ST NINIAN'S HIGH SCHOOL

School Policy No. 9

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Teaching for Effective Learning

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A coherent and consistent whole-school approach to learning and teaching is fundamental to what we do at St Ninian's. It is important that our approach incorporates statements on good class practice, lesson organisation, classroom organisation, pedagogy, assessment, support for learning, learning styles and differentiation. The policy must be read in conjunction with other policies on the curriculum, assessment, Support for Learning, ICT, homework, discipline and Quality Assurance. The policy should also take into account national guidance contained in the following documents:

A Curriculum for Excellence: building the curriculum 3 a framework for learning and teaching
Assessment is for Learning programme,
How Good is Our School 4,
BtC5 a framework for assessment,
BtC4 skills for learning, life and work,
EDC's Secondary Curriculum Framework 2012,
Education Scotland; Building Your Curriculum,
How Good Is Our School? The Journey to Excellence,
National Improvement Framework

Learning and teaching must be recognised as separate processes.

- Effective learning involves not only the acquisition of knowledge and understanding and skills but also the development of attitude, values and dispositions.
- Effective teaching is one of the key processes which addresses the identified needs of pupils by devising learning activities which are both manageable and challenging.

RATIONALE

- The main measure of a school experience is the quality of learning and teaching.
- The quality of teaching is a crucial factor in promoting effective learning in a school.
- Effective learning is grounded in effective teaching.

OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure the highest possible standards of achievement and attainment for every learner
2. To promote an inclusive and positive ethos in keeping with gospel values and a climate of good behaviour, which are essential for effective learning to take place.
3. To take account of preferred learning and teaching styles.
4. To maximise pupils' achievement and tackle underachievement.
5. To ensure the use of a variety of effective approaches to learning and teaching.
6. To ensure that pupils are aware of the purposes of activities.
7. To ensure that teachers interact effectively with every pupil.
8. To create a learning environment which motivates pupils to work well.
9. To promote learning across a wide range of contexts and well planned experiences.
10. To afford every pupil opportunities for personal achievement.
11. To equip every pupil with skills for high levels of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.
12. To ensure assessment is fit for purpose and supports learning and teaching.
13. To empower and encourage pupils to see themselves as active citizens and agents for change in local, national and global contexts.
14. To encourage and provide opportunities for parents and carers to take an active role in their children's' learning.

METHODS OF ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES

- Implement a system for monitoring learning and teaching in line with EDC policies.
- Enable regular departmental discussion of current policy and practice.
- Encourage departments to use the Quality Indicators in How Good is Our School and other means such as the Monitoring Learning and Teaching Calendar in order to review learning and teaching regularly.
- Afford teachers opportunities to share their strengths with colleagues thus ensuring a greater measure of coherence and consistency within departments and across the curriculum through learning communities and learning visits.

- Provide appropriate staff development including the provision of up-to-date information on research and good practice
- Build capacity in the teaching profession, principally through self-evaluation and network-based continuing professional learning.

TEACHING PRACTICE – A CHECKLIST

Learners learn successfully when they are:

- motivated and eager participants
- actively involved in their own learning and confident in the next steps
- aware of where to go if they need help
- clear about what they are expected to learn
- involved and engaged in deciding what needs to be done next, and who they can go to if they need additional help
- given honest and constructive feedback about the quality of their work, and what they can do to improve it
- given clear advice on what success in learning means and about the ways in which they can secure improvement
- valued and praised for their achievement.

DESIRABLE QUALITIES OF GOOD TEACHING PRACTICE

A professional practitioner:
- arrives punctually and does not leave the class unattended
- provides a safe environment for all
- delivers lessons enthusiastically and makes every attempt to make learning relevant and motivating
- knows all pupils in the class by name
- prepares thoroughly and makes a prompt start to the lesson
- establishes routine within their classroom
- has high expectations of his/her pupils
- adheres to the discipline code within the school and is consistent, fair and firm
- intervenes swiftly, sensibly and unobtrusively
- uses praise and rewards appropriately
- manages unsatisfactory work in a positive and supportive manner
- provides pupils with feedback to improve their performance
- is skilled in identifying next steps in learning
- provides basic resources where required – pens, ruler, coloured pens etc.

Class lessons should display the following features

- learning intentions discussed at the beginning and revisited at the conclusion of the lesson
- account taken of prior learning and attainment
- account taken of varying skills and aptitudes
- use of experiences and outcomes to plan coherent approaches to learning, teaching and assessment
- suitable breadth and challenge and capable of wider application
- vocabulary appropriate to age and stage
- good planning and delivery
- a range of teaching approaches where practicable
- a range of learning activities
- clearly identified individual and group tasks
- achievable success
- opportunities for enrichment which involve listening, speaking, writing, group work, research, use of IT and cooperative learning
- opportunities for independent learning
- a range of skilled questioning techniques
- opportunities for pupil reflection to allow them to make connections with other areas of the curriculum
- time at the end of the lesson to reinforce and summarise aims

EVALUATION OF LESSONS

Should feature the following:

- end of topic assessment
- discussion with pupils
- questionnaire to pupils
- a commitment to improve the lesson where appropriate, in response to pupil and colleague feedback
- teacher professional reflection and review

PEDAGOGY

- Suitable range of teaching resources available
- Teacher confident, patient and good humoured
- Teacher has a flexible approach
- Teacher responds to changing circumstances
- Tasks match age, stage and attainment
- Learning intentions clearly visible and shared with pupils
- Good balance between direct teaching, independent learning, co-operative learning and teacher interaction
- Effective use of team teaching and support staff
- Opportunities for individual, group and whole group activities
- The variety and range of tasks have been planned and designed to support and challenge pupils

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Effective and successful learning depends upon:

- a calm and industrious atmosphere in class
- peaceful and harmonious conditions in the classroom. "*Where pupils perceive a poor disciplinary climate, their performance is lower.*" PISA
- the quality of teacher-pupil relationships. "*The quality of relationships is not perceived to be poor overall. But where it is poor (in Scotland) it has a much bigger impact on performance than in other countries*" PISA

LEARNING STYLES

In each class of learners there will be a range of preferred learning styles and if teachers wish to improve pupils' learning they will vary their lessons to take account of those different learning styles. Broadly, these are:

- Visual learners who remember information from visual aids i.e. textbooks, power points the interactive board.
  They like to have a clear view of the teacher and enjoy presenting information and ideas in a variety of ways such as mind maps, charts and graphs.
- Auditory learners who understand best by listening to class discussions and presentations. These learners benefit from reading passages aloud and creating musical jingles, mnemonics and acronyms to help with their studies.
- Linguistic learners benefit from discussing and explaining what they are learning. They fully participate in group discussions and memorise information by rewriting notes, outlining chapters in addition to writing scripts and debates.
- Kinaesthetic learners learn best by a 'hands on' approach. They like to be able to move around and use practical skills to help them with everyday learning. They benefit from using ICT, flash cards, bright coloured highlighters for important points. They like to apply information to the real world by acting out materials or designing games.

Teachers too have preferred teaching styles but should try to create opportunities for themselves to explore the various styles so that all learners' needs are accommodated.

DIFFERENTIATION

"*The process by which differences between learners are accommodated so that all students in a group have the best possible chance of learning.*" Geoff Petty. Teaching Today

Categories of differentiation

1. By task - which involves setting different activities for pupils of different abilities
2. By support - which means giving more help to certain pupils within a group
3. By outcomes - which involves setting open-ended tasks and allowing pupil response at different levels

Good teachers acknowledge the spectrum of abilities, interests, dispositions and aptitudes in every class, and their duty to make the curriculum accessible to all learners. This ensures that everyone learns well despite their many differences. This necessitates intervention in the classroom and strategies which accommodate differences in the abilities and characteristics of learners, and which allow all pupils to experience success.

This process involves:

- recognising the variety of individual needs within a class
- planning to meet those needs
- providing an appropriate range of activities
- evaluating the effectiveness of the activities to maximise the achievements of individual pupils

We should be wary of using the term 'mixed ability' because classes have a whole range of differences such as age, gender, learning style, motivation, prior learning and experience, as well as specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

It is important to recognise that no one strategy in itself will provide the complete solution to the spectrum of abilities. The approach must be flexible and consider a number of strategies, such as:

- Prior learning
- Class organisation
- Setting, mixed ability or broad banding
- Group work or cooperative learning groups
- Whole class work
- Customised programmes of study
- Different ways to take in, work with, and learn information
- A carefully planned blend of assessment opportunities which allows pupils to demonstrate progress
- Different ways for students to show what they know, for example, mind maps, spider diagrams, bullet points, lists
- Different amounts of time to complete the work
- Same task work- all pupils tackle the same task. Differentiation is by level of response and/or time taken
- Graded tasks – all pupils have the opportunity to move on to increasingly difficult tasks
- Core and extension – all pupils do core tasks then move on to graded extension work or remediation
- Flexible open ended tasks or projects on topics in which pupils have an interest
- Pupils provided with regular opportunities for self-evaluation and feedback in a structured, recognisable format
- Time to talk to those who find tasks difficult and to provide support
- Consider tasks which support known weaknesses and use known strengths

Teachers should remember that organisational solutions when setting or banding, for example, will still leave a range of attainment within each class and variations in interest, motivation, aptitudes and learning styles. They must ensure that different approaches do not result in individuals or small groups of pupils feeling isolated from the main work of the classroom.

Consequently, teachers should ensure that:

- differentiated approaches should aim to provide a common framework and shared contexts for learning, even if pupils need customised or personalised programmes of study.
- they retain a flexible attitude to teaching approaches, structures, resources, pupil groupings, class organisation, etc.
- they seek help and advice from colleagues, making themselves familiar with examples of good practice.

SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

- We recognise that every child has individual learning needs and that each class will contain a wide spectrum of such needs.
- It is essential that an appropriately differentiated curriculum is offered to take account of this range of needs within an inclusive and supportive ethos in which the contribution and worth of every young person is of equal value.
- The class teacher is responsible for the learning programme of each pupil including the provision of resources, assessment and recording of progress.
- The Support for Learning (SfL) department helps identify the range of learning needs within the school and ensures that every attempt is made to provide pupils with appropriate support and assistance. Particular attention is paid to those pupils who have identified Additional Support Needs (ASN).

Procedures

- The Principal Teacher of SfL (who operates within a broader Pupil Support department) will issue information to all staff at the beginning of the year identifying pupils with ASN, explaining what these are and guidelines on how the class teacher may help these pupils.
- Departments can then request support from the SfL department under the following headings: cooperative teaching, consultation and attendance at departmental meetings.
- The Principal Teachers SfL returns a timetable to each department indicating the name of the SfL teacher /assistant, which group or individual pupil he or she will support, and during which period. Every attempt is made to ensure continuity when assigning staff.
- Class teachers can then seek further support by following the Staged Intervention Guideline.

Types of support

There are various types of support which SfL can offer:

1. Consultancy Support

   Advice to colleagues on ways of improving the quality and effectiveness of learning and teaching.
   Adapting or providing curriculum materials to suit the learning needs of individual pupils.

2. Cooperative Teaching

   Supporting the work of the class teacher by targeting assistance in a planned way for pupils experiencing barriers to learning.

3. Class Teaching

   SfL staff teach special programmes to groups who may opt out of the National Qualifications programme. For example, literacy, numeracy and other core skills can be taught to pupils as a substitute for other mainstream subjects.

4. Staff Development

   SfL staff contribute to the enhancement of colleagues' professional development through attendance at departmental meetings, seminars, collegiate time and inset days. SfL staff attend professional development courses where necessary.

BROADER WHOLE SCHOOL STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT PUPILS

- An ethos which is responsive to pupils who experience additional support needs either in the short term or for longer.
- Timetabled supporting learners classes for all pupils
- Mentoring S4-S6 by selected staff
- S6 buddies to support S1 pupils
- Paired reading. A sixth year pupil will help an S1 pupil.
- Formative Assessment strategies as part of the AifL programme have a positive impact on pupils with ASN.
- Curriculum flexibility initiatives eg life-skills mathematics
- Target setting for each pupil during a 1-1 interview with Guidance.
- Guidance staff regularly examine the Tracking system to identify pupils who are not on track.

Please refer to school policy No 3 Support for Learning and on the shared area, the policy documents on Staged Intervention and Pupils with Additional Support Needs.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Learning and Teaching Team will monitor the implementation of the policy.

May 2023