

DRUMAHOE PRIMARY SCHOOL



LEARNING & TEACHING POLICY

Developing the potential of everyone to the full, within a caring and stimulating environment

Principal: T. R. McMaster B.Ed.

‘Learning can unlock the treasure that lies within us all. In the 21st century, knowledge and skills will be the key to success good teachers, using the most effective methods, are the key to higher standards.’

(DfEE, Excellence in Schools, 1997)

Values that underpin learning

We at Drumahoe Primary School believe that:-

- All pupils **can** learn
- Regular feedback is vital for learning
- Pupils learn from each other
- Pupil learning can be improved by them developing an awareness of their own learning style and learning processes
- Pupils learn best when they experience ownership of their learning
- Pupils learn effectively when they integrate experience, imagination, information and application

Creating a learning environment for pupils and staff

At Drumahoe Primary School we endeavour to provide an environment where quality teaching and learning experiences are nurtured. To facilitate this we will adopt teaching styles that are:-

- Stimulating
- Appropriate and relevant to each child's need
- Enabling
- Challenging
- Enjoyable

We will continue to use a variety of teaching approaches within our school such as:

- Practical Activities
- Problem Solving
- Investigative/Research Activities
- Cross Curricular based Activities
- Individual work

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- Group work
- Whole class
- Questioning
- Multimedia and multi-sensory approaches
- Team teaching
- Educational visits

We aim to keep the corridors and classrooms bright and interesting – that is attractive to pupils, parents and visitors as well as safe.

Our corridor and classroom displays will be reflective of the pupils' work.

Aims for Learning and Teaching

1. To create a secure learning environment where staff and pupils are motivated to promote confidence and self esteem.
2. To provide facilities and opportunities inside and outside of the classroom for children to engage in purposeful learning through a broad and balanced curriculum.
3. To encourage pupils to become active and autonomous learners.
4. To incorporate the three main channels of learning (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic) into our planning and teaching.
5. To employ a range of teaching styles and assessment strategies which take into account different intelligences.
6. To make maximum use of teaching resources, especially human resources, in the learning and teaching process.
7. To continually monitor and evaluate the learning and teaching process to ensure the highest possible standards.
8. To provide staff with appropriate and relevant professional development which will enhance the learning and teaching.
9. To engage parents in their child's learning process.

The Process of Learning

We are aware that there are three main channels of learning (Appendix 1. Learning Styles).

1. Visual
2. Auditory
3. Kinaesthetic

We also take into account recent and relevant research indicating that children learn best by doing and by the immediate use of their learning (Appendix 2. The Learning Pyramid).

Also reflected in our teaching is the recognition that our pupils possess multiple intelligences (Appendix 3. Multiple Intelligences).

Developing the Autonomous Learner

At Drumahoe Primary School we aim to develop our pupils as autonomous learners. By the end of Year 7 we would expect our pupils to:-

- Exhibit high self esteem
- Know how to learn and have the disposition to do so
- Have good communication skills – listening, questioning etc.
- Be able to work independently and with others
- Be able to use strategies for “finding out”
- Make connections between different curricular areas
- Utilise the range of essential ICT skills which they have acquired at school

Format for Planning

In our school we have an agreed format for planning.

We plan on:-

- A yearly schemes basis with associated overviews to ensure breadth and balance to the curriculum
- Six weekly planners

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- Daily/Weekly planning notes

We realise that in our planning and teaching it is necessary to:-

- Make links between present and past learning
- Identify Learning Outcomes
- Integrate the multiple intelligences and the different learning styles
- Allow pupils to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways
- Allow pupils to review what they have learned
- Provide opportunity for peer evaluation, self evaluation and teacher evaluation

Individual teachers hold copies of yearly schemes and overviews.

Individual teachers hold six weekly planners, with copies in the Principal's Office.

Personal and emotional development of staff and pupils

In Drumahoe Primary School the ethos of the school is central to the development of pupils' personal, social and emotional competences.

We aim to promote this in staff by:-

- Creating a supportive and friendly environment
- Appreciating all points of views
- Valuing individual strengths and qualities
- Celebrating good practice
- Engaging in regular review of the school's mission statement and of its implementation in the schools' policies and practices

We aim to promote this in pupils by:-

- Encouraging each pupil to have the confidence to be themselves
- Accepting the qualities and differences of others
- Encouraging them to "have a dream"
- Being willing to take risks and use the outcome positively

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- Recognising the feelings and emotions of others and of themselves

Learning Resources and Classroom Organisation

At Drumahoe Primary School we recognise the importance of all our human resources – teachers, classroom assistants and support staff. We also recognise that our parents and the local community are a resource for learning and teaching.

Other resources we intend to use include:-

- Books
- Computer Suite
- ICT resources (interactive whiteboard, digital camera etc.)
- Audio and Visual resources
- Practical equipment
- Peers
- School Trips
- Outside Agencies
- Artefacts

In order to provide a quality learning and teaching environment and to cater for all learning styles we will vary our teaching organisation.

We will teach our pupils in:-

- Whole class situations
- Group Situations i.e. Mixed ability
 - Teacher directed groups
 - Single/Mixed gender
- Pairs
- Individually
- Team Teaching situations
- Withdrawal situations

Strategies for teaching pupils with additional needs:

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We are very aware that some pupils because of their learning difficulties have additional special needs. The school has one part-time Learning Support teacher who with the rest of the teaching staff caters for such pupils.

Early detection is paramount in this programme. Pupils in Year 1 are screened for signs of learning difficulties and this screening takes place throughout the child's education. The S.E.N.C.O. and Staff are in constant contact in identifying, monitoring and evaluating pupils. Our S.E.N.C.O. liaises closely with our school education psychologist and avails of the services of the peripatetic services of the WELB. Some of the strategies we use include:-

- Individual Education Plans (I.E.P. 'S)
- Target Setting (Academic and Behavioural)
- Early Detection
- Parental Workshops-Paired Reading & Writing
- In-class curriculum support
- Classroom Assistants Specialized Training
- Withdrawal support
- Standardised and diagnostic tests
- Award Systems
- Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation
- P7 mentoring programme

Strategies for Teaching pupils who are talented or gifted

At Drumahoe Primary School we are also aware that, on occasions, there may be gifted or talented pupils attending the school. We use the following criteria to identify such pupils.

- Pupils who achieve at a level significantly in advance of the average for their year group

While we consider such pupils to also have an additional special educational need they are primarily the responsibility of the class teacher. We hope to identify these pupils, as early as possible, by our normal screening and testing processes as well as professional judgement.

Some of the strategies we use include:-

- Setting challenging work

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- Use of a variety of resources
- Use of research based topics
- Investigation work
- Problem Solving/Open ended work
- Constant Monitoring and Evaluating
- Providing additional work for home
- Withdrawal
- Use of Outside Agencies

Parents of such children will be consulted on the best way forward and ways in which they can help.

Community Involvement in our Teaching and Learning

Over a number of years the school has established strong links with the community and these strengthen year by year. The following community links are in place to enhance learning and teaching:-

- Parental helpers (library, reading, cycling proficiency, sport etc.) (Vetting procedures in place ref. DENI 1999/10)
- P.T.A.
- Parental Expertise
- Bi-annual Parent Teacher Interviews
- Curriculum workshops
- Links with local nursery schools/playgroups
- EMU links (St. Colmcille's P.S. – Claudy)
- Links with local secondary schools
- Links with Further Education Colleges
- University of Ulster/Stranmillis College
- Links with local Special Schools
- Monthly Parent Memos

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- Choir visits to Churches, Old Peoples Homes, Hospitals, UTV Choir of the Year and Concerts
- Written Reports to Parents
- Year 1 induction
- Year 6 & Year 7 Transfer Meetings
- School website
- Sporting Links – soccer/netball/mini-rugby/basketball
- Youth Sport Foyle
- Business in the Community – Reading Project “Time to Read”
- Hope UK
- PSNI, Fire Brigade etc
- Local Charities
- Statutory Agencies
- Verbal Arts Centre
- Nerve Centre
- Derry City Council

Monitoring and Evaluating

At Drumahoe Primary School we recognise the need for teachers and pupils to monitor and evaluate the learning.

Aspects of the learning and teaching process to be monitored and evaluated are:-

- The expectations held by teachers, pupils and parents
- Self confidence and self esteem of pupils
- Use of homework
- Teaching strategies used in class
- The effectiveness with which independent learning is promoted in the school
- The use of ICT to support learning

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The following range of strategies are used to assist monitoring and evaluating.

- Co-ordinators monitor planners and report areas of concern to the Principal
- Twice yearly check of books (“Book Scoop”) against planners
- Assessment analysis: statutory (benchmarking), standardised test analysis (MIS), 11+/A.Q.E. grades, C.C.E.A.- I.C.T. Accreditation.
- Co-ordinators create an action plan annually
- Release of staff for evaluation of teaching strategies/curriculum development
- Curriculum Meetings – Curriculum Team, Literacy Team, Numeracy Team
- Classroom visits (Principal)- informal and formal
- Analysis of Assessment Data
- Staff self evaluation of Planners
- Pupil self assessment
- Release of Co-ordinators
- Evaluation by S.M.T.
- Principal/Teacher Annual Review Meetings
- Teacher Tutor – B.T. / E.P.D.