Learning and Teaching

Rationale

Learning and teaching is at the heart of everything we do in school. The purpose of this policy is to give guidance to all staff involved in the education of our pupils.

The school is committed to providing equality of education for all pupils taking into account their needs, learning styles, and social and ethnic backgrounds. We want to provide meaningful learning opportunities for both staff and pupils and encourage an enthusiasm for learning at all levels.

To this end we hope to improve attainment and ensure all our pupils meet success and have their achievements acknowledged at each step of the way.

Pupils bring a wide range of abilities, interests, personal and social skills to their learning situations. Everyone is influenced by what the learning environment offers, the quality of interactions and the commitment to improve the learning experience for all.

Tinto Primary and Nursery Aims

It is important that we educate our pupils in such a way that they develop as lifelong learners who are confident, successful, effective contributors and are equipped to become responsible citizens. (See Tinto Values, mission and aims Nov 08)

- To foster, amongst the whole school community, a climate of excellence
- To enable each child to achieve their potential both academically, through the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and in terms of personal achievements by fostering positive attitudes
- To ensure every child receives the support needed to achieve their potential including additional support for learning, child protection, emotional and mental health.
- For every child in our school to feel nurtured, respected and happy
- To prepare each child to live and work beside people, in school and in the future, co-operatively and respectfully
- To develop a sense of values and moral responsibility towards each other and the world we live in
- To develop in each child a commitment to, and enjoyment of, life long learning and the study skills to enable this to happen
- To enable each child to develop effective communication skills, both oral and written
- To involve parents, carers and the wider school community in a meaningful and purposeful partnership
- To develop a sense of pride in Scottish and local cultures and at the same time developing an understanding, appreciation and respect for other cultures

National Priorities

1. Achievement and attainment
To raise standards of educational attainment for all in schools, especially in the core skills
of literacy and numeracy, and to achieve better levels in national measures of
achievement including examination results
2. Framework for learning
To support and develop the skills of teachers, the self discipline of pupil and to enhance
school environments so that they are conducive to teaching and learning
3. Inclusion and equality
To promote equality and help every pupil benefit from education, with particular regard
paid to pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, and to Gaelic and other
lesser-used languages
4. Values and citizenship
To work with parents to teach pupil respect for self and one another and their
interdependence with other members of their neighbourhood and society, and to teach
them the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society
5. Learning for life
To equip pupils with the foundation skills, attitudes and expectations necessary to prosper
in a changing society, and to encourage creativity and ambition

Taking into account the General Aims for the school and the National Priorities the broad
aims for Learning and Teaching are:

- To provide a stimulating environment for learning
- To encourage enthusiasm for learning
- To develop skills for learning
- To improve attainment and achievement for all
- To provide learning experiences that meet the needs of all and promote equality
- To promote positive interaction and mutual respect

Curriculum Framework

The curriculum is a framework for learners within which pupils should have the opportunity
to:
- acquire and develop a range of skills appropriate to his/her own development
- be challenged on their levels of achievement
- acquire confidence in communication
- develop an enquiring mind
- be creative
- think critically
- develop a capacity for independent learning
- work co-operatively with peers, teachers and others in learning situations
- value and respect themselves and one another
- develop interdependence within their own community and the wider society
- develop appropriate knowledge and positive attitudes to diversity

Implementation

Learners learn best when they:

- Understand clearly what they are trying to learn, and what is expected of them
- Are given feedback about the quality of their work, and what they can do to improve it
- Are fully involved in deciding what needs to be done next and who can give them help if they need it.

Aifl 2004

Implementing learning and teaching effectively requires consideration of the following issues:

Learning Environment

The environment in which pupils learn has a major effect on how well they learn. For example some pupils like a bright and busy classroom others would rather work quietly with limited distractions – everyone is different. Although it is impossible to provide each individual pupil with their ideal environment all the time it is important that a variety of situations and activities are provided so that there are times when pupils can work in their preferred learning environment especially when they are feeling challenged or taking on new learning. Getting to know what pupils preferred learning styles are and giving choice where this is workable allows pupils to tackle learning confidently.

Within the school setting children should feel safe and secure. Pupils' learning is detrimentally affected by stress and anxiety. The school through the ongoing work in classrooms, pupil council and assemblies promotes a sense of belonging and aims to make all pupils feel valued despite educational, social or ethnic differences. The school is constantly looking at new ways of recognising achievement and celebrating success.

Effective Interaction

Teachers are encouraged to use a range of methods to ensure all pupils are engaged in their learning. It is hoped that mutual respect between staff and pupils can be improved through effective interaction and an effective promoting positive behaviour policy which creates a positive ethos throughout the school.

Types of interaction:
- Informing
- Listening
- Describing
- Explaining
- Questioning
- Modelling
- Demonstrating
- Coaching

The classroom should be a place where dialogue, contribution, and participation by all pupils is encouraged not just with the class teacher but with peers and other members of staff. Pupils should have the opportunities within lessons to reflect, review and make decisions about their learning and be confident in sharing this with their teachers and peers to move them on to the next steps and be adequately challenged.

Planning for Effective Learning

We need to structure learning in ways which are compatible with the way the brain learns naturally:
- When it is trying to make sense
- When it is building on what is already know
- When it recognises the significance of what it is doing
- When it is working in complex, multiple perspectives
- When it is learning collaboratively in a social/team setting

Abbot 1994

Planning is crucial to an effective learning and teaching process. It should take account of previous learning and identify the next steps for pupils. As the school moves towards Personal Learning Plans children will become more involved in the planning process; having more say in the evaluations of their own learning and target setting.

Planning should also take account of pupils' different needs and abilities, identifying appropriate teaching strategies and resources.

Planning should be focused and specific to assessment priorities to allow for appropriate next steps to be identified. The next steps should put an emphasis on progression, pace and achievement.

Effective Learning

Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences

Teachers' own learning styles have an effect on the way they teach. Developing teachers' understanding of different preferred learning styles and multiple intelligences gives everyone the opportunity to access information both for the pupil and the teacher.   This should be a key element of professional development for staff.

Howard Gardner (1983) introduced the idea, based on research about different abilities being located in different parts of the brain, that we have several different types of intelligences:
- Linguistic intelligence
- Logical or mathematical intelligence
- Musical intelligence
- Spatial and visual intelligence
- Kinaesthetic intelligence
- Interpersonal intelligence
- Intrapersonal intelligence

Clarke 2003

Effective Teaching

Central to effective teaching should be:
- sharing learning intentions
- creating success criteria with learners
- using effective questioning to extend thinking
- giving clear and specific advice to learners about how to improve
- creating a positive climate in classrooms
- allowing learners to work collaboratively
- allowing learners to take responsibility for learning
- ensuring continuity and progression in learning
- reviewing learning for recall and retention

By using a wide range of strategies all pupils are given the opportunity to respond with confidence. Pupils should be encouraged to collaborate on ideas and be aware that they can learn from each other. To do this well it is important that a supportive climate is created. Pupils must feel secure when sharing their ideas or views, even at the risk of getting the 'wrong' answer. In this way these answers can be explored and a deeper level of understanding can be gained.

> Where such changes have been made, experience has shown that pupils become more active as participants, and come to realise that learning may depend less on their capacity to spot the right answer and more on their readiness to express and discuss their own understanding. The teachers also shift in their role, from presenters of content to leaders of an exploration and development of ideas in which all pupils are involved.
>
> Black et al 2002

Effective Assessment

> Formative assessment through interactive teaching and learning will provide a comprehensive profile of pupil achievement, attainment and potential. Research shows that formative assessment has the biggest impact on low attainers, but also can be used to challenge all pupils. The development of formative assessment strategies is viewed as an essential part of improving learning and teaching in the school.

> Pupils can only achieve a learning goal if they understand that goal and can assess what they need to do to reach it. So self-assessment is essential to learning.
>
> Sadler 1989

Peer and self assessment are key components of formative assessment, but is only successful when pupils are very clear of the learning intentions and understand the success criteria. It is understood that peer assessment is especially valuable as pupils are more likely to accept criticism of their work from a classmate. It also encourages dialogue in language that is more meaningful to the pupil rather than 'teacher speak'. Both peer and self assessment are skills that take time to develop and require practice. Encouraging the capacity to self-assess develops pupils' ability to be reflective and self-managing.

Summative assessment will still contribute to the learning and teaching process but purely to confirm teachers' and pupils' assessments of ongoing learning.

Partnership with Parents

A key element in achieving success for our pupils is through effective partnership with parents and carers. There should be mutual understanding and respect of views and opinions. At the heart of this are the needs of all the pupils in the school.

Family members can be a valuable asset to a school. They may have skills or expertise that can be shared with children. Pupils should be aware that learning takes place in a variety of places and with a variety of people.
Parents need to be kept informed. They should be in a position to support their child's learning and share in their achievements. Also parents are encouraged to inform the school of significant developments that may have some bearing on their child's progress in school. Continuous dialogue can be achieved through these methods:
- school newletters
- class updates each term
- homework
- target setting
- parent meetings
- open days
- reporting

Working with Others

The school acknowledges the support outside agencies give to pupils. Their influence on pupils' learning can have remarkable effect. An integrated approach is crucial – everyone involved in supporting a pupil in his/her learning needs to be fully informed and understand their role to aid progression. Outside agencies involved with a particular pupil should be considered when planning, assessing, and communicating with parents.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

All staff have a right to professional development and have a responsibility to ensure that there is continuing development. The school wants to encourage a positive learning environment for all – supporting each other and sharing skills. The self-esteem and morale is crucial. Everyone's strengths needs to be recognised and know the significant part they play in the lives of the pupils in our school.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular monitoring / class visits by all staff and evaluation of learning and teaching is embedded within the establishment

Review 2011