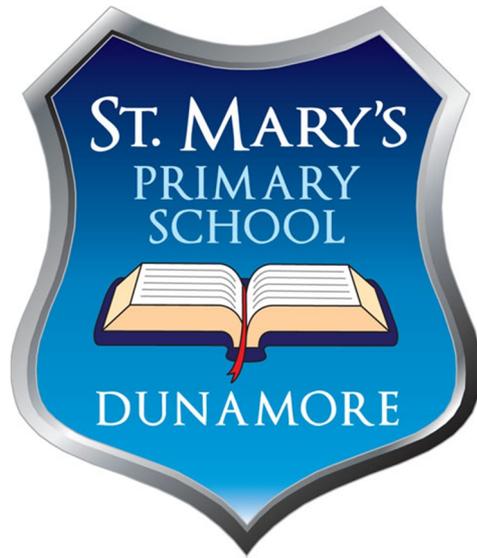


# St. Mary's Primary School Dunamore



## Teaching & Learning Policy

We are firmly committed to providing effective education for all our children (St Mary's Mission Statement).

## The Quality of Teaching and Learning is at the heart of school improvement

### **Introduction**

In St Mary's Primary School, we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the idea that both adults and children learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone, it should be fun. Through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

### **Aims and Objectives**

We believe that people learn best in different ways. In our school we provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.

This policy guides what pupils do, what teachers do, how time is managed, the organisation of the classroom and what the school as a learning organisation does to create an effective and well-managed learning environment in which the individual needs of each pupil can be met.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- Enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners
- Provide opportunities for all children to fulfil their full potential
- Ensure children feel happy, secure and are aware of boundaries
- Inform children of the learning outcome and provide feedback
- Encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning
- Promote children's self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people
- Develop children's self-respect and encourage children to respect the ideas, attitudes' values and feelings of others
- Show respect for all cultures and, in so doing, to promote positive attitudes towards other people
- Enable children to understand their community and help them feel valued as part of this community
- Help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens

- Provide opportunities for each child to learn in his/her preferred learning style by using a range of teaching strategies
- Use a variety of resources and differentiate according to ability

### **Effective Teaching and Learning Strategies**

We acknowledge that people learn in many different ways and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow the children to learn in ways that best suit them.

The psychologist, Howard Gardner identifies the following areas of intelligence: linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal/group working, natural, spiritual and interpersonal/reflective. We take into account these different forms of intelligence when planning teaching and learning styles.

We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way they learn, and to reflect on how they learn – what helps them learn and makes it difficult for them to learn. We offer opportunities for pupils to learn in different ways. These include:

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole class work</li> <li>• Group work</li> <li>• Paired work</li> <li>• Independent work</li> <li>• Sharing learning intentions and Developing success criteria</li> <li>• Reflection on what has been learnt</li> <li>• Self and peer review strategies</li> <li>• Peer-tutoring</li> <li>• Open-ended, thought-provoking and challenging questions</li> <li>• Circle time</li> <li>• Pupils adopting role of teacher</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision making</li> <li>• Investigation and problem solving</li> <li>• Creative activities</li> <li>• Use of brain breaks to bring pupils back on task</li> <li>• Research and finding out</li> <li>• Use of ICT</li> <li>• Designing and making things</li> <li>• Participation in physical activity</li> <li>• Discussions, debates, role plays and presentation</li> <li>• Play-based learning areas i.e. sand/water, art area, construction etc.</li> </ul> |
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## **Planning for Learning – Learning and the Learner’s Role**

- Pupils have a vital role to play in the learning process and are encouraged to set personal goals and targets
- Pupils are motivated and are interested in their work. They are supportive of each other, enjoy their work and persevere with tasks
- Pupils engage in a range of group activities to share ideas, to work co-operatively, to contribute effectively and to respect each other’s views and opinions
- Pupils engage in a range of individual activities to develop independence, take responsibility for their own learning and encouraged to reflect on what they have learnt
- Pupils are aware of and employ a range of learning styles
- Pupils are given opportunities to demonstrate their learning and talk about their work which shows knowledge and understanding about what they are doing and how they can apply this to different contexts
- Pupils evaluate their own work, making realistic judgements about it and communicate information and ideas, offering comments and explanations
- Pupils’ individual learning needs are met through differentiated, yet challenging experiences
- Pupils feel that they are valued by their teachers and that their achievements are being recognised
- All teachers are also learners and should be striving to evaluate and improve their practice

## **Teaching and the Teacher’s Role**

- Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and of the learning process
- Teachers create a purposeful, supportive and safe environment for learning.
- Teachers ensure that all provision is inclusive
- Teacher’s planning and teaching takes account of the pupils’ different stages of development, abilities and attainments to ensure that their individual needs are to be met
- Teachers plan lessons which have clear learning intentions which are communicated effectively to pupils
- Teachers use a range of teaching styles and ensure that there is an appropriate balance of individual, group and whole-class tasks
- Teachers use a range of questioning

- The school supports a climate where pupils feel happy, safe and secure, where they are nurtured and cherished and where their contribution is valued
- Teachers encourage pupils to ask questions, take risks, knowing that mistakes/failures are acknowledged as part of the learning process
- Teachers have positive attitudes and pupils feel confident and secure in asking their teacher for advice and support
- Teachers use praise and positive reinforcement to foster self-esteem, motivation and confidence in pupils

### **Learning Environment**

The learning environment will be:

- Challenging and stimulating
- Peaceful, calm and comfortable
- Happy, caring and supportive

### **Classroom Routines and Rules**

Routines and rules in the classroom contribute to a healthy learning environment. To be effective they should be:

- Clearly understood
- Fair and consistent
- Realistic and positive

### **Display in the School should be used to:**

- Support pupils' learning and changed regularly
- Create an attractive and stimulating environment
- Include work on different aspects of the curriculum
- Reflect the individual child's efforts as well as ability
- Sometimes be interactive

### **Physical Organisation**

#### **Furniture**

All classrooms should have:

Tables arranged for:

- Ease of working
- Flexibility

- Purposeful discussion
- Provision of quiet corners
- Large working surfaces

### **Chairs should normally**

- Be sufficient areas of the curriculum
- Support a project or activity
- Give character to a room
- House children's personal belongings

### **Library**

This area should be:

- Accessible to a pupils
- Attractive, comfortable and inviting
- Furnished to enable quiet reading and study
- Carpeted
- Provided activities for pupils to become active readers

### **Learning Resources**

Materials in all areas should be well organised, be of good quality, be clean, tidy, attractive, accessible and well labelled. Stocks should be checked and replenished regularly. Children should be taught and shown by example that resources are finite and that we all have a duty to care for equipment and not misuse, damaged or waste it. Relevant textbooks should be available in each classroom.

The effective implementation of the curriculum subjects calls for a wide range of equipment to be used. These do not necessarily have to be stored in the classroom. The school library, Reading Centre and classroom have a selection of books covering all curriculum subjects. Additional books are loaned from ELB.

We will ensure that the materials used are appropriate to the individual needs of the children.

### **Strategies for dealing with children with learning difficulties.**

Staff will provide a differentiated learning environment which takes account of gender, high and low achievers and children with special education needs. We base our teaching on our knowledge of the pupils and levels of attainment. We adopt a range of strategies for dealing with children with learning difficulties. These include:

- Preventative action in early years
- Collect and record information
- Assessment, diagnosis
- Individualised education plans
- Short term targets
- Steps outlined to achieve targets
- Teacher works with classroom assistant, SEN Co-ordinator, parents, medical, psychological and social services where appropriate
- Knowledge of child's interests
- Ensure children experience success
- Suitability of materials used
- Raise self-esteem of children
- Highlight ability and potential
- Team teaching – redeployment of staff

#### Gifted and Talented children

We also provide a range of strategies and activities to deal with these children. These include:

- Individual Learning Programmes
- Enrichment Materials
- Different Resources
- A Register of these children

#### **Resources**

Materials in all areas should be well organised, be of good quality, be clean, tidy, attractive, accessible and well labelled. Stocks should be checked and replenished regularly. Children should be taught and shown by example that resources are finite and that we all have a duty to care for equipment and not misuse, damage or waste it. Relevant textbooks should be available in each classroom.

The effective implementation of curriculum subjects calls for a wide range of equipment to be used. These do not necessarily have to be started in the classroom. The school library and classroom have a selection of books covering all curriculum subjects. Additional books are loaned by ELB.

#### **Staff and Staff Professional Development**

- All staff will establish positive working relationships with the pupils that they are teaching

- All pupils will be treated fairly and given equal opportunity to take part in class activities
- All staff will follow the school's policy for Promoting Positive Behaviour and classroom management
- Pupils will be praised and rewarded for their efforts in line with the school's policy and by doing so, help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning
- Staff will regularly review performance against this teaching learning policy and any other targets set as part of the PRSD process
- Staff will identify areas for individual and school-based development through both formal and informal procedures
- Staff will maintain and update individual training on a regular basis
- Staff will work as part of a team, sharing good practice and liaising with others across the disciplines, when appropriate

### **Curriculum Co-ordination**

Co-ordination of curriculum subjects is divided between the staff. As a small school, this means that each member of staff may have several responsibilities in relation to co-ordination.

### **Role of Co-ordinators**

Co-ordinators will be responsible for:

- Maintenance and overview of their subject's resources
- Attending relevant courses and disseminating information to staff
- Liaising with other teachers to ensure continuity and progression
- Monitoring teaching and pupil progress in line with the monitoring and evaluating procedures in their subject and preparing reports for the principal and governors
- Preparing and evaluating action plans for their subject in line with the School Development Plan

### **Role of Parents**

- We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping their children to learn
- We work hard to inform and support parents in how they can support their children's learning at home

Parents are kept informed of the progress of their children and how to participate in their education. This is done through:

- Monthly newsletters
- Key school policies
- Parents Curriculum Night
- Parental Workshops
- Informative and helpful remarks when marking work
- Well-chosen homework activities
- Invitations to parents to attend open days, displays of work, pupil presentations, prize giving, assemblies, celebrations, sports days, concerts etc.
- Annual Parent/Teacher meetings
- Parents of pupils with Individual Education Plans (IEP's) are invited to attend each half-term, to review progress made and to discuss the way forward

The school also offers an open door policy so parents may arrange a suitable time to discuss any concerns that they may have with regards to their child's learning.

### **Assessment Strategies**

- Assessment is an integral part of planning, learning and teaching and helps pupils know how to improve
- Teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including observations, discussions with pupils, marking and written tests.
- All assessment tasks have clearly identified purposes which are understood by the pupils
- Assessment criteria are shared with pupils, so that pupils have a clear sense of what the teacher expects of them
- The pupils' work is marked regularly and highlights strengths and areas for development
- Pupils receive regular oral or written feedback on their work which highlights strengths and areas for development
- Pupils understand that the teacher's marking is linked to learning intentions and success criteria
- Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their current performance and what they need to do next to improve so that they are actively involved in the learning process
- Pupils are given time to make improvements to their work
- Encouragement is given to promote improvement and praise is given regularly to encourage pupils. It recognises progress from pupil's previous best.

- Responses from pupils are welcome and feedback, not failure is highlighted
- Teachers encourage self-assessment and peer-assessment strategies, thus encouraging pupils to become more responsible for their own learning
- Summative assessments are carried out annually and the pupil data is used to identify progress or underachievement.

### **Monitoring and Evaluating**

We are aware of the need to review the school teaching and learning policy regularly so that we can take account of the new initiatives, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. Refer to Monitoring and Evaluating Policy.

- Monitoring and evaluating are integral parts of the teaching and learning in our school and are the responsibility of all members of staff. The principal will oversee the progress we are making towards fulfilling our aims.
- The principal will monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in term of raising pupil achievement, through the school self-review process
- Through monitoring and evaluating procedures, the information gathered is used to inform and influence future developments and is closely linked to School Development Plan
- The Board of Governors support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively and by ensuring that the school building and facilities are effective in supporting effective teaching and learning
- The Principal will present a written report to the Board of Governors over the Pupils/Staff overall achievement.

### **The Role of the Board of Governors**

The Governors determine, support, monitor and review the school policies on Teaching and Learning and all policies with the Principal.