

KILKEEL HIGH SCHOOL



LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY (2013-14)

September 2013

KILKEEL HIGH SCHOOL

'Creating Opportunity; Realising Potential; Developing Individuals'

LEARNING and TEACHING POLICY, 2013 - 2014

RATIONALE

Learning and Teaching is the CORE business of Kilkeel High School and this policy is developed to recognise and consolidate current good practice, at the same time pointing to future development and improvement.

Our staff - teaching and support - continue to provide a structured and challenging curriculum which is supported by high quality teaching to ensure that the learning needs of all are met. They endeavour at all times to make learning relevant, achievable and enjoyable through the effective use of learning intentions, success criteria and other Assessment for Learning strategies.

Our classrooms are welcoming and stimulating environments conducive to a variety of active classroom methodologies which, in turn, encourage maximum learning opportunities for all.

AIMS:

- to develop enquiring minds which will see learning as an enjoyable lifelong experience
- to help our pupils achieve their full potential
- to develop pupils' attitudes and skills to enable them to prepare well for the world of work, thus allowing them to take their place as responsible citizens in an ever-changing world
- to encourage high expectations and mutual respect, ensuring good relationships with staff and peers
- to ensure that our pupils will be self-disciplined, self-motivated, able to make informed decisions, independently and collaboratively, and take responsibility for their own learning.

EXPECTATIONS/RESPONSIBILITIES

It is expected that the **SCHOOL LEADERSHIP** has:

- an overall broad, balanced and flexible curriculum plan which reflects the aims and priorities of the School and its overall School Development Plan
- clear and coherent planning for all areas within the curriculum which will guide effectively the work of individual teachers and the staff as a whole
- learning programmes which are broad and balanced and promote continuity and progression for all pupils
- appropriate assessment strategies which will promote effective learning at all stages and inform future planning/teaching
- effective monitoring and evaluation processes in place to inform appropriate progression and future planning

- an orderly and disciplined school community which encourages consideration for others, courtesy and good manners as well as a sound framework or context in which quality teaching and learning takes place.

It is expected that **TEACHERS** are:

- knowledgeable, motivated, well-prepared and resourceful classroom practitioners
- professional in terms of punctuality and appearance and respectful in their approach to pupils
- establishing consistently high expectations of pupils in their classrooms, challenging and inspiring them
- using and building on the pupils' ideas, interests and prior learning
- modelling lifelong learning through the acquisition of new skills and knowledge.

It is expected that **PUPILS** are:

- punctual for lessons, properly equipped and ready to learn
- respectful of their peers, classroom assistants and teachers
- punctual in the submission of their work, always completed to the best of their ability
- motivated and engaged learners, wanting to find out and learn more.

It is expected that **PARENTS** are:

- partners of the School in promoting pupils' good learning habits and behaviour
- supportive of their children's endeavours in the areas of personal organisation, homework, revision and the achievement of targets.

The LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Learning Environment will be enhanced by appropriate displays, especially of pupils' current work - these will reward, motivate and inspire, as well as support and stimulate the learning. Seating arrangements will be flexible to promote the use of a range of teaching methodologies, At all times, classrooms must be safe and should be environmentally friendly.

RELATIONSHIPS

The best teaching and learning in Kilkeel High School is based on positive relationships and mutual respect. Teachers learn and use pupils' names at the earliest opportunity and have high expectations in terms of their attendance and punctuality and how they enter and exit the classroom. Teachers make full use of the support which is provided by classroom assistants and other non-teaching staff.

Teachers avoid demeaning comments and will lead classes in a warm, good-humoured, purposeful and business-like manner, where the learners will feel comfortable asking and answering questions. At all times teachers are sensitive to the needs of particular groups especially those pupils with special educational needs. Praise on the basis of ability alone - rather than commending a pupil's effort and approach - can inhibit progress and produce a pupil mindset which lowers personal expectations because they can become more concerned about how able they are rather than focusing on how well they work. Pupils will be helped to recognise that ability alone is no guarantee of success. Such a climate makes it more likely that pupils will take risks in their learning and use their mistakes as valuable learning moments.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

'Teachers use adaptable, flexible teaching strategies that respond to the diversity of the classroom.' (ESaGS)

- Teachers in Kilkeel High School employ a wide range of methodologies which are inclusive and cater for the interests, needs and abilities of all pupils, who will be involved actively in their learning.
- Lessons are planned effectively, with clear learning outcomes and strategies which are matched to learners' abilities, using differentiated tasks for the most able learners and for pupils who are struggling, including those with special educational needs.
- Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods, building into most lessons activities to make best use of all the differing learning styles, recognising that each pupil learns in many ways.
- Active learning strategies are used to encourage and ensure that all pupils participate in every lesson. Teaching strategies include paired work, group work and role play as well as whole class teaching. Creativity is valued in all subjects.
- Questioning strategies include open questions and provide sufficient time to allow pupils to develop their thinking. Pupils asking questions is a key indicator of high quality learning and teaching.
- Most lessons end with a plenary session to consolidate learning and help the teacher to assess formatively the extent to which learning intentions are achieved.
- Learners benefit from the regular use of new technologies, such as digital projectors, interactive white boards and lessons in computer suites and using ICT to learn rather than for its own sake.
- Teachers use an appropriately wide range of assessment for learning strategies, including self- and peer-assessment, and formative use of summative assessment outcomes. Such assessment opportunities will inform the learning process.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly, frequently and consistently in ways which highlight individual strengths, and give feedback on what the pupil needs to do in order to improve. Pupils will be aware of their achievements and progress.

LEARNING SKILLS

While we aim for the achievement in external examinations of the highest grades possible according to individual ability, we in Kilkeel High School see our most important function as helping our pupils to learn how to learn; this means teaching pupils the tools of the learning trade:

- teaching and encouraging pupils to develop greater responsibility for their own learning
- building learners' capabilities, perseverance and curiosity by encouraging them to ask questions
- developing their note-making and processing skills
- equipping learners with the confidence to ask for help, persevere and take risks in their learning so that mistakes are seen as powerful learning opportunities
- pupils developing learning and revision strategies that work for them, enabling them to memorise effectively and practise recalling their knowledge and understanding

- challenging pupils to make connections between different parts of the learning experiences within and between subject areas
- collaborating with other pupils in their learning, both inside and outside the classroom
- challenging learners to reflect on their learning and express their views on the learning experience.

TEACHERS are REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS

Central to effective learning and teaching in Kilkeel High School is the principle that our teachers are self-evaluative classroom practitioners who engage in formal and informal professional reflection on an ongoing basis.

- Are the relationships in my classes founded on mutual respect and are the learners encouraged to express their opinions?
- Do I communicate clearly high expectations with respect to pupils' behaviour, effort, classwork and homework?
- How effectively do I share learning intentions with the class and revisit them to find out that the aims of the lesson have been achieved?
- Do my lessons cater for the needs of each of the pupils in my class? How do I know?
- In what ways is the quality of my teaching being developed through the use of pupil feedback? Are they meeting the set targets? How does my tracking system inform me of particular pupil needs and am I addressing underachievement successfully?
- How up-to-date am I with developments in my subject and in teaching methodologies?
- What types of questioning strategies do I use to motivate pupils and are they afforded enough time to develop their thinking?
- How frequently do pupils ask questions in my lessons and do my responses encourage them to do so?
- Are learners encouraged to 'have a go' and take risks in their learning?
- Are all pupils involved actively in each lesson and does my teaching meet the needs of every pupil through differentiation?
- Do my pupils' learning experiences contribute to their fulfilment, personal development and education? Have they achieved the highest possible standards?
- In what ways is my teaching being improved through the discussion of methodologies with colleagues and observing fellow professionals?

NB This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the monitoring and evaluation of the School Development Plan.

APPENDICES:

1. Lesson Observation Template
2. The Reflective Teacher (DE and GTCNI)
3. Together Towards Improvement (SELB version of DE document)
4. Every School a Good School (DE)