ST NINIAN'S HIGH SCHOOL

School Policy No.10

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STRATEGIES TO RAISE ATTAINMENT

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The life-chances of our young people are often determined by their attainments. The focus on raising attainment is crucial to the task of ensuring that our young people leave school with the best possible qualifications and fully equipped for work, training or continuing education.

Standards of attainment are defined in three ways;

1. Performance in the experiences and outcomes within CfE (levels 3 and 4 for most in secondary), internally marked by teachers and verified through moderation. Each learner's progress within a level may be assessed by teachers as secure, consolidating or developing.
2. In senior phase the assessment criteria within SQA courses are benchmarked against the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Attainment at SCQF levels 5 and upwards after 2014.
3. Performance relative to other countries eg through the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) which samples the knowledge and skills of pupils aged 15.

This paper will identify some of the underlying features of a high attaining school and suggest some consistent strategies which might improve attainment in external examinations.

In 2012 the Association of Directors of Education identified a number of strategies and practices that successful schools have adopted at classroom and whole school level, in order to raise attainment. These include ;

An ethos in each classroom where there is

1. a culture of respect, care and high expectations for every young person.
2. good teacher management skills
3. effective use of praise and encouragement with every pupil knowing their best is expected

Where effective, enabled professional practitioners

4. take full responsibility for leading the learning of every pupil
5. embrace a culture of self-reflection and an appetite for reflecting and acting upon all available evidence about the progress of each pupil.
6. display a culture of openness where peers are welcome to observe and where collegiate time is used to discuss teachers' practices and potential improvements in approaches.
7. deliver lessons enthusiastically and make every attempt to make learning relevant and motivating
8. deliver well planned and differentiated lessons
9. share lesson intentions and success criteria so pupils know what success looks like
10. are skilled in identifying next steps in learning

<u>Strategies to improve attainment</u>

Suggested areas for inclusion in no order of preference

- Monitoring and tracking
- Data or evidence sources
- Learning and teaching
- SQA feedback
- Verification and internal assessment
- Appeals procedures
- Identifying appropriate learning and qualification pathways
- Support for teachers
- Broader whole school policies

Monitoring and Tracking

The new Seemis Tracking and Monitoring is used in the school.
Staff input grades for the pupils at the start of the year. The grades include:

- An aspirational grade (what they should be aspiring to at the end of the year)
- A target grade (for that particular month)
- A working grade
- Next Target Grade (NTG) – what their target will be for the following month.

These grades are then updated monthly in S4-S6 to give a clear indication of the pupils' targets for the month as well as their working grade. This information is then used by Principal Teachers, Guidance staff, SMT, mentors and Supporting Learners teachers to target particular pupils and identify strategies for improvement. This information is also used to share information with parents and keep them updated.
The system will also track the pupils' effort, behaviour and homework.
As well as monitoring and tracking individual pupils, the system can be used by guidance, SMT and Support for Learning to track performances across departments and target where extra support may be required.

<u>Source of Data</u>

1. SQA Results

2. Component marks

3. Estimate grades

4. External assessment Reports (formerly Principal Assessors' reports)

5. Internal Assessment Reports

6. Standard Tables and Charts e.g. the % of candidates passing at each grade, trends over the past five years, NCDs, the importance of relative value scrutiny, is the trend negative?

7. Marking schemes

8. List of candidates eligible for an appeal

9. Result of appeals

10. Analysis of appeals processes

Learning and Teaching

1. Has the department compared actual results with estimated grades?

2. Is there concern over the pattern of results achieved in the classes of individual teachers?

3. What use is made of component UASPs?

4. Has the requisite teaching time been allocated to component parts of the course? Is sequence correct?

5. Are the more demanding parts of the course left to the latter stages and does this disadvantage the able pupil?

6. Are classes shared by two teachers? Is there consistency in learning, teaching and assessment approaches?

7. Are preliminary exam results analysed to target areas of weakness at individual pupil level, class level, and departmental level?

8. Does pass/fail at unit assessments induce complacency especially if the pass is narrowly gained?

9. Is there headroom in the assessment to allow for a truer or more accurate reflection of performance?

10. Is enough importance attached to the preparation and purposes of preliminary examinations?

11. What use is made of homework or supported study to refresh skills covered earlier?

12. Is sufficient use made of pupil evaluation of lesson content?

13. Do the skills taught in the Supporting Learner period complement the skills taught across the curriculum?

External Assessment Reports

1. What use is made of External Assessment Reports comments on e.g.

- the quality of responses given
- incident of irrelevance and waffle
- reading the rubric
- time management
- understanding command words such as justify, describe, discuss, evaluate, compare etc.
- the need for higher order writing skills, extended essays etc.
- use of 'text language'

2. The volume of assessment? Too many NAB's. How useful are NABS? How important are they in the event of appeals?

SQA Verification

Current concerns from SQA are well documented

1. Overuse of assessments
2. Pupils over rehearsed
3. Given too much time. This doesn't help candidates
4. Feedback from verifiers not communicated to all teachers in the department

Identifying appropriate learning and qualification pathways for pupils

"Young people are thriving in this new curriculum particularly the current S2 who were the first to experience the new curriculum" Michael Russell SLF Sept 2011.

If this is the case then pupils successfully completing Broad General Education in S1-3 in session 2012-13 should embark upon qualification pathways appropriate to their needs. The new qualifications build on the outcomes and experiences of BGE and this in conjunction with more sophisticated assessment and reporting procedures and, where appropriate, standardised tests, should enhance the process of selecting appropriate qualification pathways and programmes of study which suit the needs of the learner.

Support for Teachers and Continuing Professional Learning

1. Departmental quality assurance and self-evaluation processes which include inter-visitation, cross-marking, moderation, targeting learners having difficulty with aspects of the course, discussion of results analysis, Insight, HMIe documentation such as the Learning Together series, HGIOS4 and the Journey to Excellence improvement guides
2. Good practice seminars on inset days
3. Partnerships with high achieving departments in the school
4. Attendance at SQA Professional Development Workshops.
5. Authority led Professional Development Groups for PTs.
6. Judicious use of opportunities for cooperative teaching.

7. Judicious and appropriate use of opportunities for supported study.

8. PT visits to classrooms to offer support and advice.

9. Opportunities to participate in Learning Visits to the classes of colleagues and to discuss and share good practice.

10. Active involvement in school procedures to enhance literacy and numeracy e.g. literacy lunches, literacy hotline, numeracy audit on the shared area, sharing of good departmental practices etc.

11. Moderation to help build upon existing effective practice. Teachers should take every opportunity to engage in professional dialogue with colleagues in school and across the authority to agree and share standards. This helps build reliability, trust and confidence in professional judgements within departments.

12. An effective process of Professional Review and Development which informs the school's Continuing Professional Development agenda and the school Improvement Plan.

13. Judicious and enterprising use of the school CPD budget to encourage teachers to continuously develop their professional skills and knowledge and so enhance their professional capacity for improvement.

Broader whole school processes

1. A core belief that every child matters and can achieve and an ethos of attainment, included in the school and departmental development plans, and flagged up at every opportunity including awards ceremonies, assemblies and parents' evenings.

2. SMT tracking of pupil experiences across the curriculum.

3. SMT, in consultation with Principal Teachers, setting targets for raising attainment.

4. Monitoring departmental practice on estimates and appeals.

5. A robust and consistent presentation policy.

6. SMT sharing attainment information with staff across the school, and with pupils and parents.

7. Setting targets for individual pupils through the tracking process at departmental level.

8. Embedding timetabled Supporting Learners and the role of the Key Adult in helping pupils to set, overtake and record targets for attainment and broader achievement.

9. Mentoring of learners.

10. Targeted mentoring of learners. Cusp candidates in danger of not getting 5 Credit or National 5 passes.

11. Targeted supported study classes.

12. Study skills seminars from S3 onwards.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the school policy on assessment to support learning, teaching for effective learning and quality assurance and self-evaluation.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Learning and Teaching team will monitor the implementation of this policy.

May 2023