

Kilkeel High School

Curriculum Policy



January 2014

Signed: _____

Aims

“To ensure every learner fulfils his or her full potential at each stage of her or his development”
Every School a Good School (DENI)

Through our curriculum, Kilkeel High School aims to develop and promote a culture of high aspiration and inclusion.

We aim to provide every pupil with the opportunities to improve and advance their learning as far as they are capable by giving access to a broad, relevant curriculum which is best suited to their abilities and aptitudes.

Both teaching and non-teaching staff aim to provide the highest quality education which will ensure all pupils achieve their full potential. We aim to continue to raise levels of achievement but also to narrow the achievement gap amongst all our pupils.

Improvement in pupil performance will be encouraged through regular assessment, tracking progress, providing feedback and reports and conducting pupil reviews, which will identify where more teacher support is needed as well as promoting greater pupil autonomy and self-evaluation

Kilkeel High’s curriculum promotes moral standards based on Christian principles, encouraging pupils to have respect for others and to become responsible members of their community.

We aim to conscientiously monitor and evaluate our curriculum provision and maintain its effectiveness through the application of appropriate quality assurance measures.

In practice, our curriculum policy must take account of the characteristics of high quality teaching and learning set out in “Every School a Good School”. (Department of Education for NI)

These are:-

- A broad and relevant curriculum is provided for the pupils, including through the Entitlement Framework for pupils at Key Stage 4 and above.
- An emphasis on literacy and numeracy exists across the curriculum.
- Teachers are committed and enthusiastic, enjoying a positive relationship with their pupils and with other school-based staff and dedicated to improving learning.
- Teachers use adaptable, flexible teaching strategies that respond to the diversity within the classroom.
- Assessment and other data are used effectively to inform teaching and learning across the school and in the classroom and to promote improvement.
- Rigorous self-evaluation is carried out by teachers and the whole school, using objective data and leading to sustained self-improvement.
- Teachers reflect on their own work and the outcomes of individual pupils.

- Education outcomes reflect positively on the school and compare well, when benchmarked measurement is undertaken, against the performance of other schools.

Curriculum

Kilkeel High's curriculum is set out in accordance with all the requirements of the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum which was introduced on a statutory basis in all post-primary schools in the 2007/08 school year.

Key Stage 3 – Years 8, 9 and 10

All pupils follow a common statutory curriculum made up of elements set out below.

Learning for Life and Work

-which includes

Personal Development

Employability

Local and Global Citizenship

Home Economics

Religious Education

The following Areas of Learning

Language and Literacy

Mathematics and Numeracy

Modern Languages

The Arts

Environment and Society

Physical Education

Science and Technology

(For listings of individual Key Stage 3 subjects within Learning Areas please see Appendix 1)

Along with the above provision it is also a statutory requirement that certain cross-curricular skills and other skills, which are considered essential for life and work, are developed and assessed; all subject departments have a responsibility to contribute to this development and assessment.

Cross – curricular Skills

Communication

Using Mathematics

Using IT

Other Skills – Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

Being Creative

Working with Others

Self-management

Managing Information

Thinking, Problem-solving and Decision Making

Key Stage 4 – Years 11 and 12

At Key Stage 4 the statutory curriculum elements are reduced to:-

Learning for Life and Work

-which includes

Personal Development

Careers

Local and Global Citizenship

Religious Education

Physical Education

Along with the above provision it is also a statutory requirement that certain cross-curricular skills and other skills, which are considered essential for life and work, are developed and assessed; all subject departments have a responsibility to contribute to this development and assessment.

Cross – curricular Skills

Communication

Using Mathematics

Using ICT

Other Skills

Working with Others

Self-management

Problem-solving

Additional to the above, schools have discretion regarding which subjects they offer as the main part of the Key Stage 4 curriculum. However, all are bound by the statutory entitlement framework requirement that all pupils entering Key Stage 4 must be able to choose from a minimum of 24 subjects, at least one third of which should be applied and at least one third of which should be general subjects.

Apart from the compulsory subjects above, Kilkeel High more than meets the statutory curriculum requirement by offering pupils what is aimed to be a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum choice from 28 subjects.

(Please see Appendix 2 for the list of subjects offered at Key Stage 4)

Post-16 Curriculum

Kilkeel High's aim is to offer as comprehensive and inclusive a choice of subjects and courses as possible for prospective post-16 students. We actively seek to attract pupils from a wide range of ability, knowing that, provided they show proper commitment, they will derive great benefit from their studies.

As with the Key Stage 4 curriculum there is a statutory entitlement framework requirement; in this case, that schools providing post-16 studies should endeavour to offer a minimum of 27 subjects, at least one third being applied and at least one third being general subjects.

In order to meet this requirement almost all schools will find it necessary, and will be actively encouraged, to join in collaborative arrangements with other schools in their respective Area Learning Community.

Kilkeel High belongs to the Newry and Mourne Area Learning Community and is presently collaborating with neighbouring St Louis Grammar School and Southern Regional College on the provision and development of certain jointly offered courses.

(Please see Appendix 3 for the list of post-16 subjects offered)

As well as their formal studies, students are encouraged to participate in enrichment activities which include Car Awareness, Games and RE.

Careers' Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

Kilkeel High recognises the important role of careers' education in the curriculum. Discrete lessons covering a comprehensive careers' programme, including employability, are provided for all pupils from Year 8 to Year 14.

All subject departments are encouraged to expand their own relevant contribution to careers' education, making use of the guidance offered in the DENI booklet – "Preparing for Success: A Guide to Developing Effective Career Decision Makers"

Every pupil gains experience of the workplace environment from a week's work shadowing in Year 11 and a number of Year 12 pupils have the opportunity to spend one day a week with an employer, undertaking work experience.

Careers' information and guidance are provided by school and Board staff, involving individual pupil interviews and making use of the library and research facilities in the Careers' suite.

Throughout the year special events are organised for pupils by the Careers Department to develop careers information and employability skills.

Taken altogether the intention is to cover as fully as possible the 3 aims of effective CEIAG provision:

- Self-Awareness and Development - identifying, assessing and developing the skills and qualities necessary to choose and implement an appropriate career plan.
- Career Exploration - acquiring and evaluating information, and reviewing experiences to identify and investigate appropriate career pathways and learning opportunities in education, training and employment, locally, nationally and internationally.
- Career Management - developing skills in career planning, and employing effective career decision-making strategies to manage transition and make suitable career development choices, with the appropriate support, advice and guidance.

(Preparing for Success- A Guide to Developing Effective Career Decision Makers. DENI)

Literacy and Numeracy

The Head of English and the Head of Maths act as the Literacy and Numeracy Co-ordinators respectively. It is their responsibility to monitor Literacy and Numeracy provision across departments as well as keeping abreast of developments and keeping staff informed.

All departments must give consideration to any relevant methods which they may employ to improve the Literacy and Numeracy of pupils; any such provision should be noted in department action plans and department schemes.

Arrangements are in place to provide extra Literacy and Numeracy tuition to referred pupils on a withdrawal basis.

This provision will be enhanced from September 2013 – June 2015 with the provision of Literacy and Numeracy support from the Signature Project (2.5 days each), if appointments are successfully made.

The Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum (introduced 2007/08) stipulates the development of certain skills and, in its teaching, the use of Assessment for Learning methods.

Skills

(see *Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities for Key Stage 3 and Assessing the Cross-curricular Skills* – nicurriculum.org.uk)

The skills to be developed are

Cross-curricular Skills

- Communication
- Using Maths
- Using ICT

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

Key Stage 3

- Being Creative
- Working with Others
- Self-management
- Managing Information
- Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision making

Key Stage 4

- Working with Others
- Self-management
- Problem Solving

All departments have an active part to play in developing these skills and assessing pupils' performance in their uptake.

The development of the skills should take place in parallel with the departments' subject learning.

Assessment tasks for the cross-curricular skills in Key Stage 3 and the GCSE controlled assessment tasks in Key Stage 4 should prove to be suitable media, among others, for assessing progress in Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities.

In their schemes, departments should make reference to where notable skill development is taking place.

These skills will reported on once in each academic year.

Assessment for Learning

(see *Assessment for Learning: A Practical Guide* – nicurriculum.org.uk)

Assessment for Learning methods are intended to improve pupils'

- inclusion,
- motivation,
- autonomy, and
- desire to succeed

in relation to their learning.

The Four Elements of Practice are set out below.

1. Focus on Learning

Focus on Learning means making 2 essential elements very clear to pupils:

- the learning intentions: the new learning that pupils will get from the next stage in their learning programme; and
- success criteria: those parts of the learning activity that are essential in helping them achieve the learning intention.

2. Effective Questioning

Effective questioning strategies help address:

- how to extend participation in whole class and group questioning to all pupils
- how to develop questioning strategies that deepen pupils' learning

3. Formative Feedback

Formative feedback focuses on success and improvement, not just measuring performance.

For feedback to improve learning, pupils need to know 3 things:

- where they are in their learning
- where they need to go (their next steps) and
- how to get there (what improvements they can make).

Formative feedback is done during the task not at its conclusion.

4. Scaffolding Reflection

Scaffolding reflection in the classroom involves helping pupils to develop and use the skills of:

- peer and self-assessment – reflecting on what they have learnt; and
- self-evaluation – reflecting on **how** they have learnt it.

In the teaching of the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum the staff of Kilkeel High are committed to engaging the elements of Assessment for Learning and to developing their application, using the guidance provided.

Within the framework of engagement and development, departments must decide how they can best implement the Assessment for Learning strategies, giving some outline of their approach in their schemes.

Monitoring and Evaluating

The effectiveness of the curriculum and its delivery are monitored and evaluated by:

- using database *khsmapping*
- tracking individual pupil's progress
- assessments
- homework
- pupil self-evaluation and review
- benchmarking data.

Database *khsmapping*

How each department's scheme of work covers the statutory elements of the curriculum is monitored using the school database *khsmapping*. As departments develop their schemes they have to record references to statutory elements in the database; reports can then be produced showing the extent of independent department and whole school coverage, leading to follow-up in department action plans if necessary.

Tracking

Using SIMS Assessment Manager every teacher has to track each pupil's performance over six assessments in the year.

The tracking module not only records results but compares each pupil's performance with the class average.

The resulting presentation of data is a valuable resource for subject teachers, form tutors, department heads and year heads to monitor overall class and individual pupil progress and possibly judge if and how support may be given.

Examinations

Whole-school examinations take place in January and June. On both occasions the follow-up reports to parents are produced using SIMS Assessment Manager and Profile modules which allow form tutors and year heads the ability to monitor and evaluate pupil progress.

Pupil Self-evaluation and Review

Pupil reviews take place twice a year after the school exams.

Leading up to the reviews, pupils have an opportunity to evaluate and reflect on their performance and previously set targets for improvement and plan future development.

Pupils then have a ten or fifteen minute individual interview with their form tutor to discuss their reflections and plans. Pupils should be encouraged to reflect on their targets and progress throughout the year.

Not only is this an encouragement to pupils to accept greater autonomy for their own learning but is also an opportunity for closer and more personal monitoring of their progress.

Benchmarking Data

Benchmarking data are used to compare sets of examination results.

For example, among the many comparisons for which statistics exist are:

- countrywide, one school's individual subject's pass rate against that in other similar schools or the Northern Ireland average
- within school, one subject's pass rate against the performance of the same students in their other subjects.

All departments must not only be aware of relevant benchmarking data but must know how to interpret it; evaluation of benchmarking data should be considered as part of the process of producing department action plans.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance involves having suitable structures and procedures in place to guarantee that proper monitoring and evaluating of curriculum provision are taking place, that department targets are being set and action plans, devised to bring about improvement, are being followed-up.

The aims of curriculum quality assurance are:

- to regularly review the quality of all school provision
- to use external and internal data to measure and benchmark quality
- to ensure mechanisms are effective in maintaining or improving the quality of provision
- to require all staff to assume responsibility for the quality of provision
- to disseminate good practice.

Roles and Information

Senior Management, as a group, guided by the VP i/c Curriculum should act as a quality assurance monitoring team, taking responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision. This will be part of the school's Departmental Review process.

The information which should be considered as part of the assurance process includes external and internal exam results and benchmarking data, curriculum aspects of departmental action plans, including targets and regular evaluations and results of pupil surveys on curriculum provision which should be regularly carried out to test quality.

A Curriculum Team of teachers interested in the evaluation and development of the school curriculum should meet under the leadership of the VP i/c Curriculum. It should act in an advisory, think-tank role as well as having responsibility for actively identifying and disseminating good practice.

Department Requirements

For their part in the quality assurance process departments need to consider:

- analysis of internal and external results
- benchmarking and target-setting for improvement
- skills and capabilities development in Key Stages 3 and 4
- promotion of Literacy and Numeracy within department
- support for pupils with Special Educational Needs
- procedures for identifying and providing for gifted and talented pupils
- results of any pupil surveys on curriculum provision.

Minutes of Departmental meetings should show that the review of the department action plan is being regularly addressed and progress noted.

Action Plans and Meetings

Departments have to conduct an evaluation of the previous year's action plan and draw up an action plan for the incoming year, covering the points set out under Department Requirements above.

Heads of Department meet individually with Principal and VP i/c curriculum to consider suitability of evaluation and plan.

Evaluations and plans are also given consideration by Senior Management as a group and relevant information on quality assurance should be relayed to the Curriculum Team to consider any useful points on good practice which might be passed on to all staff.

Appendix 1

Key Stage 3 Subjects in their Areas of Learning

Area of Learning	Subject
Language and Literacy	English
Mathematics and Numeracy	Mathematics
Modern Languages	French
The Arts	Music
	Art and Design
Environment and Society	History
	Geography
Physical Education	PE
Science and Technology	Science
	Technology

Home Economics and RE are also included as compulsory subjects

Appendix 2

Key Stage 4 Subjects (A – applied, G – general)

English Language	G
English Literature	G
Mathematics	G
Additional Mathematics	G
French	G
Spanish	G
Biology	G
Chemistry	G
Physics	G
Single Award Science	G
Geography	G
History	G
Art and Design	G
Music	G
Technology	A
Engineering	A
Manufacturing	A
Essential Skills Number	A
Essential Skills Communication	A
Key Skills - ICT	A
Home Economics	G
Child Development	A
PE (GCSE)	A
RE (GCSE)	G
ICT (GCSE)	A
Business	A
Motor Vehicle & Road User Studies	A

English Language and Mathematics are considered compulsory subjects by the school.

Appendix 3

Post-16 subjects and courses (A-Applied, G-General)

English Literature	G
Mathematics	G
French	G
Spanish	G
Religious Studies	G
History	G
Geography	G
Biology	G
Chemistry	G
Physics	G
Technology	A
Art and Design	G
Engineering	A
Home Economics	G
Music	G
Music Technology	A
Sport	A
Business	A
ICT	A
Construction	A
Health and Social Care	A
Key Skills Application of Number	A
Key Skills Communication	A
Key Skills ICT	A
Psychology	G
Certificate of Personal Effectiveness	A