assessment judgements and decisions about next steps.

Woodfarm's vision is as 'The school that PREPARES you for life' with an aim to ensure that all young people achieve to the best of their ability.

Aims of Policy

To ensure that pupils attending Woodfarm High School receive the best possible education by providing engaging lessons, effective use of assessment and high-quality teaching delivered by highly-skilled practitioners who are constantly seeking ways to improve and inform their practice.

"We must create classrooms which are inclusive, where the level of cognitive demand is high, and where participation is obligatory." (William, 2016)

The key aim is to ensure that our staff are equipped to provide high-quality learning experiences for all young people.



Policy Date June 2019

Review Date June 2021

Specifically the policy aims are:

- to engage all staff in a process of practitioner enquiry so that a culture of professional reading and reflection is developed and sustained within Woodfarm High School
- to engage pupils in taking on leadership roles, specifically in leading learning
- to raise attainment and achievement
- to ensure that learners experience activities which are varied, differentiated, active, and provide effective support and challenge
- to deploy a wide range of innovative and creative resources and approaches
- to ensure that we use a range of assessment information to identify development needs for all learners

Learning and Teaching

“Teachers do not create learning, learners create learning; teachers create the conditions in which students learn.” (Dylan William, 2016)

According to William, the five key strategies for this to occur are:

1. Clarifying and understanding learning intentions and criteria for success
2. Engineering effective class discussion, questioning and tasks that elicit evidence of learning
3. Providing feedback that moves learners forward
4. Activating students as instructional resources for each other
5. Activating students as sources of their own learning

Several of these strategies were researched, trialled and evaluated by the TLC in session 2018/19. Professional reading suggestions, plus links to strategies carried out by the TLC are detailed below.

Clarifying and understanding learning intentions and criteria for success

- [Learning Intentions & Success Criteria](#)
- [John Hattie - Learning Intentions](#)
- [East Renfrewshire LAN - Clarifying and Sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria](#)
- Further professional reading: Clarke, S. (2005), *Formative Assessment in the Secondary Classroom* (UK ed.), Hodder Education



Policy Date June 2019

Review Date June 2021

Engineering effective class discussion, questioning and tasks that elicit evidence of learning

- [Aifl/ Effective Questioning](#)
- [Philosophy in Education](#)
- [Professional reading \(Philosophy\)](#)

Providing feedback that moves learners forward

- [Learner Conversations](#)
- [Education Scotland Exemplars](#)
- [Further reading:](#) Sutton, Hornsey, & Douglas (2011), *Feedback: The communication of praise, criticism, and advice*

Activating students as instructional resources for each other

- [Collaborative Learning](#)
- [Quiz Trade](#)
- [Peer assessment](#)
- Professional reading – Dr Spencer Hagan (see E Merriman)

Activating students as sources of their own learning

- [Flipped Classroom](#)
- [Visible Learning](#)
- [Professional reading – John Hattie](#)

Structure of a Lesson

As a result of the above, a lesson should be structured to incorporate the following features:

- Acknowledgement of prior learning
- Clear learning intentions (see above)
- Negotiated success criteria

- Range of teaching and learning strategies designed to meet the needs of all pupils (see above)
- Opportunities for pupil led learning (see above)
- Opportunities to assess pupil progress (self/peer/teacher) - see above
- Plenary
- Timed and paced to ensure maximum learning

Lessons are part of a **sequence** of teaching and the whole should be planned and evaluated against C for E outcomes or specific SQA course requirements.

Practitioner Enquiry

Practitioner enquiry, as defined by Menter et al (2011), is a 'finding out' or an investigation with a rationale and approach that can be explained or defended. The findings can then be shared so it becomes more than reflection or personal enquiry.

It is usually undertaken within the practitioners own practice/ context or in collaboration with others. Within collaborative enquiry the group shares a common research question which can then be 'investigated' through different lenses to enhance knowledge creation and sharing within the group and beyond. As such evaluation and reflective teaching are fundamental elements of practitioner enquiry if it is to have impact on the practitioners practice and ultimately pupil experience. (GTCS)

TLC Practitioner Enquiry

The TLC trialled Practitioner Enquiry in session 2018/19.

After discussion as a group, it was decided that presentations would generally follow this format:

- Introduction to the topic
- Theory and professional reading
- Pros and cons
- The task itself
- Photographic/ video evidence
- Pupil evaluation, often done via Microsoft forms
- Teacher evaluation/ next steps



Quality Improvement:

When deciding upon and evaluating an area of research to inform and improve their practice, teachers are encouraged to use the self-evaluation for self-improvement process - see separate [policy](#)

Meeting Individual Needs

Children and young people can benefit from additional or targeted support, tailored to their individual circumstances. This could be at any point of their learning journey or throughout the journey.

Barriers to learning may arise from specific learning difficulties, disability, social, emotional or behavioural needs, bereavement or family issues. Additional support may also be required to ensure progress in learning for the gifted and able, looked after children and young people, young carers, Gypsies and Travellers, asylum seekers and those for whom English is not a first language. (Education Scotland)

In meeting the needs of individual learners we acknowledge that:

- No two learners are alike
- Young people will display different abilities in different contexts
- Young people will experience more success in some areas than in others
- Some young people will have learning difficulties or disabilities of varying degrees which, without additional support, could be barriers to their learning
- The school aim of Equality means that opportunities for learners must be equitable and removing barriers to learning is a key component of the GIRFEC agenda

In meeting these individual needs we must:

- Identify pupil strengths and areas for development
- Differentiate so that all pupils in our care can learn at an appropriate pace and level.



Policy Date June 2019

Review Date June 2021

Supporting Learning & Teaching

Classroom teachers and Heads of Department can call upon a wide variety of support to enhance effective learning and teaching. These include:

- Support for Learning Department (Sara Wilson PT)
- Pastoral Care Team
- Members of the Senior Management Team
- Members of the Joint Support Team (all staff have the opportunity to attend these meetings)
- [JST minutes](#)

The practices which can support learning and teaching include:

- Consistency across the curriculum
- The sharing of good practice (this is on the agenda at each DM/FM)
- Effective communication between Departments, Support Teams and Management. The GIRFEC folder should be updated after each DM/FM

All members of staff should refer to the SfL Confidential Booklet, which details strategies for pupils with ASN. **Please be aware that this updated throughout the year.**

Pupil Participation

Context

Woodfarm High School was awarded UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award Gold Status in 2018. The award *“is granted to schools that have fully embedded children’s rights throughout the school in its policy, practice and ethos.”* (UNICEF, 2018) This must be demonstrated in several ways:

(UNICEF, 2018, <https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/getting-started/gold/what-is-gold/>)

Article 12 of the UNCRC states:

“States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.”

A rights-based approach emphasising provision of Article 12 is at the heart of Woodfarm’s vision, values and aims, particularly that of Participation. Research suggests that there are demonstrable educational benefits where participation of young people in decision making is extensive and valued, including increased attainment and achievement (Mannion *et al*, 2015).

Pupil participation in school improvement is fundamental to our curriculum’s design principles and the pupil voice should be key in both driving school improvement and supporting practitioners’ self-evaluation activities:

“Pupil participation is a strong feature of our approach to self-evaluation and continuous improvement... All stakeholders, including children and young people, have a shared ownership of this evidence and use it to plan continuous improvement.”

- (Woodfarm) has explicitly adopted a child rights approach based on the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** and has embedded it in school policy, practice and culture
- Children, young people and adults in your school have a thorough understanding of child rights, and rights respecting attitudes and language are embedded across the school
- RRSA has had a positive impact on children and young people’s learning and wellbeing
- Students see themselves as rights respecting global citizens and are advocates for social justice, fairness and children’s rights at home and abroad



Policy Date June 2019

Review Date June 2021

It is crucial that the school aim of Equality is considered, particularly ensuring that opportunities are equitably afforded to pupils from a wide range of demographics e.g. SIMD, FME, gender, ethnicities etc.

There are four Arenas of Participation where opportunities for meaningful, impactful and relevant opportunities for participation should be offered to pupils at Woodfarm:



(Education Scotland, 2018, <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/learner-participation.pdf>)

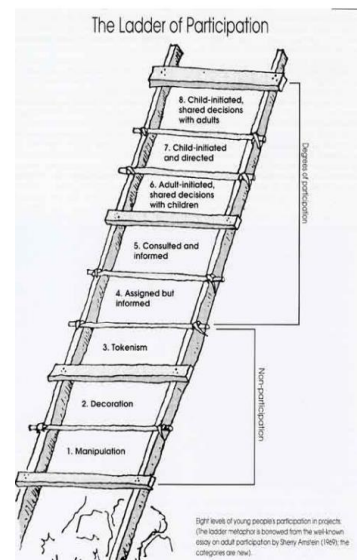
Examples of activities and opportunities that might be appropriate include:

<p>i. Learning, Teaching and Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Curriculum evaluation e.g. focus groups with pupils at the end of a unitb. Providing opportunities for pupils to lead their own learning, including the use of strategies above, such as flipped classroomc. Choices offered to pupils about what and how they learn, and how they present their workd. Pupil learning visits to observe learning and teaching	<p>ii. Opportunities for Personal Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Interdisciplinary learning opportunitiesb. Extra-curricular activities such as sports, volunteering (Amnesty, Fair Trade etc.), debating etc.c. John Muir awardd. Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Silver Awards
---	---

<p>iii. Decision Making Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Pupil Parliament committees (Learning & Teaching, Health & Wellbeing, Skills, Digital Technologies, Equalities, Achievements) b. Pupil involvement and input into participatory budgeting c. Pupil representation on interview panels 	<p>iv. Wider Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Volunteering in the local community e.g. Thornliebank Remembrance Service, fundraising activities for charity b. Outdoor learning opportunities
--	---

Planning to involve pupils

Staff planning activities that involve learner participation should consult Hart’s Ladder of Participation to reflect on whether the activity planned constitutes true participation. Activities where pupils do not understand the purpose or issues surrounding the activity, where feedback is not given on how pupils’ views were used, or where pupils are used in a tokenistic way are not considered participation and more meaningful alternatives should be explored. Case studies and ideas can be found here: https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/childrens_participation.pdf



Creating an environment where meaningful participation can occur

At Woodfarm, staff should also consider the four key elements of provision when carrying out activities that involve pupil voice and participation:



(Lundy, 2007)

Space

- Actively seek the young person's views
- A safe space should be provided where young people can share their views
- Steps have been taken to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to participate

Audience

- Young people know who their views will be communicated to
- The views will be heard by someone with the power to make decisions and effect change

Voice

- Information has been provided to young people that allows them to formulate their own views
- Young people are aware that they have a right to take part, not a duty
- Young people have been given a range of ways in which they can express their views

Influence

- Are procedures in place to ensure that the young people's views will be taken seriously?
- Have young people been given feedback on what has been done, including the reasons for any decisions made?

Further Reading

Education Scotland (2018), *Learner Participation in Educational Settings (3-18)*,
<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/learner-participation.pdf>

Education Scotland (2018), *How Good Is OUR School? (Part 2)*,
<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/HGIOURS-Part2.pdf>

Hart R. (2005), *Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship*, https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/childrens_participation.pdf

Lundy L. (2007), *Lundy Model of Participation*,
https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/lundy_model_of_participation.pdf

Mannion G., Sowerby M. & l'Anson J. (2015), *How Young People's Participation in School Supports Achievement and Attainment*, <https://www.cypcs.org.uk/ufiles/achievement-and-attainment.pdf>

UNICEF Resource List: https://www.unicef.org/adolescence/cypguide/index_concepts.html

Assessment

Teaching, learning and assessment are fundamentally linked and arrangements for assessment must be planned alongside development of courses at all levels, as is outlined in [BtC5](#).

The purpose and expectations of assessment procedures should be common to every department in the school and should include assessing knowledge and understanding of a subject as well as skills for learning, life and work.

Purpose of Assessment

At Woodfarm assessment should

- be timely and relevant, clearly linked to schemes of work;
- flexible and negotiated to suit the needs to the pupil and the wider school;
- is planned alongside relevant [CfE Experiences and Outcomes/SQA course support notes](#);
- provide evidence to track and monitor pupil progress at all levels;



Policy Date June 2019

Review Date June 2021

- be used to provide coherent feedback for teachers, pupils and parents;
- inform learner conversations and assist in target setting;
- provide guidance on course choice and progression throughout a pupil’s pathway referring to the gradient of learning;
- prepare pupils for external examinations and the world of work;

Structure of Assessment

Woodfarm recognises that learners have varied learning styles, diverse backgrounds and differing needs and therefore assessment opportunities should be structured to reflect this.

In all departments in Woodfarm assessment should:

- be ongoing and contain both formative (assessment FOR learning) and summative (assessment OF learning) styles of assessment;

For example:

FORMATIVE	SUMMATIVE
homework and classwork	end of topic/unit tests
research and presentations	standardised tests
practical projects	internal school examinations
discussions	external examinations

- be differentiated to account for the diverse abilities of learners and have access to required support;
- where appropriate offer choice, provide depth of learning and allow for challenge;
- acknowledge progress at all levels to maintain pupil motivation;
- ensure consistency of approach and standards across the curriculum, while recognising subject specificity;
- where appropriate meet the relevant benchmarks and are linked to success criteria
- where appropriate meet the requirements of national qualifications, including [SNSAs](#);
- be internally moderated to ensure consistency;



It is expected that all departments in Woodfarm have a moderation calendar as well as an assessment calendar in place to provide structure and aid planning.

Expectations for Staff

The expectation at Woodfarm is that all staff undertake regular Quality Assurance and Self Evaluation to ensure the progress of all pupils is tracked and meets the standards of Curriculum for Excellence or National Qualifications.

Staff should ensure:

- requirements for each piece of work are clear and notice is given using suitable platforms such as Show my Homework;
- there is adequate time for students to complete any assessment task;
- there is access to any materials necessary for the successful completion of any assessment task;
- work is assessed according to departmental procedures and return it to students in good time;
- feedback is timely and relevant, providing appropriate next steps in pupils' learning and aiming to instil the school values of Ambition and Responsibility in our young people

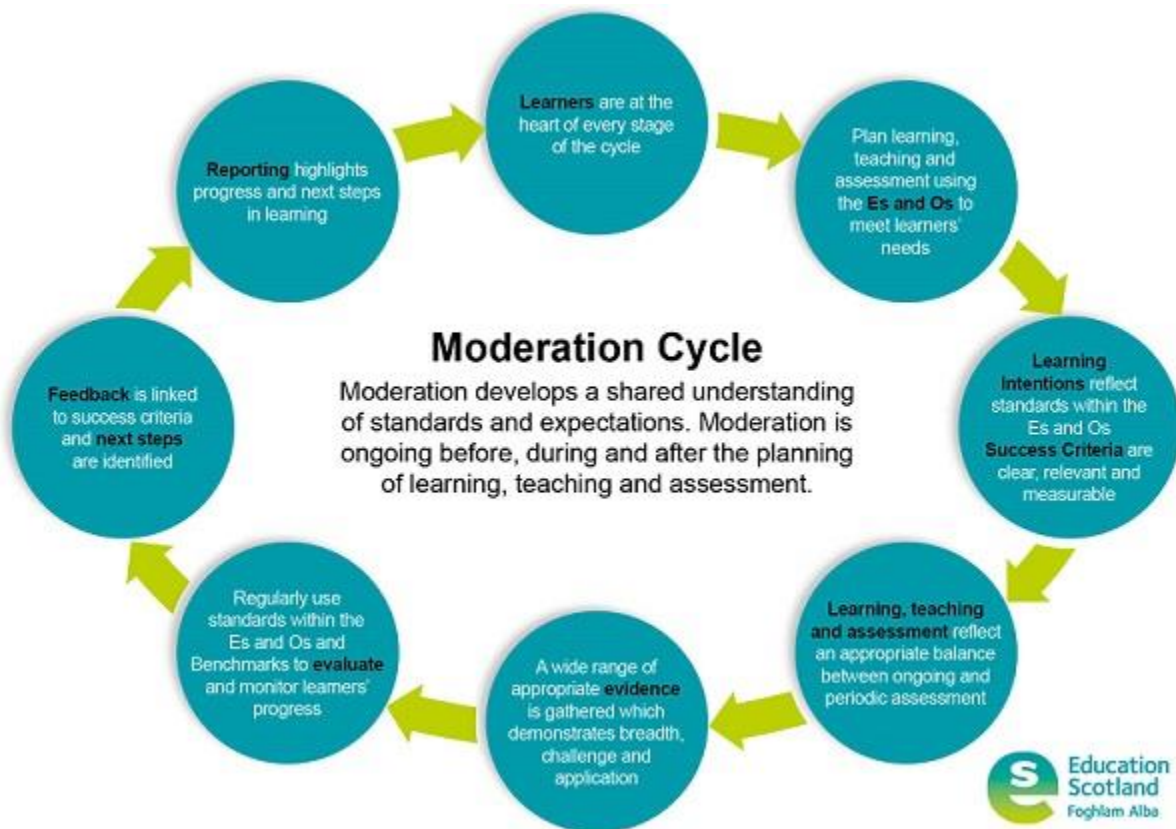
Expectations for Learners

In order to learners to fully benefit from assessment they should:

- arrive to class on time and fully prepared with all the appropriate materials for assessment activities;
- respect others' right to learn and where appropriate collaborate constructively with peers;
- submit any required assessment tasks on time and to the standard expected;
- actively participate in the techniques of self/peer assessment and evaluation;
- take on board feedback and self-evaluate effectively to set targets and next steps

Moderation

Ongoing moderation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment is a high priority to ensure the aims of this policy are met.



All departments should use the [Moderation Cycle](#) and allocated time effectively to ensure all courses and assessment meet the required standard. For information can be found on the [Moderation Hub](#).