



Learning and Teaching Policy

Introduction

At Abbeyhill we teach using the Curriculum for Excellence which is the national curriculum for all children and young people aged 3 – 18. It brings together a range of initiatives in a coherent manner, opening up choices and providing opportunities to realise individual potential and to develop deep and meaningful learning for all. This policy aims to outline the effective learning and teaching approaches that will develop the four capacities:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Effective contributors
- Responsible citizens

For more information on the Curriculum for Excellence please visit the Education Scotland website at www.educationscotland.gov.uk and click 'Curriculum'.

Ethos of the Learning Community

For effective learning to take place it is important that there is a positive and empowering climate for learning. Our school is welcoming and classrooms are well-organised with resources clearly labelled and easily accessible for children and staff. High quality displays across the school reflect what the children are learning. All staff have high expectations and promote positive and open relationships. Our learning community climate is one in which children are entrusted and encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.

Curriculum

The curriculum that we offer our children is in line with the Curriculum for Excellence and aims to promote challenge, enjoyment, breadth and depth, progression, relevance, coherence, personalisation and choice in learning for all pupils. We acknowledge national and local advice whilst leaving scope for individual teachers to introduce well-considered innovations.

Our teaching plans provide concise and clear specifications of what pupils will learn and how they will be taught and provide pupils with the opportunity to experience a balanced curriculum across the session while allowing for an element of flexibility.

Teachers develop knowledge and skills in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing across curriculum areas as appropriate and plan for links between areas of learning.

We aim for our learners to become creative, enterprising and prepared for the world of work and their future careers.

Learning and Teaching and Assessment Approaches

Engaging and Active

Learners should be actively engaged in their learning. They need to have an investment in the learning process and to be positively involved in their own learning. Learning will build on and connect to prior learning and this learning will be meaningful and relevant; by making connections to what is already known children will be more receptive to new knowledge.

Effective questioning is one of the four key elements of formative assessment and is at the heart of an effective learning environment. Learners will be encouraged to think and ask questions.

We encourage children to be actively engaged in their learning by offering opportunities to:

- Listen to others
- Explain their learning to others
- Solve problems
- Take responsibility
- Be involved.

Class teachers will ensure that there is a range of teaching approaches employed that reflect the needs of the individual learner.

Setting Challenging Goals

Learners must be encouraged to be ambitious in their learning and learning goals need to be challenging but achievable. Teachers will encourage high expectations in learning and children will be encouraged to set themselves challenging but realistic targets. Children will however be praised for their effort and achievement regardless of attainment. The pace of learning will be matched according to each individual learner and all learners will experience depth and progression in learning along with the development of higher order thinking skills. Teacher's planning will make connections across curricular areas and will include clear aims and objectives, recognising individual needs and ensuring that all learning experiences are appropriately resourced.

Shared Expectations and Standards

Planning for learning should be responsive allowing children to contribute to the process. Children are involved in regular dialogue relating to their learning in a variety of ways e.g. informal discussions, planned interviews etc and feedback will offer formative assessment of how well they are doing and what they need to do to progress. Children are given choice in how they demonstrate their success in learning.

Formal whole school moderation activities take place on a termly basis to further strengthen the ongoing moderation across stages. Teachers are encouraged to discuss professionally with colleagues regarding expectations and standards and pace of learning.

Timely, Accurate Feedback

Feedback, both verbal and written, is a key element of formative assessment giving the learner a clear understanding of what needs to be done to learn more effectively. Feedback relates to the learning intention and success criteria.

Learning Intentions, Success Criteria, Personal Learning Planning

Learning intentions focus on what is to be learned rather than on the task or activity. Learning intentions should be matched with success criteria. These are key elements of formative assessment and will enable children to have their own understanding of the learning that they are trying to achieve and what the successful learning will look like when they have achieved the learning intentions.

By ensuring that both learning intentions and success criteria are shared, agreed and understood, learners are encouraged to have a greater independence and a sense of responsibility for their learning.

Personal learning planning is a conversation about learning that enables learners to think about how they are progressing in their learning; how they know this, what they need to improve/ learn next and how they will achieve this learning. These conversations take place informally throughout the school day but are formally recorded on a termly basis with a particular curricular focus.

Collaborative

By enabling children to learn and play in teams, pairs and larger groups, knowledge, co-operation and trust can be established and built to form collaborative communities in our classrooms. Such experiences support the development of confidence and skills for life, learning and work. They allow choice and ownership of learning through: sharing ideas; 'buying in' rather than 'going along'; pursuing common goals; and recognising and resolving conflict.

Learning Styles

Opportunities will be given to allow learners to demonstrate their learning through saying, writing, making and doing. Teaching approaches will be varied to encourage learners in using different learning styles. Children are taught to identify the ways that they learn best and are provided with opportunities to use all their senses and different intelligences through a variety of different contexts.

Transitions

Effective transitions promote continuity and progression in learning. All staff, support agencies, parents and children are involved in the process ensuring learners' experiences are coherent at times of transition.

Wider Achievement

Children are encouraged to reflect on and articulate the learning and skills they have gained across a range of contexts both within and outside school. This is done as part of the personal learning

planning process and in doing so; they can track and monitor their progress towards the four capacities: successful learners, responsible citizens, effective contributors and confident individuals.

Self-Evaluation

Using a range of self-evaluation tools including *The Child at the Centre* and *How Good is our School 3*, all staff regularly evaluate the quality of learning experiences offered to children and how well the learning needs of children are being met.

Monitoring and evaluation includes quantitative data, direct observation and professional, parental and children's views.

At Abbeyhill Primary School, this will take the form of:

- Sharing of good practice through liaison with colleagues
- Celebrating success
- Regular focussed sharing of classroom practice by leadership team
- Informal observation and feedback on effective learning and teaching
- Monitoring of plans by the leadership team to ensure continuity, pace and progression and to ensure that learning experiences are well structured and differentiated as appropriate.
- Talking to pupils about their learning
- Looking at pupils' work
- Evaluating staff's strengths through the Professional Review process and agreeing development targets

Planning Learning Experiences

Teachers plan programmes of study to ensure continuity, pace and progression within all curricular areas and across curricular areas (interdisciplinary planning) on an annual, termly and daily basis. Planning for the learning experience will focus on learning outcomes, taking into account needs and interests of the learners. The learning experience should build on prior knowledge and allow for choice and personalisation of learning. Teachers also need to be flexible in order that they meet the demands of the moment.

When planning lessons teachers include a variety of approaches. Children need to be given the opportunity to listen, to see, to do and to interact with others.

Support for Pupils

Support may be necessary to provide the best learning opportunities possible for individual children. This may include pastoral care, personal and social development, learning support, support for special educational needs etc. For more information please see our Additional Support for Learning policy.

Reporting on Pupils' Progress

Parent Consultation evenings are held twice a year to discuss individual pupil progress with parents and an annual formal report is sent out yearly.

Meetings can also be arranged to discuss any issues which arise throughout the year.

Reports detail work covered throughout the year, progress and achievements and should advise on next steps for development. The main focus of Parent Consultations is to provide information on pupil progress and advise on next steps in learning.

Parents will be informed of homework tasks and projects through a variety of means and we aim to involve families in learning as much as possible.

Planning for school improvement takes place annually with the views of the school community sought and considered. A summary of the school Standards and Quality Improvement Plan is issued to all parents via our website with the full copy available in school.

Supporting the Learning & Teaching Policy

We aim to support the development of learning and teaching by:

- Professional dialogue and reflection
- Working with Support Assistants and developing their role
- Facilitating and promoting CPD opportunities
- In-service sessions supporting the School Improvement Plan
- Effective communication – jotters, forward plans, working with other professionals: e.g. Development Officers and Quality Improvement Officers
- Sharing of good practice
- Tracking and Monitoring of attainment and wider achievement
- Child Planning meetings and Learner Reviews
- Communication with parents through work going home, reports, newsletters, website, our Twitter feed and consultations with parents
- Pupil self-evaluations and comments sheets (shared with parents)
- Consultation with learners to inform and enhance classroom practice
- Development of professional library for staff
- Regular time for reflection through the annual in-service programme

Links to further information:

Information about the Curriculum for Excellence and education in Scotland:

www.educationscotland.gov.uk

Information about provision for children with Additional Support needs in Edinburgh schools:

<http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/inontheact>